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THE SALMON POOL.

FROM A CARBON DRAWING BY GEORGE SHEFFIELD.

ANGLERS' EVENINGS.

PAPERS BY MEMBERS OF THE MANCHESTER ANGLERS' ASSOCIATION.

SECOND SERIES.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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CONTENTS.

PAGE.

THE COACH, THE COACHED, THE COACHMAN. GEO. SUMNER, B.A 1
ONE WAY TO THE TWEED. ABEL HEYWOOD, JUNR........ 17
TWEEDSIDE, WITH A FEW PRACTICAL HINTS. JOHN O. MACKENZIE........ 30
THE MERES OF SHROPSHIRE. GEORGE DAVIES........ 44
THREE FISHERS. ARTHUR HIBBERT 58
TOOME BRIDGE. HENRY BROWNBILL........ 64
A DAY ON A STAFFORDSHIRE MERE. DAVID REID...... 71
IN MEMORIAM. FRANCIS FRANCIS 80
QUARTER OF AN HOUR ON THE WYE AND THE WHEREFORE. GEORGE SUMNER........ 84
WE'LL ALL GO A-FISHING TO-DAY. GEORGE DAVIES..... 106
PATERNOSTER, OR BOILED COCKLES. GEORGE DAVIES 110
A WEEK IN MID-WALES. JAMES LAUDERDALE WILSON..... 114
ANALYSIS OF FISHING WATERS—THE RIBBLE AND THE BOLLIN. C. ESTCOURT, F.I.C., F.C.S........ 124
CERTAIN CHRONICLES OF PEN-Y-BONT—
PART I.—CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTORY. DAVID REID...... 128
„ „ II.—OUR OPENING DAY. DAVID REID 131
„ II.—AN APRIL HOLIDAY. E. G. SIMPSON........ 141
„ III.—"GLORIOUS SUMMER." ROBERT BURN 148
WE'LL ANGLE AND ANGLE AGAIN. BY HENRY LAWES. ARRANGED BY HENRY STEVENS, MUS. BAC........ 154
A FISHING ADVENTURE IN JAPAN. EBERU EWODU 159
A LETTER FROM NORWAY. AN ANGLER'S WIFE. 167
THE CONDITIONS OF VISION IN FISHES. THE HON. SEC........ 178
FISHES' EE-SEET; OR, TH' ANGLE O' INCIDENTS. ARTHUR HIBBERT........ 195
THE FENS AND FEN SLODGERS. CECIL DE GONVILLE.. 202
PREHISTORIC FISHING. F. J. FARADAY, F.L.S........ 222
RAMBLING RECOLLECTIONS OF FISHING DAYS ON THE ABERDEENSHIRE DON. HENRY VANNAN, M.A. 250

ILLUSTRATIONS.

***The full-page illustrations from Mr. Sheffield's Carbon Drawings are reduced by the Autotype Mechanical Process.

PAGE.

THE SALMON POOL. BY GEORGE SHEFFIELD. ....Frontispiece.

THE MERE SIDE. BY GEORGE SHEFFIELD............Title Vignette.

"SUCH BROOKS ARE WELCOME TO ME." BY R. O. BOTTOMLEY........ 17

" . . . LET ME OFTEN TO THESE SOLITUDES RETIRE." BY GEORGE SHEFFIELD........ 44

" . . . THE SHADOWY LAKE . . . " BY GEORGE SHEFFIELD........ 71

THE COCKLE STALL. BY W. G. BAXTER........ 111

"NINE HOURS OF UNREWARDED HOPE." BY W. G. BAXTER........ 112

PEN-Y-BONT. BY COLONEL JOHN I. MAWSON, C.E........ 128

" . . . ROCKIE ARE THY WAYES ALL OVER." BY GEO. SHEFFIELD........ 148

THE CLIMBING PERCH. BY W. G. BAXTER........ 164

THE COLLAPSE. BY W. G. BAXTER........ 165

DIAGRAM........ 181

DIAGRAM........ 183

DIAGRAM........ 184

PREFACE.

JUST two years ago was published the First Series of *Anglers' Evenings*. The volume was so well received that a Second Edition might well have been issued; but as time went on, and the monthly meetings of the Association supplied material that had at least the merit of novelty, it was resolved to bring out a Second Series of papers, not perhaps so much instead of a reprint of the First as in anticipation of it. This resolution has now been carried out, and here is the result.

Every paper in the book, with one exception, is by a member of the Association. The exception that proves the rule has been made in favour of—"An Angler's Wife."

In the *Field* of February 28, 1880, the reviewer of the first volume, speaking of the constitution of the Association generally, says: "If they had two or three artists affiliated with them, their organization would be perfect." Well, the two or three artists have been

found, and their illustrations form a new feature in the Second Series of *Anglers' Evenings*, but as for perfect organization—that's quite another thing. Thanks are due to the *Field* for giving a valuable hint, and to the brethren of the pencil for taking that hint. The drawings are an accomplished fact. Four of them are autotype reductions of carbon sketches; the rest are wood engravings.

It is hoped that these papers may be read not alone by anglers, but by men who *used* to fish, and by others who wish to begin. To the former it cannot be unwelcome to recall the by-gone holiday so happily spent by the water-side; while an attempt has been made to give, here and there, scraps of information that somewhere, somewhen, somehow, may prove useful to the latter.

Says Wordsworth, in one of his Sonnets:

> The world is too much with us; late and soon,
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.

The *raison d' être* of the Manchester Anglers' Association is to repair this waste of powers as much as may be, and in *Anglers' Evenings* they tell their readers how they do it—in not too solemn conclave in the city, and in the country on loch and mere and stream.

Manchester, December, 1881.

ANGLERS' EVENINGS.

THE COACH, THE COACHED, THE COACHMAN.

BY GEORGE SUMNER, B.A.

HE two, "coach" and "coached," on a fine August morning, took their tourist tickets, by the Midland route through Skipton, to Melrose. The railway arrangements—Lancashire and Yorkshire, Midland, and North British alike—were admirable. The country between Skipton and Carlisle is in many places very beautiful.

> The green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
> And the dimpling stream runs laughing by,

and the two travellers were in most laughter-loving mood; for brooks and rivers in endless succession, winding their way by the hillsides, suggested thoughts of treats in store, and trouts in scores, of Whiteadder and breezy Berwickshire. It wasn't, however, so much the smiles of nature that provoked the mocking merriment of those Pullman passengers. It was a bagman—

I don't mean a fox (tho' he had truly many fox-like attributes—even *hounds* might have thought so)—I mean a traveller—one of the commercial order, who was the most mirth-provoking man one might meet in a month. Though not perhaps witty himself, he did his best to cause wit in others. He was as ugly as Thersites (and he was the ugliest man that went to Iliüm).

> He squinted, halted, gibbous was behind,
> And pinched before, and on his tapering head
> Grew patches only of the flimsiest down.

He was as merry as a grig, and as full of music—well, we won't say too much about his *harmony*, but he sang, *certainly, several times.* As the train was nearing Carlisle, the "coached," who is a mischievous young dog, and better read in Lancashire literature than in most of the "'ologies picked up in colleges," handed round *to all save one* a quotation-legend somewhat after this sort:—

> Jackasses never can sing well, because they pitch their notes too high; his e'e-seet cuts across somewhere abeaut th' end ov his nose, as sharp as a pair o' sithers, an' twinklin' like a farthin' rushlight; he skens ill enough to crack a lookin'-glass welly; he's as feaw as an empty pot ole o'er, beside bein' as dirty as Thump-o'-Dolly's, 'at deed wi' bein' wesht; he's like a pig's tail, goin' all day an' nothin' done at neet; he'd weary a grooin' tree.

The document was scarcely a success. It was generally, though silently, voted "too bad, too bad by half."

Then came Carlisle, and a rush for refreshment. If jokes lacked dryness, throats didn't; and after swallowing a goodly draught of fine old ale, the "coached," who was irrepressible for that day at least, once more broke out in broad Lancashire (quotation again, doubtless)—"None o' yor brew'd besoms this, bo gradely stingo. A quart o'

this o'th' top ov' a beef steak 'ud mak a chap's ribs feel dosome, would nor it? Well, here's luck! That's what aw co milk o' paradise."

"Milk o' paradise?" broke in a Cumbrian jokester, "it should be, it's brewed on Edenside!"

Another five minutes and the train was again rushing northwards, and after glimpses of many a tempting stream—Esk and Liddle amongst the rest—and a change at St. Boswells, followed by a somewhat slower rate of progress and a second short delay at Dunse, our wayfarers found themselves landed at last.

At the station at Chirnside a wagonette was waiting. The portmanteaus were carefully counted by someone—(the youngster had brought about five times as much luggage as he could possibly need), the whistle sounded: the train started: but—not the wagonette. "Where are the rods"? was the cry. They were well on their way to Berwick! For the moment nothing could be done; but the station-master gave a somewhat confident assurance that they would be brought back by the next train, and he promised to send them on as soon as they came.

At the Waterloo there was already established a jovial old angler and friend, whom I beg to present as the "Governor." He was so used to this name that he would scarcely answer to any other, It was, in his eyes, a title of honour and respect. The dinner that evening was a dinner to be remembered; and by no means the least pleasant incident thereof was the apparition of a man in the North British railway uniform, bearing in

triumph a bundle of rods. If ever a man earned his reward, and received it from an ungrudging hand, that man did. To this country inn I must give several words of praise. The bedrooms are clean and comfortable; the cooking is excellent; host and hostess are both of them all that one could desire; the charges are very moderate. Need I say more?

The village of Chirnside is about three-quarters of a mile from the Whiteadder, the nearest point being Allanton Bridge. Here the Blackadder joins her sister stream, and the two together form a river of considerable size, nearly as large as the Dee at Carrog. The *Sportsman's Guide*, a book that every angler should have, very justly calls this river "one of the best trouting streams in the south of Scotland." The fishing is free, and it seems none the worse for that. Blackadder, however, is strictly preserved, and I am told is full of large, well-fed trout; but as "governor," "coach," and "coached" were all entire strangers to the several proprietors, they did not ask for a day in these waters.

On the opposite side of the river to Chirnside, and much nearer the stream, is the village of Allanton, where comfortable quarters can usually be had. There are also other fishing stations at Moor Cottage, by Abbey St. Bathan's and Ellemford, but of these I know nothing.

When first the "coach" set eyes on Whiteadder, and that, you may be sure, was on the evening of arrival, under the soothing influence of an after-dinner pipe, "she" was in spate. The "governor" waxed eloquent

on the worms he had in pickle; the "coached," who had never wet a line in his life, was eager enough to try his hand at any kind of fishing whatever; and the "coach" was hoping, almost against hope, that by the morrow the water would be fit for fly.

The morrow came; and after an early breakfast our three fishers were soon at work. The "governor" stuck to his worming; the "coached" tried it for a time without success, made friends with a colley bitch, and disappeared for the rest of the day. He found rabbit-hunting more to his taste, after all, than "trying to catch fish." He had some sport too, and amongst other things, contributed to the general store that night a toothsome dish of meadow mushrooms. The "coach," after a blank hour with the minnow, put up a cast of large flies, and had scarcely stretched his line when he had hold of "a fush." (I may here say that on Whiteadder, every thing that runs up from the sea is called "a fush," and it is quite hopeless to expect a local fisherman to give any other name to it.) The "governor" was soon aware of the fun that was going on, and left his rod lying by the side of a deepish pool, the worm in the water, with the object of being in at the death and handy with the net. "The fush" was promptly landed, and turned the scale at two pounds and a half. "Not a bad beginning" thought the "coach," as he examined the killing fly with affectionate interest—shining black wings with white tip, scarlet body with gold twist, yellow tag, reddish brown hackle. The best of the fun however was yet to come. During the "governor's" temporary absence

from his own rod, a gigantic and hungry eel had marked, and almost digested, the delicious worm he had found at the bottom of the pool. After a considerable amount of exertion, on the "tug of war" principle, almost before it was known what strange creature there was at the end of the line, that snig was snug round a snag! The dislodging him was no easy matter. However a long pull, and a strong pull, eventually succeeded, and he was brought to bank. He must have been own cousin at least to a conger! There were caught that day another "fush," better than the first by over a pound, and a few yellow trout, none of them over half a pound in weight.

Mrs. Peacock, the landlady, seemed almost shocked at being asked to send up the eel at dinner. She said that no one in Scotland ate eels, but that if it must be cooked she knew how to do it. And she did know, for each member of the party thoroughly agreed with the dame of the Ingoldsby Legend who exclaimed—

> Eels a many
> I've ate; but any
> So good ne'er tasted before;
> They're a fish, too, of which I'm remarkably fond,
> Go—pop Sir Thomas again in the pond,
> Poor dear! he'll catch us some more.

And à propos of that eel, after dinner the "governor" told a little story—a nursery reminiscence of Hans Andersen.

An eel and her daughters were in a creek, and the young eels wanted to go farther up. "Don't go too far," said their mother, "or the ugly eel-spearer might come and snap you up." But they went too far, and of eight daughters only three returned. They wept, and said, "We only went a little way beyond the entrance, and the ugly eel-spearer came directly and

stabbed five of our sisters to death. "They'll come back again," said the mother eel. "Oh! no," exclaimed the daughters, "for he skinned them, cut them in two, and fried them." "Oh! they'll come again," the mother-eel persisted. "No," replied the daughters, "for he ate them up." They'll come again," repeated the mother-eel. "But he drank brandy after them," continued the daughters. "Ah! then they'll never come back," said the mother, and she burst out crying, "It's the brandy that buries the eels." "And therefore," said the "governor," in conclusion, (somewhat inconsequently it must be confessed), "it is always right to drink WHISKEY after eating eels,"—and he suited the action to the word.

The next day's fishing was fairly good with the fly, but there were no "fush" taken, and the trout for the most part were small. The sky was cloudless too, and the good water left the river in a shorter time than I could have thought possible. The "coached," after a few hours' fruitless flogging once more gave it up, remarking that he'd been "as patient as Willy Wood's horse, 'ut died one day in a fit o' patience, waitin' for fodder."

I may mention here that our three anglers made the acquaintance, on the waterside, of a semi-professional fisherman of the neighbourhood. He ties good flies, though not on the best gut in the world, and is an amusing and original character. If any members of the association should go to Chirnside, they would do well to hunt up George Hey. He is both able and willing to give every information about the river, and *he kills fish.* There were one or two seemingly strange peculiarities about his method of fishing, which may, perhaps, be not altogether uninteresting. He uses a long trace, covered from end to end with flies, large and small alternately, at intervals of about a foot. In bright

weather he makes a long cast, straight across the stream, holds his rod perfectly still, pointed in almost a horizontal position at the opposite bank, and allows his miscellaneous swarm to drift downwards till they can get no further. Then comes another cast a yard or two lower. His notion is that the fish don't care to get too near the sunshine. In spite of his eccentric methods of fishing, however, one seldom found George with an empty creel. At the inn, in an evening, with his glass of whiskey before him, he was very great in fishing yarns. He could talk, and talk in a very amusing way too, for hours together. "He'd sit a fire out any time."

For the remainder of that week small baskets all round were the order of the day. The best were got by fishing the Stewart tackle up stream. Two Edinburgh men did fairly well in this way, and the fly did some execution at night.

On the Saturday the "governor," "coach" and "coached" travelled together to Berwick and there separated, the one homeward bound, the other two on their way to Castle Ford, on the Till. Here they stayed three weeks, and though the weather was bright, the water low, and the fishing in consequence none of the best, those three weeks yielded almost an unlimited amount of pleasure. To say much about it, however, would extend this paper to too great a length. Still I cannot pass them over without at least saying something.

Ford itself is a model village, kept in perfect order, and scrupulously clean, under the immediate inspection of Louisa, Marchioness of Waterford, who lives at the

Castle, and is the principal landowner of the neighbourhood. Fortunately, her ladyship was at home, and kindly gave your two adventurers leave to fish seven miles of water during their stay at Ford. Salmon fishing, alas, was out of the question the whole time, and this was a sore disappointment to the "coach," who was anxious to avail himself of what might have been a golden opportunity. The fates, however, were unpropitious, and—well, luckily, there was no lack of amusement.

No one could pass many days in a place like Ford without being strongly interested in stories of Border warfare. Close at hand is Flodden Field, where fell, almost to a man, the flower of Scottish chivalry, fighting round their king. It was at Ford Castle that James slept the night before he was slain. Close at hand, too, are the Keeps of Norham and Etal and half a score of others, for the most part, I believe, in ruins. But I must not detain you with scraps of history and references to Marmion. I must refrain from enlarging on the hospitable character of the people, the rubbers of whist, and the very charming feminine society of the place—(one heart at least was nearly broken).

The squire of Etal sent, with fishing cards, invitations to dinner, and gave his guests an opportunity of discussing a Till salmon. It was on his water that the "coach" managed to get a few baskets of decent trout.

For the most part the river is deep and slow, kept up by weirs, and holding pike and perch in abundance, but in the Etal water there are fine streams, flowing over

rock and gravel, and if it had not been at a considerable distance from head quarters, this fishing ground would have been oftener visited. The deeper parts of the river were tried with a Devon minnow, and some good perch were taken. The "coached," one evening, thought he would like to try the deadly worm in a pool in the Park. He went off by himself, and, not taking a fish under six ounces, filled a large creel with perch—many of them between a pound and a pound and a half. There was no lack of fish for breakfast after this discovery!

There is a curious sight to be seen any evening at a place called the Forge Pool, about a mile and a half from Ford. Stretching across the river there is a cauld or weir, and at the side a flour mill, driven by two large water-wheels. These wheels are at the upper end of stone tunnels, about fifteen or twenty yards long. When the mill is working there is a fierce rush of water here, and as there is no cover against it inside the tunnels, I should have thought it impossible for a fish to hold his own even for a few minutes. At six o'clock, however, the water-bailiff comes down; the mill is suddenly stopped; the water is instantly cut off from the tunnels; and then you see fish—salmon, sea-trout, herling, yellow trout—of all sizes, suddenly left high and dry, kicking their way down the boards. The presence of the bailiff is, of course, necessary to keep off the marauding hands of men and boys, and unless he requires some fish for the Castle, he just throws them into the stream above the cauld, and away they go, wondering, perhaps, what curious thing has happened to them. Occasionally a

salmon gets his head broken by one of the mill wheels, and goes tumbling helpless down the stream. Then he is considered fair game for the urchins of the neighbourhood, and many a fine fish they get in this way.

Just below the mill is one of the best salmon casts on the river. There is another excellent one on Mr. Scargill's water below Etal Cauld. I would strongly advise any angler who goes to the Till to take pike tackle with him, if he cares for that sort of fishing. There would be no lack of sport, I am sure.

The three weeks at Ford glided away all too quickly. The time came to bid farewell to all the pleasant people, and all the pleasant places, and all the pleasant things. The garden—a glorious garden—of fruits and flowers, and kitchen-stuff, such as no greengrocer *could* supply, even if he would, is remembered with tenderness even now. There was one special bed of artichokes, the like of which was surely never seen or tasted. There were poultry, and a cow or two. There was a young mare that could go fast and jump; there was a dog-cart and a pony, and last, though not least, there was a handsome Newfoundland, that thoroughly enjoyed the rabbit-hunting part of a mushrooming expedition. In one word there was all that gives country life its charm to townsfolk.

The two last days of the Ford visit were a Sunday and Monday, on that Sunday, *at last*,—oh! that it had been one little week sooner—the rain descended and the floods came, and with them the salmon. On that Monday morning they were going over the Cauld at the

forge pool in scores—nay hundreds. Sea trout might have been caught there easily, at the sides, with a landing net. The "coached" and a young Etonian, a nephew of Lady Waterford, tried the worm for some time, but unsuccessfully; and by the time luncheon had been discussed the dog-cart came round, and a new departure was made. Coldstream and Berwick received each another flying visit, and Monday evening found the two friends once more comfortably ensconced in their old quarters at Chirnside.

The week's sport may be described in a few words. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday were all days to be marked with a white stone in an angler's diary. The largest basket of the three, to one rod, was thirty brace—the smallest twenty-five, all trout, all taken on the fly. No fish was basketed under quarter of a pound—(that is to say as near as might be guessed at the water side). In the course of the three days, twelve brace of fish, the largest no doubt, were weighed. Seventeen pounds and some ounces was the result, giving an average of nearly three quarters of a pound. The largest fish taken was an ounce under a pound and a half. The flies that were found to be the best killers were the landrail, the black spider, the Pennell brown, and blue dun during the day, and at night the coachman and sand fly. And here at last you are formally introduced to the "coachman." You all know him well though, no doubt. A better night fly, in my opinion, cannot be tied.

On the evening of the third day at Chirnside, the baskets were but light. The "coached" indeed had

given up fishing altogether, and was in search of more attractive game. Just, however, at the edge of twilight the rise came on. For about a hundred yards below where the "coach" was fishing, there was a run of uniform depth, eighteen inches to two feet, over gravel, with a pool at each end. The cast at the time consisted of a coachman, sand fly, and black spider. Coiled round the "coach's" hat there was a second coachman, white moth, and sand fly, the whole cast being several sizes stronger than the other, and the flies a shade larger. All at once the fun began, and soon became fast and furious. There was scarcely an offer without an answering rise. A large number of fish were returned to the water that might well have been basketed, but there was really no room for them! Between them the two casts were enough. Just the hundred yards of stream was the only part of the river in which a line was wet that night, and at last the darkness became so intense that the angler had really serious difficulty in finding the road, and his way home. George Hey was fishing the same water at the same time from the other bank, and he too killed as many fish as he could carry.

There is a perversity in trout, as most anglers have found out for themselves. The rest of that week, just when baskets were most wanted for the homeward journey, scarcely a fish was to be had. Up or down, wet or dry, no matter how the fly was put over them, they wouldn't have it.

The Chirnside budget is now almost exhausted. Two scraps of an incidental character may perhaps be added.

The first is about a pair of waders. "Coach" and "coached" were one day wandering somewhat aimlessly by the river side, when they heard shouts of feminine laughter. Turning a corner of the stream brought the merry-makers in full view. They were three girls—grown up it is true—but still girls. They were all of them wading, their object evidently being to ford the river, with a view to mushrooms on the opposite bank. One, more adventurous than the rest, was in mid stream, in water of considerable depth. Her shoes and stockings had been left behind on the bank, and she was navigating her comely bulk across the river, and managing her dress as best she could. On seeing two fisher forms approach the scene she, shrieking, stood transfixed. Her friends beat a hasty retreat to the edge of the stream and sat down there, in fits of laughter. The impulse of the "coach" was to retire discreetly and quictly. The "coached" however jumped to the unreasoning conclusion that before him there was a damsel in distress, and he started forward at a run. The shrieks were redoubled. The "coached" increased his pace, reached the fateful spot, in a bran-new pair of trousers plunged gallantly in, and made his way to the shrinking fair one. To seize her hand, whisper a few words of encouragement, and lead her gently to the shore was the work of a very few moments. That pair of waders should have been seen to be properly appreciated—the one face covered with crimson, the other showing a proud consciousnes that

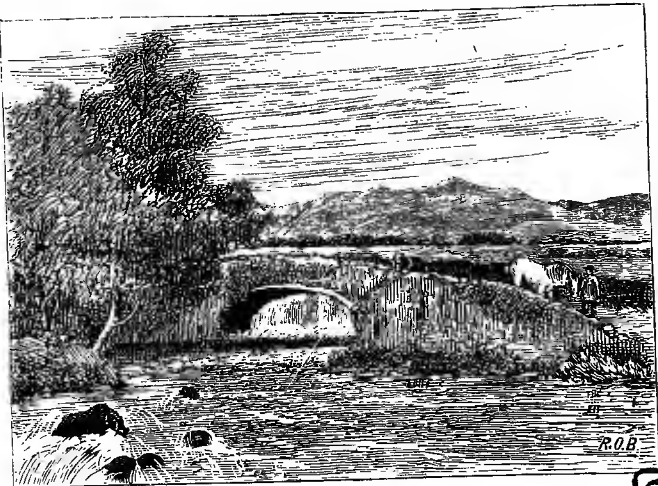
> Something attempted, something done,
> Had earned a night's repose.

Presently the water nymphs were lost sight of, but one of them began to sing, and she sang in such sort as one seldom hears. To one of the two fishers, at least, there occurred with some feeling of their meaning those lines of Wordsworth:—

> I listened till I had my fill,
> And as I mounted up the hill,
> The music in my heart I bore,
> Long after it was heard no more.

The other little incident I referred to may perhaps serve to point a moral, if not to adorn a tale. Domesticated in the hotel were some three or four fish-loving cats, arrant thieves, but most guileless and innocent of look. It happened however that one of them was caught red-toothed and -clawed, in the very act of spoliation. A sudden dive was made at her with a long handled landing net, and the marauder careered wildly round the room only to find both doors shut against her. Outside the window there was a stand of valuable flowers, intended for a village show the following week, and unluckily the window was open. To hesitate, thought the wily one, was to be lost. There was no time to look before she leaped, so she made a mighty spring into space and disappeared. Her pursuers rushed forward expecting to see a mangled heap of blood-stained fur quivering on the stones below, in all the agonies of death; but instead they saw a broken fuchsia, and disappearing round a corner, the tail of the fish-filcher, at such speed as she well might have made if there had been exploding behind her a whole magazine of fireworks. That identical beast was to be seen half an

hour later calmly washing her face in front of the kitchen fire as sound as a bell, without a scratch in fact, except for one curious pair of hands that tried to examine her too closely. Ere they could stroke they were suddenly stricken, and grimalkin was avenged. "Let sleeping dogs lie," exclaimed a mocking voice from the corner. The moral is pointed: the tale is told. Your two anglers made a successful southerly flitting, and with them, curled up in a creel, they brought home a little bundle of Scotch wool, as a memento of their northern holiday. This bundle of wool covered an animal that was so very small that he nearly got drowned at Carlisle by tumbling head over heels into a saucer of milk. He has since developed into a handsome colley. He is well over the distemper, and hopes before long to see once more his native Berwickshire.



"SUCH BROOKS ARE WELCOME TO ME."—MERRY WIVES, II., 2.

Cornell University Library

ONE WAY TO THE TWEED.

BY ABEL HEYWOOD, JUNR.

IF one could only get into the North train at Victoria Station at 1-15 a.m., and sleep for six hours, how delicious would be the waking! To be, a little after midnight, in endless, monotonous, wearisome streets, and at breakfast time to find one's self, after an unconscious journey, at Moffat, one of the sweetest little towns in Her Majesty's dominions. One often journeys in this way, barring the sleep; and though six hours in a stiff-backed railway carriage—rolling, tossing, and writhing in ineffectual effort to find repose, are not conducive to anything but bad temper at the time, and dull stupidity next day, a few mouthfuls of the pure Moffat air will make you forget your fretful and restless night, and drooping eyes will never remind you, even as night comes on again, that you have been forty hours without rest. I have many times travelled to Scotland by night, and don't think I ever slept an hour on the way, or even discovered the fact of my loss of sleep.

To attempt to describe your sensations as you emerge from the station and climb on to the 'bus, must result in miserable failure. One could only write

maudlin rubbish which no one *ought* to write, and no one *would* read. It is a good long time since I was at school, but as far as I remember, the feeling I have been speaking of is nearest to that of a schoolboy home for his holidays, who has just caught sight of the dear old walls that shelter mother and sisters. I am afraid that the dear old *hills* would, under circumstances such as I am writing about, appear to me dearer than the schoolboy's home, or than kith and kin. Were I not past skipping and jumping, I should dance, but it is only my heart now that can indulge in such antics, and may *it* never fail in its joyful performances in the presence of spring-tide and the loved mountain scenery.

As the 'bus rolls on its way, how delightful is every remembered object that comes in view—the square black inn with its pillared porch, under which you have more than once sat in the warm summer days—the old square Scottish tower, and the Roman way that runs by it, but no trace of which you have ever been able to find—every rise and fall of the road—every tree—every changeful outline of the hills—all there as they were, just as if *you* had not been away for ever so many years. Now you cross the straight little river, and see the blue smoke of your own town wreathing at the foot of the dark wooded hill beyond; now you enter the street, pass the "Black Bull," are under the shade of the great elm trees that front the old church, then you turn sharp round into the market place, around which the town is gathered; the 'bus stops, you are immediately in the hospitable embrace of the Buccleugh Arms (this is not

meant for a pun*), and after a souse in the bedroom, come down to breakfast "as fresh as paint," and your holiday has begun.

What a charm there is in re-visiting a spot you have come to know and love. How minute do you find your memory to be, as you gaze out of window and recognise, almost with smile and nod as though they were old acquaintances, the bricks and mortar which in the main seem to be exactly as you left them. How ready is your eye to note the town "improvements"—disfigurements as they seem to you—for how could the old place be better than as you first knew it, when it consisted of little more than the one great street or square of whitewashed houses, and one or two off-streets, where the few detached lodging houses were located? A clean, simple, delightful little town was Moffat twenty years ago—the place Edwin Waugh might have had in his mind when he wrote:

> It's what care I for cities grand,—
> We never shall agree;
> I'd rayther live where th' layrock sings,
> A country teawn for me!
> A country teawn, where one can meet
> Wi' friends, an neighbours known;
> Where one can lounge i'th' market-place,
> An' see the meadows mown.

The extensions and improvements have no charm for you. But it cannot be helped; the march of events will not spare even Moffat; and with this trace of sadness in your joy, you sit down to breakfast.

As you have a good day's work before you, you lose

* Then it ought to have been.—*Ed.*

no unnecessary time over the meal, but cross the square, and take the best trodden road out of the town—the road to the well. Moffat is famed for its well. People come from all parts of the country to drink the waters; and as it is the custom of the votaries to walk, if they are able, the mile and a half up the hill to the moors, and after drinking, to walk back again, and all this before breakfast, we may be very sure that many people find their feeble stomachs and stiffening joints vastly improved by Moffat well. It is a good broad macadamised road all the way, and when you come to the bridge crossing a little stream, you are not far from it. This streamlet joins the Well Burn, by the side of which we have walked a good part of the way, and runs at the bottom of a pretty little dell, which an iron palisade, now substituted for the former stone parapet of the bridge, gives you an excellent opportunity of seeing. There it runs, in deep shadow, some thirty feet or so below you, between banks richly clad in fern and foxglove, with boughs hanging lovingly over. I have caught one or two trout, a good deal larger than the place would lead you to expect, in that rindle; but I fancy few people would waste their time in fishing it now; or perhaps, the place is unchanged, and it is I who have altered, and grown older and less hopeful than I was.

Very soon after passing the Well, the road terminates, not abruptly like a railway line which ends in a pair of buffers, but gradually tapering off into a rough cart-track, and seeming to commit suicide by running into

the burn. We have no path to follow now; we are really and truly in the wilderness; not a trace of a human habitation, or of man's work is in sight; we are closed in by the mighty hills on every side; our only companions the sheep on the steeps, the grouse, the curlews, and the "wailing" plovers.

The first part of what we have set ourselves to do we can now see before us, and it is evident that the sooner we begin our climb the easier it will be; so leaving the stream on our right, we commence the ascent of the hill which buttresses the higher one at the head of our valley, plodding steadily on, through withered bracken, heather, and occasional furze, until these cease, and a short grass only remains. Now we come to a patch of green spongy turf, in the midst of which a spring gushes up, and after slaking our thirst, urge upwards again, and after a struggle, during which now Peter, now Squills the Doctor, now Crabstick, begs his companions to turn round and admire the prospect, we reach the summit.

All the world is now beneath us; we are higher than most of the hills. From our side their rounded forms slope gradually downwards, reminding us of our juvenile impressions of an elephant's back. On the other side they are steeper, more craggy, and deeper in colour. Away in the west are the high hills at whose feet Moffat Water flows, and far beyond, almost lost in the haze, the Solway is gleaming in the sun.

A glance at the map shows us that we have but a short way to go before we come in sight of another

valley which we shall have to skirt for some distance; and steering by compass, we thread our way at the bottom of deep trenches in the peat, which seems to crown the tops of all the hills. Our new valley is that of the Blackshope, a stream of that name running along it. Coming in sight of this valley suddenly as we do, the prospect strikes us dumb with awe and amazement. We are on the verge of a precipice so steep that the first inclination is to stand back, lest one's head should reel. To our right the high bare rocks are, if possible, bolder than where we stand; to the left rises Hart Fell's summit, in a smooth grassy mound scarped suddenly on the Blackshope side. The mountains opposite, on the other side of the hollow, are bleak and rugged, without a tree, and almost destitute of verdure. There seems, from where we stand, to be no outlet for the stream, the rocks apparently closing in the valley, and we have a huge black basin three miles long, two wide, and 1500 feet deep. A wilder and more fearful place even Doré never imagined.

The spot we stand upon, part of Swatte Fell, is 2388 feet high; to the right the rocks are within a few feet of the same height; to the left, closing the valley, are Hart Fell, 2651, and Hartfell Rigg, 2422; turning round on the other side is Raven Crag, 2246; then right opposite Priest Crag, 2215; and Saddle Yoke, 2412 feet.

I do not know how often I have clambered up to see this place,—I think about fifteen times, and if I am ever near enough to Moffat again, and have strength to do it, I shall see it once more. It is perhaps not singular to

say, for it always is so, that probably not a dozen people in Moffat have taken the trouble to see this Blackshope hollow, and very few visitors either see or hear of it.

The stream at the foot of these mighty hills is a famous one for trout of small size, but as we are on our way to the Tweed, we will not venture to waste the couple of hours or so that it would take to get down to the water and climb back again.

As we ascend the last slope of Hart Fell, we encounter a strong and piercingly cold east wind which seems to have gathered in the basin beneath, and to be forced on its bitter way by pressure from below. With hands numbed and half frozen, we have to hold our hats as we go, and more than once lie down on the slope to recover the breath that has been blown out of our bodies. Flying from this, and seeking the lee of the hill, we come in full view of another valley, draining into the Evan, which from where we stand, seems most surely to run up hill. Then we go down to Raven Crags and Rotten Bottom, and in doing this get a sight across still another valley (that of the Fruid), and of a little lake we wish to pass. The Fruid flows into the Tweed, and is the first tributary of any size : the lake is Gameshope Loch, to reach which we have to descend a short distance, or make a long detour. Before we commence this, let us take another look at the hill tops we are in the midst of.

We are now at the head of the Blackshope valley, and looking down it, have Saddle Yoke on our left, the sharp ridge of which we plainly see. This is said to be

narrow enough for a man to straddle across, and each side is so steep that a stone may be rolled down for half a mile. The next valley parallel to Blackshope is Carrifran, narrower than the former, but scarcely less rugged. Beyond it we see Green Coomb, the highest peak in the district, and were we to go in that direction, after passing it we should come upon the wildest of all wild lochs—Loch Skeene. Well might this district be chosen by the persecuted Covenanters as an unassailable refuge! Well might Claverhouse, who set his horse to mount one of these steeps in a chase after a hare, gain the reputation of having come, horse and all, from the infernal regions!

But we are not going to Loch Skeene. Let us then turn our steps towards Gameshope. Soon we find ourselves going splash, splash, at every step. It is almost a bog all the way to the loch, and quite a bog when we get there. The loch is very small, scarcely more than a pond. Its waters are as black as the Styx, and the side of the lake is so boggy that it is unsafe to walk round it, and except at the narrow end, where the bottom is stony, very unsafe to wade. There are any quantity of trout, as black as the water they inhabit, and in the summer they are said to be always ready. The small stream which issues from the loch gathers size very quickly, and we follow its course till it falls into the Tweed.

We are now at the head of another valley, deep and dark, with great bold hills towering up on each side. The stream is a famous one for burn trout, still of dark colour, and occasionally quite black. The fall of the

burn is very rapid, and the holes, for a wormer, leave nothing to be desired. After following this stream for a mile or two, we come in sight of a house; and the dogs are already barking and rushing towards us. The shepherd has not met strange faces here for many a day, and is glad to see us; while his wife, in answer to our hungry application, readily supplies us with bannocks, butter and milk. Neither the food nor the rest are by any means unpleasant, and we are in no great hurry to leave the gude wife and her house full of bairns.

Peter declares, when we set off again, that the milk has upset him, but seeing that he has swallowed at least two quarts, we cannot see how that *can* be. Crabstick and the Doctor know all about it; they have observed poor Peter's distress, know how completely he is knocked up, and that, proud of his endurance, he is anxious to take refuge in the innocent milk-bowl. "It's no use, Peter, you'll have to come on;" and come on he does, never even going to look at Talla Lynnfoot, the beautiful fall not more than a hundred yards from the back of the cottage. "We can see it well enough from here," says Peter; and to tell the truth, so said the others, for had they not seen it before? were their legs not weary, their feet sore, and their boots sopping wet?

From the Lynn, the way is broad, grassy, and level, and often running by the side of the stream, now widened into a little river called the Talla. This is the largest of the Tweed's tributaries for a good many miles, and an excellent trout stream at all times. The track, after four or five miles, crosses a stone bridge, and here be sure our

travellers lean over the parapet, and peer into the depths of the pool. We are at the Tweed now, and have gained our object; we have found *one* way, and that a glorious and magnificent one.

But if we have reached the river, we are not yet at our resting place. There is a little village here—Bield, with a red kirk in it, and I almost think it is the model village in which there is no public-house, it is so quiet and sweet-looking. The church is in the shadow of a tall dark hill—nestling in its lap. It is one of those out-of-the-way little places where you may be sure the hunted Covenanters brought their dead to be buried. If you would find the stones that it was the devoted task of "Old Mortality" to tend, it is in such places as this, away from the bustle of the world, that you must seek them. Here, still fondly preserved, is the grave of John Hunter, with a headstone bearing inscriptions which Mr. Dick, the minister, in answer to my application, was kind enough to copy for me.

Here lyes JOHN HUNTER Martyr who was cruelly murdered at Corrhead by Col. James Douglas and his party for his adherance to the word of God and Scotland's covenanted work of Reformation, 1685.

Erected in the Year 1726.

When Zion's King was robbed of his right,
His witnesses in Scotland put to flight
When Popish Prelates and Indulgencie
Combin'd 'gainst Christ to ruine Presbyterie
All who would not unto their idol bow
They socht them out and whom they found they slew
For owning of Christ's cause I then did die
My blood for vengeance on His en'mies did cry.

Our road is now a firm macadam, and half-an-hour's walk brings us to our resting place—the Crook Inn.

The house stands apart from all other dwellings, almost the solitary occupant of the vale. This is the place for "sweet retirement,"—no railways, no telegraphs, hardly a postman,—800 feet above the sea, stern, rugged, wild,—the purest of all fresh breezes blowing over the hills,—a comfortable house,—simple fare,—a bath fed direct from the mountain stream,—and last of all, the dainty waters of the Tweed running at the foot of the meadow, free to your rod either up or down, as far as you wish to fish it.

The trout are not generally large, but there is a fair sprinkling of half-pounders in your basket at night, and one or two larger, culminating in one of a pound; but monsters of three or four pounds are caught occasionally by those who know how to do it, and where to find them.

Right opposite the door of the inn, a couple of hundred yards away, there is a series of delightful pools, which to this day are known by certain Manchester anglers as the Doctor's pools. A heathen Chinee is this Doctor, "childlike and bland." During the tramp over Hart Fell he imparted to the innocent Peter his ignorance of matters piscatorial, and begged the latter to take him in hand and instruct him in the gentle art. Who so ready to help as Peter? On the morrow he inducted Squills, before Crabstick knew what he was about, to these lovely pools, and leaving him there for a few minutes, returned for his own rod. When he rejoined the innocent one, the Doctor meekly remarked that he had taken three trout, one of them half-a-pound weight. Then poor Peter knew himself sold. "I don't know

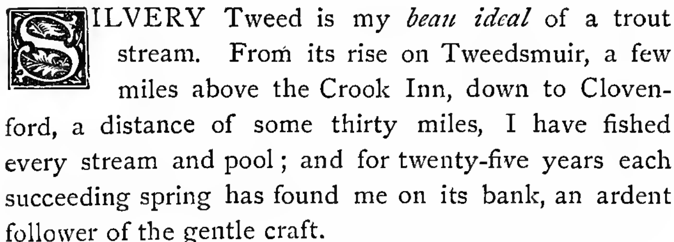
what to make of Squills," he remarked to Crabstick on joining him; "he said he wanted me to show him how to fish, and before I could say Jack Robinson, he had three trout in his creel." "Something wrong, Peter, that's clear;" and wrong it was, for Squills had got possession of the best and handiest pools in the river, and would not stir. Every morning, when the arrangements for the day were talked over,—"I don't care to go away," he said; "I'll leave it to you two to find out the best places;" and the guileless pair fell into the trap, only discovering, I do not know how long after, how they had been gulled. To be sure they tried to tempt Squills up the stream, and down the stream, but he was soon home again, loitering about his pools till he got possession, and then he stopped there. Crabstick would go down and fish up, Peter up and fish down, in the hope of getting a cast over the Doctor's preserve, but Squills was always there when they arrived, always ready with a bland smile to give them good speed up or down, but *not* to vacate.

On one of the first days Squills vowed he raised a monster, certainly a four pounder. There was no mistake about it—the fish just gave one roll, revealing himself in the sun for a moment, took away the whole cast, the rod flew up, and the trout was seen no more. "I'm determined to have that fellow," Squills said; and for him he made it out he loitered about his pools from day to day, getting the while as many fish as his deluded companions, who whipped miles of water, up and down.

Unhappily, this excursion ended: they all do. The three friends found sport, health and pleasure at The Crook. The return was made by the high road, a route which is only less beautiful than the one already spoken of. It skirts another huge hollow in the hills, known as "The devil's beef-tub," a description of which may be found in Sir Walter Scott's *Red Gauntlet*, the only one of the Waverley Novels in which the singularly grand scenery at the head af the Tweed is described.

TWEEDSIDE, WITH A FEW PRACTICAL HINTS.

BY JOHN O. MACKENZIE.



SILVERY Tweed is my *beau ideal* of a trout stream. From its rise on Tweedsmuir, a few miles above the Crook Inn, down to Clovenford, a distance of some thirty miles, I have fished every stream and pool; and for twenty-five years each succeeding spring has found me on its bank, an ardent follower of the gentle craft.

And here let me premise that, what modicum of skill I possess, and what measure of success I have enjoyed, I put down to having read, when it was first published, that fly-fisher's book of books, *Stewart's Practical Angler.* It is to me a keen source of regret that, in all my wanderings, I never had the good fortune to meet Mr. Stewart, shake his hand, and express to him my appreciation of his volume. Before seeing this now famous work, I was, as times went, a fairly successful angler. I rejoiced in a fourteen-foot rod, weighing two pounds or more, fished invariably down-stream, and hugged the delusion that the weight of the catch would be proportional to the number of flies used. Stewart changed all this. I invested in an eight-ounce nine-foot

rod—a "whip-shank" the natives termed it—and fished across and up-stream, using two flies only. The result was a revelation. No longer was I bothered by parr, those pests of a down-stream fisher. To make up my basket I had to cover only a tithe of the ground; and, if I caught fewer, I had very much larger trout, and these more securely hooked. To my mind the advantages of up-stream fishing, in small or moderate-sized water, are so marked and self-evident, that I often wonder at the matter being argued at all, except from the trouts' point of view. In their interest, say I, let down-stream fishing continue!

The trout, for some miles above and below the Crook Inn, are numerous, but, as a rule, do not run large. I had the satisfaction of capturing with fly, one June afternoon, many years ago, the largest trout of which there was then any record in the district. He scaled three pounds and three-quarters. He led me a pretty dance down stream, and eventually lodged under a huge boulder lying in the very centre of a deepish run. There he kept boring away, evidently trying the effect of friction on my trace. At length I got a sight of his great tail, and managed to insinuate my net under him from behind. It was a close shave, as, when I had him on the bank, my cast, for three feet or more, looked as if hung with cotton fluff. In a cottage nigh the inn dwelt a patriarch of fourscore, by name William Tweedie, who had fished Tweed all his life. In the evening he came to inspect this trout, and on hearing where I hooked him, and of the big boulder, exclaimed, "Ah! I ken him weel—a greedy

beggar—he broke my rod last March." My capture, I may add, being deemed too big to broil, was next day served up at dinner *boiled*. I cannot recommend boiled trout!

For those fond of burn-fishing there are no better quarters than The Crook. The accommodation is excellent; and Stanhope, Polmood, Hairstanes, Tala, Fruid, and Gameshope burns are all within walking compass, and all contain numerous small trout. On one occasion I devoted a day in early June to Stanhope burn, and fished it from its junction with the Tweed right up to its source in the hills. I was alone, and used one fly—black spider with orange body. I waded up the bed of the stream, thus keeping out of sight, and fished before me every foot of water. Eight o'clock found me with a twentyfour-pound creel cram full of trout, coat pockets in the same condition, and seven miles of rough walking between me and mine inn. That tramp homewards, weighted as I was, I shall not soon forget. I got in about eleven, too much done up even to drink! My catch was counted next morning, and I had seventeen dozen and nine fair sized burn trout. This is the largest take, in point of numbers, I have ever made. In Gameshope I have frequently got trout up to a pound and a half. It is a grand burn, for two miles cascading into deep inky pools. It must be fished up.

For the last twelve years I have angled mostly in the lower waters, making Peebles my headquarters. My favorite bit lies close to Thornilee Station, twelve miles below Peebles. The trains suit admirably. You are on

the river by nine, and can work away till after seven in the evening, when a half-hour's run brings you home fish-laden—or otherwise—to an eight o'clock dinner. The stream about Thornilee is simply perfect, and contains any number of big trout; but, from being so much fished, they are about the most highly educated of their kind in all Scotland. Each year I find it more difficult to outwit them. A rise of trout—or "loup," as the natives term it—when a hatch of March browns comes on, say on a sunny day in early April, is a sight, once seen, never to be forgotten. The whole stream is alive with big yellow fellows breaking the surface in every yard of water; and it is brought home to you with power that the trout are there, even if, alas, you cannot catch them.

The river at Thornilee has acquired a fair volume. Still, by wading, it can easily be commanded with a nine-foot rod; and there is a whole day's fishing to be had in one or two streams. My favorite plan is to get possession of a long one, and beginning low down at the shallow end, gradually work up, yard by yard, till I arrive at what is there termed the "throat." This, perhaps, takes half-an-hour. Then, keeping well back from the bank, I return to my starting point and smoke a pipe, all the while carefully marking any feeding trout. The pipe over, I begin *de novo*. It is surprising how little the water is disturbed by careful up-stream fishing, and I much prefer sticking to a short stretch, to covering three or four miles.

I have had many good days on the water, and not a

few bad ones. All anglers must, I think, believe in luck; how sometimes everything goes across :—your knots slip; your hooks break; your biggest fish breaks *you*; your matches get wet; your waders spring a leak; you miss your home train. I have had *my* share of mishaps, and can truly say that the quarter of an hour after you have just lost a two- or three-pounder is a very bad quarter of an hour indeed.

One May-day, three seasons ago, I was fishing in the stream below the island at Thornilee. I had just succeeded in grassing a noble two-pounder—which, by the way, I had put the fly over at least fifty times. Fully quarter of an hour did I devote to that fish, he feeding all the while; but my turn came at last. I was enjoying a pipe afterwards on the bank, when opposite, in shallowish water, I saw a tremendous fellow start feeding. Crouching down, I entered the stream about twenty yards below the fish, and coming on quietly, covered him. Up he came, and I had him fast. He made a rush like a grilse. For twenty minutes I played that fish, and as the banks were high, I had to net him in the river. This I did, and raised him up triumphant—(there were bright eyes observant on the bank). "Oh! what a trout!" I heard; and then, to my dismay, a yellow mass fell from the net with mighty splash into the river. To let go was the work of a second, but it was too late; my dropper had caught; the tail fly came home with a bit of skin attached, and I was left lamenting. On examination I found the net was rotten. It had been put away damp some time or other, and the weight of the fish—he

was four pounds if he was an ounce—simply crashed through. The condolences of my fair friends, kindly meant as they were, made me appreciate Job's feelings towards *his* comforters. That day I could fish no more, and evening found me with a new silk net, which, I need scarcely say, has been carefully dry-nursed ever since.

Apropos of landing nets, I am reminded that on my first appearance at Peebles this adjunct to an angler's equipment was almost unknown. That season the river was exceptionally low and clear, and the natives, down-stream fishers all, had given up fly-fishing as useless. My baskets—and I had some good ones—roused grave suspicion, and my new-fangled net was regarded with jealous eyes. One day I observed a man following my movements, and, pipe in mouth, carefully watching me from the opposite bank. I found out afterwards this was Howden, a gamekeeper, the crack fisherman of the district; and I also heard his verdict: "He fishes fair enuch; the net's a grand staff in wading, and saves a hantle o' time." I need scarcely add that on my next visit to Peebles I found Howden himself the possessor of a landing net; and now they are in almost universal use.

The heaviest yellow trout I have caught in Tweed scaled four and a half pounds. For many years my baskets at Thornilee averaged from ten to eighteen pounds a day, and they usually contained half a dozen fish over a pound. Once I had six which together scaled ten pounds; and this with fly, in open water, shows at least that the sport *was* good. For the last three seasons the fishing has been but poor—why I

cannot tell. The trout are there, but they must be getting *too* knowing. My best basket last May was fourteen pounds caught between two o'clock and four, after a blank forenoon.

A good deal has been uttered from time to time as to the *patience* required to make a good angler. How often you hear it said, with perhaps a tinge of contempt, "Oh, I have not the patience to become a fisherman." Well, I candidly admit I have not, and never had, the *patience* to go on flogging persistently when the fish are not feeding. I simply knock off, smoke a pipe, and wait for the rise. Of course that is patience in a sense, but not in the sense in which the word is usually applied to the brotherhood of anglers. And here let me note a curious sympathy between your 'bacca pouch and basket. Bring the one home plenished, the other surely is not empty; but a toom pouch betokens too often a light creel.

And now as to

A FEW PRACTICAL HINTS.

I feel first of all that an apology is due for this heading, because I see around me many of more years and greater experience than myself. In excuse I can only urge, that from early boyhood, every spare day I have had within reach of a trout stream has found me *there*, and, if anything I have observed, or any hints I can give, will prove of service to our younger members, I shall be satisfied. To begin with

DRESS.—And here let me say that all my remarks apply to angling in low, clear water. When the river is

flooded or colored you may do pretty much as you please. Well, I would as soon think of attending a funeral in a yellow waistcoat as go fly-fishing in a black coat. The secret of success lies in making yourself as unconspicuous as possible, and my favorite color is a light stone drab, with hat to match. This shade assimilates with rocks, stones, and grey backing of clouds. I have often noticed how the trout keep feeding away a few yards from my nose, whereas if a chance parson, clad in conventional but somewhat hearse-like garb, comes up the stream, off they scutter on the first approach of the harmless man! My invisible brown, however, has one objection, as I have found to my cost. If you have arranged with "the missus," that she is to come down by the noon train, and bring a supply of creature comforts in a luncheon basket, you've got to look out for *her*, and "holler;" it's no use her looking for *you*.

THE ROD.—I object to a black or shiny one, and prefer the natural color of the wood, not too highly varnished. The lighter and the stiffer it is the better. Limber rods, for up-stream fishing, are an abomination—a fallacy—a delusion—a snare.

THE REEL.—Lightness and free action are desirable. If your reel is stiff the first rush of a big trout is certain to break you. I always have the drum of my reel filled up, as thus the line pays out faster.

THE CASTING-LINE.—Make your own. First take two or three strands of salmon gut, then three strands of strong trout gut, and let the remainder, tapering to the end, be the finest you can procure for love or money. A

trace so made has these advantages. It goes out straight, even against a strong breeze; and, if you have the misfortune to be hung up in a tree, foul a stone, or get broken by a big fish, you lose but a strand or two. My present trace has been in use four years, the three or four end strands of fine gut being every now and then renewed. For a nine-foot rod I use, on Tweed, a trace of about eleven feet, but for small streams, and one fly, the length of your rod is ample.

THE FLIES.—I generally use spiders for choice, and look more to the fineness of the gut on which they are tied than to the actual workmanship shewn in the fly. Bushy, heavily-dressed flies are objectionable. In fact, trout are like humans, most easily fetched by the elegant and slim. Don't bother with too many. I never fish with more than three. In the Tweed I use two, and in small streams only one. When you have hooked a big fellow, it is a comfort to know that no dropper can foul a snag and bring you to grief; and as to your having a double or treble chance through offering two or three different flies, observation should enable you, ere you have fished half an hour, to have your *one* fly the right one. I am no advocate for a hundred and one different kinds. On the Tweed I have found four to five varieties answer very well, and, in fact, kill anywhere wherever I have fished for trout. In early spring the March-brown is the thing, and later on, up to June, I use the partridge, plover, dotterel, and starling, all dressed spider fashion. As the days lengthen, and the river gets low, I use the same flies, only of a smaller size.

A HINT.—The flask should be a big one always—the bigger the better. And if on river side you meet a brother angler, no matter how threadbare his coat, if he has an honest face, out with it and unscrew. Many is the wrinkle I have got over a social "nip."—"Ye just bide here, Mr. M. Ye couldna be in better watter, and the 'loup's' sure to come on about twa o'clock. Gude day and many thanks to ye; that's grand whiskey," and the old boy, who possibly had intended to sit me out and use that particular stream for his own diversion, goes on his way rejoicing. And here let me offer a word of caution. Hotel water is often indifferent; fill your flask with the pure spirit, and trust to chance for the diluting element!

ANOTHER HINT.—Always bear in mind that trout are the keenest eyed of fishes; and if you have a companion doing his level best some quarter of a mile below, and your matches give out, or you wish to apprise him of the mighty one you have just lost, do not bear down on him, pacing along the high bank, but, trending backwards, make a strategic movement to the rear, and warily approach him from below. Otherwise you deserve thanks from the trout, but none from your friend. How often have I had a stream spoiled in this fashion. The rise is *on;* you spot a big fellow feeding just above you, and are working cautiously up to him, when down the sloping bank comes a well-meaning friend. "Hillo, old fellow, what sport? There's a whopper been rising just opposite this, but he's stopped." Of course he's stopped, and with a sigh you seek the bank, for there's nothing for it but another pipe!

WADING.—In commencing to fish the shallow end of a stream wade in as gingerly as if bent on winning gloves from some fair slumberer. If you splash rudely in, a wave goes before, heralding your approach, and the hoped-for trout, knowing that an enemy is upon them, are off and away. In evening and night fishing you cannot, in this respect, be too careful, as trout then leave the strong water and betake themselves to the sides and shallows.

CASTING is done from the wrist. All arm work is bad form. In up-stream fishing you are constantly casting, probably three times for a down-stream fisher's once. Let your trace float down say three yards, then up and at 'em again. Do not drag your flies, except where there is no current. The natural insect is carried down more or less rapidly, according to the velocity of the stream, and a Hanlan of a fly begets suspicion. I once had a friend, whom, to use a Scotticism, I "incensed" into casting in rather a curious way. It was on Tweedside. I had coached him, lectured him, held his wrist, but that dreadful heave of the arm would come in, and I was in despair, when, happy thought—"Arnold, old fellow, you are a good whip; now suppose you were driving tandem, and a horse fly lit on your leader's ear, what would you do?" Presto! the thing was done, and the following April my friend killed at Kelso one of the baskets of the season. In casting do not bring the point of your rod within a yard or two of the water. This also is bad form, and apt to alarm the keen-sighted trout. Arrest—from the wrist, mind—in

mid descent, and the line will then spin out straight, and fall, flies first, like the oft-quoted thistledown.

Don't be afraid to sink your flies. The majority of river insects are hatched from stones in the bed of the stream, and, for one that meets death on the surface, I am bold to say scores, aye hundreds, are seized in the middle passage. This is easily proved. No fly is *on*, but you are getting an occasional trout. Open the mouth of one of these; clean tongue, no trace of insect food whatever. Out comes the sun; a few flies appear; then many; the hatch is *on*; a trout you have noticed apparently *begins* to feed, and ere he has broken water half a dozen times you have him. Open *that* fellow's mouth; are there *six* flies only? Why, he looks as if he had bolted half an ounce of cantharides. His mouth and gullet are crammed with a mass of insect food.

STRIKING.—In up-stream fishing "the rise of a trout" is not always seen, for the simple reason that your fly is probably three or four inches below the surface. Keep your eyes on the water about where you think your flies are; and, if you see a *gleam* of a trout, strike; or, if you mark your line stop, strike. You cannot do it too soon. Correct striking is a trick of the wrist, which only practice will give; but in up-stream fishing, as opposed to down, it is comparatively seldom you are broken as you pull the fish towards you *with* the current.

PLAYING.—When you have the luck to hook a big trout, instantly raise the point of your rod, and keep it up, and ever up. Never let out more line than you can possibly help; and, to this end, follow your fish up,

down, or across stream, keeping as close to him as you can. If you simply stand still and let him run, ten to one you lose him. In playing a salmon or large trout I always like to see a portion of my trace clear of the water.

LANDING.—In landing anything over a pound, if possible, net from the bank. Big trout have a trick of making for your legs, as some of my friends have found to their sorrow; and if his lordship escapes, leaving the dropper deep in your wader, there is shame and confusion of face.

IN CONCLUSION, one word in praise of, and in defence of, the gentle craft. A mother remarked to me the other day, "My boy—he is a lad of fifteen—is enthusiastically fond of fishing—too fond I fear." "Your boy," I replied, "has discovered and appropriated a pleasure that will last with his life, as fresh at sixty as at sixteen; that will keep him in health, and that will do much to save him from the snares and vices of big cities. So be content; a love of fishing has never spoiled a boy yet, and has helped to make many a boy into a good man."

The charm of fly-fishing, to my mind, is, that though perfection is unattainable, yet progress, and with it a fair amount of success, is within reach of us all. The same may be said of billiards, and of the sport which our Yankee Cousins term "gunning;" but in our pastime there is no hitting the balls hard, and trusting to luck. Flukes are rare in fly-fishing, and shooting "into the brown" is of no avail. Our "brown" must be quietly, coyly, and individually wooed; and for twenty crack

shots, find me one crack fly-fisher. Yet what greater or purer pleasure than a mild spring or early summer day passed on the bank of some lovely stream—the hum of men exchanged for that of bees, and the din and clatter of a city for the peace and quiet of, let *me* say, Tweedside. And when the creel is full, the last pipe lit, and you brace yourself for the home stretch, what a feeling of content steals over you, and what large pity you feel towards the poor scoffers at our art, worthy old Samuel Johnson *not* excepted.

THE MERES OF SHROPSHIRE.

BY GEORGE DAVIES.

IN writing of the meres of Shropshire, I desire to confine my remarks to those in the neighbourhood of Ellesmere, which may be called *the* lake district of the county. Perhaps, to begin with, a few words about the town itself may not be out of place.

The visitor will be struck with its almost painful quietness. It has a large market hall, and a handsome church in the decorative style of early English architecture, with a square tower within which is a ring of eight bells. The church was partly restored about thirty years since. The principal hotel is the Bridgewater Arms; there are also several smaller inns. A short distance from the church is Castle Hill. On the top there formerly stood a castle—a frontier fortress during the unsettled period that preceded the final subjugation of Wales. It was probably demolished during the civil wars of the seventeenth century, not a single stone of it now remaining visible. The site of the castle was, many years since, converted into an excellent bowling green. On a clear day views of nine different counties may be obtained from it.

" . LET ME OFTEN TO THESE SOLITUDES RETIRE."—*Bryant.*

Drawn by George Sheffield.

Ellesmere is supposed by some to derive its name from Aelsmere, i.e. the greatest mere, because the lake is the largest in that part of the county; while others believe the word to be a corruption of Eels-mere. I am disposed to think the Saxon derivation the more probable, as the other lakes are also well stocked with eels.

The mere is on the eastern side of the town, and covers about 116 acres. Sloping gently down to it are beautiful grounds, kept in perfect order, with rustic seats conveniently placed for the use of visitors. On the other bank is the mansion of Oteley. It is on a hill-side, with terraces leading down to the water's edge. The park skirts the mere for some distance, is charmingly undulatory, and contains many noble trees.

I am sorry to notice how rapidly the *Anacharis* has spread on the mere of late. It is much to be regretted that something is not done to prevent its further growth. Rowing, over a good portion of the lake, is already difficult, and fishing almost impossible, at least in those places where fish are wont to congregate.

I have fished this mere on many occasions with varying results. Sometimes, when I expected good sport, finding it almost a blank; and sometimes, with slender expectations, I have been rewarded with a full creel. The largest pike, so far as I am aware, that has been taken here, weighed twenty-five pounds.

Leaving this lake, and walking a short distance along the high road by the side of Oteley Park, we come to Blackmere, or, as the people here call it, Blakemere. It is situated in a hollow more than two hundred feet

below the road, and is surrounded on three sides by woods. At the further end it is open to the green fields, which rise in gently undulating lines. This mere is connected by a narrow passage through the wood with Kettlemere, a much smaller lake, quiet as a mountain tarn. Round both these lakes the *Osmunda regalis* used to grow in great beauty and luxuriance, but whether here, as in many other places, it has become extinct through the modern rage for collecting ferns, I cannot say.

I have fished both these meres, when their present owner was a boy. It is reported that a thirtyfive-pound pike was taken many years since in Blackmere, and I see no reason why the report should not be true.

Proceeding a little further along the high road, we come to Newton-mere, near the small village or hamlet of that name. It is not so interesting as the other meres, and though it contains the same kinds of fish, they are smaller—at least that is my experience.

By a cross-cut along a narrow lane, Colemere can be reached; and you enter a fir wood, through which you walk along the whole length of the lake. This mere is long and somewhat narrow, and is bounded on the other side by a belt of tall reeds, which, at the upper end, broadens out into a perfect forest of aquatic vegetation. Here is the home and breeding place of numerous wild-fowl. And here, too, in the summer time, is the curiously constructed nest of the reed-wren, which is made by binding together three or four reeds with coarse grasses, some distance above the water. The nest is slight, but

strongly made; is very deep, and contracted at the top, so that however much the reeds may be "shaken with the wind," the eggs or young birds are in no danger. There is a peculiarity about this mere, that does not belong to any of the others, in its possession of green moss balls, and also of brown ones, which appear to be composed of fir leaves or needles. The spherical shape is produced, I think, by the action of eddies and currents at the bottom. The largest I have seen was about eighteen inches in circumference, but I believe they have been found more than treble that size. Fishing on this lake on a bright November day, I once killed fifteen jack.

A walk of little more than a mile from Colemere will bring you to Whitemere, on the Shrewsbury road, and about a mile and a quarter distant from Ellesmere. This mere is nearly surrounded by trees, and, like Colemere, is a famous place for wildfowl. Some years since, I was one of a party of four shooters, when we killed seventy-two coots and one grebe. The last time I fished here was on a rough winter's day. I got five jack, averaging about five pounds. They were all taken on the spoon.

Crosemere is about two miles from Whitemere, and may be said to be a little outside the main group. I have never fished it.

In the summer time all these meres—to use a local term—"break," and present the appearance of having small particles of matter held in suspension, resembling fine meal or bran. The cause I do not know, but suspect it is fermentation of decayed vegetable matter. I have

noticed the same condition of water in the meres of Rostherne and Tatton, in Cheshire. During the "break," the fish seem sickly, and refuse to feed.

Ellesmere lake is open to the public, and visitors staying at the Bridgewater Hotel will find no difficulty in obtaining permission to fish in either Whitemere or Colemere, on each of which there are good boats. As regards the fishing on the other lakes I can give no information.

The district of these seven meres is, to my mind, very attractive. It does not possess the bold scenery of Scotland, of Wales, or of the Cumberland lake district, but it has a quiet beauty, an unobtrusive loveliness, that is really charming. Either in Spring, when Nature, like a blushing maiden, first puts on her bridal robes, or in the matured bloom of Summer, or in Autumn with overflowing lap and plenty-crowned, or in white-locked Winter,

> When the frost has wrought a silence,

an observant eye will discern "things of beauty," which to the memory will be "joys for ever."

To change the scene—though it does seem a pity—let me ask you to accompany me in thought to Manchester—the time the latter end of November—the day dreadfully foggy. There was fog in the streets and in the squares, fog in the workshop and in the warehouse, fog in the mansion of the rich and in the hovel of the poor, fog in the counting house, and in the innermost sanctum of the merchant. It was a fog that made the eyes of old and young to smart and fill with tears, as if the

whole city was weeping for its sins. It was a fog that irritated the throat and the bronchial tubes down to the very lungs, making them as wheezy as an old collapsed accordion or dilapidated bag-pipe. In a word, there was a fog such as Mrs. Partington experienced when she exclaimed to her young friend, "Eh! Miss Mary, there's a deal of pocket handkerchiefs attending it, isn't there now?"

On this enjoyable day, two members of the Association ran against each other in the street, and exchanged greetings.

"Well, Stargazer, how are you?"

"Bad, Red-hackle; quite out of sorts."

"No wonder—this weather is enough to spoil both one's health and temper. Not much the matter, though, I hope."

"More than I like, I assure you."

"What are the symptoms?"

"Well, in the first place, I have a nasty cold."

"Is that all?"

"I have been bothered with tic for the last three days."

"What else?"

"My liver has been out of order for a long time; and I have no appetite."

"Anything more?"

"This morning I have made a bad debt; that is the catalogue, Hackle!"

"Well, I can sympathise with you, old boy; let me be your medicine-man. Suppose we leave foggy Man-

chester for a few days, and have some fishing. I have heard you speak of the Shropshire meres; let us fix a day, and go there."

"That is not a bad idea, Hackle, and if Wednesday will suit you, I'm your man."

"The very thing."

So the matter was settled with a hearty shake of the hand, and in half-a-dozen strides the friends were lost to view in the fog.

After a cold journey in the early morning of the appointed Wednesday, the two fishers found themselves in a snug room at the Bridgewater Arms, Ellesmere.

Breakfast over the trap was brought round, and off they drove to Whitemere, fully bent on slaughter, either of pike, or wildfowl, or both. In a short time the boat pushed off, and the two were trolling round the lake; Red-hackle with his trusty rod that had killed many a lusty fish, and conveniently placed beside him his no less trusty chokebore, that had been the death of many a quick-winged bird; while Stargazer was all attention, and eager for the fray. The mere was very rough in consequence of a strong north-west wind that swept across it. The water was dotted over with hundreds of coots, a goodly flock of wild-duck, and some score or more of widgeon; but all were very shy, and difficult to get near, and at the first discharge of the gun rose in great numbers, evidently very wild. The widgeon and duck made a lofty flight twice round the mere, and not liking the appearance of the intruders, disappeared over the high trees on the further side—an example that

was presently followed by half-a-dozen swans. Once the fishermen were rowed round the lake without a run, twice with a like result, thrice—slightly altering their course—but still unrewarded. Then they tried the middle—no fish; tried all the likely nooks and corners—a blank; tried live bait—no go; tried, in fact, all they knew, but all to no purpose. Occasionally they fired away at a coot that happened to fly near enough for a shot, and I won't tell you how many birds they killed; but these two solid men of business, when the first coot was bagged, looked more like a pair of schoolboys, and their merry laughter and snatches of song contrasted strangely with the quiet and seclusion of the lake. Presently their man, who was wet through with spindrift, began to complain—in broad Shropshire—that "it was nashun cowd," and that he was "hommost starved to geth," so he was sent home, Hackle and Gazer determining to remain afloat until the arrival of the dog-cart.

There had been all day long a biting north-west wind, and mimic seas had made the punt dance about in quite a lively manner. It was hard work to row, and still harder work to shoot straight; but scarcely had they reached the further side of the lake, when a perfect hurricane set in, against which their united efforts were quite unavailing; so letting the boat drift into a somewhat sheltered place, they moored her to some fishing stakes. The wind swept down with such fury that the whole surface of the mere was covered with turbulent waves, crested with foam. It roared through the branches of

the giant oaks that skirted the water's edge; it moaned among the sombre pines on the hill top; whilst it almost shrieked as it rushed through the dead reeds, snapping them asunder, and hurling them aloft as though shot from a bow; while amidst the tumult was occasionally heard the crash of falling timber. After a time the wind began to abate, and the sky, across which the clouds had been scudding with incredible swiftness, grew darker and darker still. Gazer suggested the propriety of getting back to the boat-house as quickly as possible; but Hackle, like an old salt, preferred to remain. They were not long kept in suspense as to the meaning of the strange darkness that had come upon them so rapidly, for they were almost immediately enveloped in a blinding snowstorm. The punt soon began to wear quite an Arctic appearance, while the two friends sat, quiet as stones, silent as the silent footsteps of the fleecy snow. What strange vagaries it seemed to play, sometimes driven in wavy horizontal lines, then rising perpendicularly until broken by the wind, and falling in graceful lines like the spray from a fountain; or again rushing on like a torrent. The storm lasted about half-an-hour, then moderated. The wind was hushed; the shores of the mere became visible, and with them the welcome dog-cart. Such was the day—no fish, a bitter north-west wind that grew into a hurricane, a blinding snowstorm. Were these the sort of things to make two fellows happy? Yes! they were happy, as all true anglers are, whether their efforts are crowned with success or not, and when they returned to the hotel their glowing faces

showed that they felt small inconvenience from the rough weather they had experienced.

On the Thursday morning the two friends walked down to Ellesmere lake; Antley, an obliging and civil fellow, having a punt waiting for them. What a contrast was presented to the previous day. Now there was but little wind, and a clear blue-grey sky, save for a few narrow, elongated clouds, low down on the horizon; and overhead, apparently at great height, were small patches of wavy gossamer vapour, almost transparent, but of rare beauty. Above all was the sun shining, for the time of year, with singular power. Large numbers of wildfowl rested on the tranquil water, and graceful swans, with plumage of unsullied whiteness, moved about majestically slow, as if conscious of their dignity and importance. The deer in Oteley Park were leisurely nibbling the short grass, or hunting beneath the trees for nuts and acorns; while from the distance came the faint coo of the wood pigeon, and nearer was heard the late autumnal song of the cheery redbreast. Along the road by the water side there crept a wagon laden with barley. The sturdy wagoner was whistling a simple pastoral tune, yet one of exquisite melody, that seemed to blend harmoniously with the lovely morning, and all its sylvan surroundings. Not having permission to shoot wildfowl on this water, the two devoted themselves to pike fishing, with some little success, until mid-day, when luncheon arrived.

Sport not being to their liking while trolling for jack, they decided to try for perch with minnow; and Antley rowed them to a favourite spot beside a small island.

Hardly had their lines been in the water a minute before there was a fish on each, and three goodly perch were soon in the boat, each weighing fully a pound; again the same thing, but with a different result—two fishes were lost, and a third got entangled among some dead branches; and the water was so disturbed that not another run was forthcoming, so the two anglers determined to leave off fishing.

Red-hackle was just reeling up his line, when out went twenty yards with a rush. "This is a good fish, I can feel. Antley, are there any large perch in the mere?"

"Yes, sir, three or four pounds, some of them."

"Then I must have hooked one of that sort," (getting in a foot or two of line, which the fish promptly recovered, with interest). "What, twenty yards not enough for you? well, then, have ten or a dozen more, for I don't want to lose you, but if you mean getting to those weeds, I most strongly object." Whatever was the weight of the fish, it seemed determined to reach its home in the weeds, and Hackle seemed quite as determined it should not, so there was a long struggle in the fast-failing daylight. But little by little the fish was reeled up to closer quarters, and Antley suddenly exclaimed, "It's a pike, sir; and by gum, a nice un!" "You be ready with the net," says H., "we mustn't lose him." Jack fought for his life, and only gave in when he had not a kick left in him. He was a nice fish, in splendid condition, and had been taken with a very small minnow.

I should not omit to state, that for an hour before

they left off fishing, this part of the mere was literally alive with dace playing on the surface of the water, and it is no exaggeration to say there were thousands within thirty yards of the boat at the time the minnow was taken.

On Friday (the last day at Ellesmere), the two friends determined to try their luck at Colemere, so were driven there after an early breakfast, Stargazer being furnished with a breechloader, kindly lent by the landlord. During the night there had been a sharp frost. The roads were very slippery, and on arriving at the mere they found the sheltered parts near the shore frozen over. No time was lost in getting out the boat and preparing for action; it being considered best to commence with shooting wild-fowl. The punt was rowed near the edge of the high reeds at the top of the mere, in the hope that either duck or widgeon would be found there. The hope was realised. A mallard and two ducks rose from the reeds; the ducks wide, and a good distance off. The mallard, however, was near, perhaps too near, or possibly his enemies were both nervous, for bang—bang—bang—bang went four barrels in succession, and bang went the drake to join his two frightened spouses, who no doubt received him with many a loving quack. This was a bad beginning. For Stargazer the excuse might be that he had a strange gun—that he had never shot out of before; but for Redhackle there was no excuse: he had his own gun, with which in theory it was impossible to miss. However, both looked sheepishly guilty, like your pet cat

after she has eaten your favourite canary that cost you a guinea, and that you would not take five for. There was no mistake made however, with the next birds that got up. The shooting was steady enough, and both guns were dead on.

Trolling was now tried, one line fishing dace, the other spoonbait; but jack was nowhere to be found. This seemed the more strange, as it was one of Stargazer's pet meres, on which hitherto he had always made fair, and sometimes large, baskets. However, as they did not find the pike in the humour, the two again turned their attention to shooting, but adopted different tactics to those they had tried before. Stargazer landed in a small wood and placed his back against a tree, so that he might be as little seen as possible, while before him was a belt of high reeds, which served the purpose of a screen, but through which it was somewhat difficult to shoot. However, he had some sport, the only drawback being the small number of the cartridges he had brought with him. They were used all too soon. The place selected for Redhackle was a narrow plank in the middle of the reeds at the upper end of the mere, where there is something very like a swamp. As the said plank was covered with hoar frost, the footing was none of the best, and it required all the Hackle's nerve to keep him from personally proving the depth of water and mud he had under him. There he had to remain while the man in the punt rowed over the mere to drive the birds to one or other of the shooters. To do this effectually requires two or three boats,—that is, if a good bag is to

be made. However, there was fair sport, and Hackle kept blazing away to his heart's content. It is much to be regretted that we haven't a photograph of him, balancing himself on that narrow plank, like some amiable Blondin, and occasionally altering his perpendicular position to a semi-devotional attitude, the better to escape observation from the birds as they flew towards him. Or perhaps it would be better still to see him depicted after his trusty Greener had brought down a coot, at such a distance as in the old cylinder days would have been impossible. Were such a photograph in existence, I think I may say that its possession would be desired by every member of this honourable Association.

The time had at last arrived when the two friends had to think of returning to their own homes. So the birds were picked up, and Redhackle released from his perch on the plank. In due course they arrived safely at their journey's end ; Gazer remarking, as they parted, that he had lost his tic, had almost lost his cold, had forgotten he had a liver, and only remembered his bad debt with a feeling of satisfaction that he would get a good dividend !

THREE FISHERS.

BY ARTHUR HIBBERT.

NE Saturday I happened to be at the railway station waiting for something to turn up, when I was pleased to see three well-known members of the Manchester Anglers' Association—Squills, Quills, and Bills—walk up the platform. They were fully equipped with rods, nets, and creels. Now, thought I, is my chance; I have never seen good fishing, and can never manage to throw a line without a tangle. I will have a lesson for once. So while the three took their places in the train, having heard them say something about Stockport, I ran off to the booking office and took a third class ticket. The incidents of the journey need not detain us. Suffice it to say that after about fifteen minutes, the three descended from the first class carriage in which they had travelled, and I, unseen, got down from the third.

When we emerged from the station, a four-wheeler was called, into which our trio disappeared. As the cab drove away I dexterously seated myself on the spikes thereof, and in spite of the extreme discomfort of such a situation, in spite of cries from the street urchins of "whip behind," to which the driver responded with a savage, though

harmless cut of the whipcord; in spite of the pointed force of the *a posteriori* argument to which I was subjected; in spite indeed of stern Necessity herself, I sat on, grinning and bearing, while we drove past shops and manufactories, then rows of houses and villa residences, and finally fields and waving trees. At last, when I was beginning to think that my strategic position in the rear was untenable, a welcome voice cried "Here we are! Pull up, cabby!" The vehicle stopped: I hopped off my thorny perch, and the three fishers got out.

We were, I found, outside a small bleach works. Some one opened the gate, and we all went in; I slipping behind tubs and carboys, and so remaining unobserved. The low shed-like works were to our right, and some distance beyond was a tall square chimney. A buxom dowager here addressed the leader of the expedition (who was easily known by the superiority of his get up), and having inspected the credentials of the party, showed them their way by the side of the chimney. In answer to a question as to whether there was fishing there, she said that indeed there was, for a fish of seven pound weight had been caught that very morning.

Encouraged by this report, our anglers proceeded, and so did I, still taking advantage, like a sharpshooter, of every bit of cover I could find. The fishery proved to be a rectangular reservoir about seventy yards long by forty wide, partly overgrown with water plants, with low grassy banks, and a thick row of trees along the whole length of one side. In the cover of these trees I lost no time in secreting myself, and from this position I was

fortunately able to see and hear, for some time, every thing that passed.

"Well, this is a nice place to bring us to," said Squills; "what on earth made Gilliflower send us here? I wish I could get at him; I'd chuck him in!"

"Wait a bit," said Bills; "there was a seven pounder caught this morning; we shall get fish, you'll see. The place has been carefully preserved for years."

"I'll bet you a shilling there is not another caught," returned Quills.

"No, I won't, but I'll bet we have seven pounds among us."

"Done," was the answer, "*run or not.*" And in this way the sport began.

At an early stage of the proceedings, a gentleman, who had evidently been out in the sun, came upon the scene. With drunken gravity he demanded the permit of the party, which, after a short parley, was submitted and approved. This gentleman was the hero of the seven pound fish, and a full account of the capture was given, several times over, to each of the three visitors in the same words.

The story was somewhat as follows;—"Yes, sir, there's good fish in this reservoir, I know. There was one caught this morning—seven pound. I was out fishing at seven o'clock with a minnow, and I got him. He was a proper one, I can tell you. My tackle will hold 'em. If they break my tackle I'll forgive them. He was a proper fish—he was—seven pound weight. I sent him to the governor. You'll hear of him if you

know the governor, I'll warrant. I caught him at seven o'clock this morning, fishing with a minnow, and he was a proper fish, I can tell you. He weighed seven pound. I was fishing just there at seven o'clock this morning, and I got a proper fish, that I did. He *was* a proper one, *he* was. Oh, there's plenty of fish here. Why, only this morning at seven o'clock." . . . And by going round and round, like a horse in a mill, the story might just as well have lasted till now, as have stopped at the end of five minutes as it did—only, however, to be renewed with another unhappy victim a few yards further on.

While this narrative was being told, long cane rods were being drawn from their cases by the anglers, and lines were threaded through the rings. Squills was ready first, and I saw him swing a huge paternoster baited with gudgeon, minnow, and writhing worms, well out into the centre of the pit. Quills followed, having spent some considerable time in piecing up a knock-kneed rod, which he said had not been used for fifteen or sixteen years; and finally Bills, who had a budget of tackle large enough to furnish a shop, dropped in his bait.

As I watched their dismal proceedings, how my heart throbbed with agony! These then are the high-souled gentlemen who originated our Association, and to whom bait fishing is a crime and a horror! "Oh, Ichabod! Ichabod!" I exclaimed, "How is thy glory departed!" As I saw the miserable men, with hands in pockets, standing gazing at their motionless floats, and forced to listen to the oft-repeated story of the seven

pound pike, what thoughts of high hopes abandoned, of virtuous resolves draggled in the dirt, came surging through my aching brain! Continuing to gaze, first at one wretched angler who drew up his line to see once more if he had had a bite, and to find he hadn't; then turning my eyes on another, my agony increased: my head drooped against the friendly tree by which I crouched: the gods took pity on me, and——I slept.

How long my slumbers lasted I cannot tell; but when I awoke the rods were still there. Squills, Quills, and Bills were there too, with faces longer then ever, and the seven pound fish was still being caught at seven o'clock in the morning.

I soon learned from their conversation that they had never had a bite, not one among them; but at last a great excitement arose. Quills *had* a bite. At the top of his voice he proclaimed it, and his two companions in misery rushed towards him to see the result. Now he strikes, hurrah, he has him! Out comes the fish, a perch, weighing, on the word of an angler, three quarters of—— an ounce. That was the most unkindest cut of all. It finished the sport of the day. They packed up their rods, turned what remained of their wretched baits into the pond, and departed.

As they walked away, the manager, who was by no means sobered, told each of the three his story of the seven pound fish once more, condoled with them on having had no sport, but assured them that it wasn't because there were not plenty of fish in the place. The cab was waiting; the three got in; I resumed my

place behind, and as we drove away, there fell upon my ear the parting words "You should have been here at seven o'clock this morning, you'd have seen a fish worth having then, I can tell you; it was a *proper* fish, *it* was." And I couldn't help feeling that the baby perch was a proper fish too—*under the circumstances* a very proper fish indeed!

TOOME BRIDGE.

BY HENRY BROWNBILL.

E are not all of us adepts in the use of the pen, but many of us have fished waters unknown to the rest; and it is in the hope that what I have seen at Toome Bridge may be new to some at least of the members of this Association that I venture to put my hand to the goose quill. My first visit to Toome was made in May, 1875; and I was so well pleased with the locality, the scenery, and the fishing, that I went again both in July and September of the same year.

Any of you who care to go there may take a tourist ticket to Belfast, *via* Fleetwood, where the train runs down to the wharf, close alongside the steamer--a convenient arrangement that saves all trouble on the score of luggage. The boat usually leaves almost immediately after the arrival of the train, and you will find a comfortable meal ready in the saloon. After a stroll on deck, a quiet pipe, and a glass of grog, you will do well to turn in, and it is to be hoped will find sweet repose, unmarred by stomachic disturbance. Berths should be secured a few days beforehand by writing to the company's office at Fleetwood. You should be up by four in the morning if you would enjoy the beautiful

scenery as the steamer enters Belfast Lough. The boat gets in between five and six o'clock in the morning, but it is advisible to breakfast before going ashore, as there is nothing to be got at the railway station. A car, which may be taken from the quay, will usually catch the 6-10 train for Toome. Once there, a couple of minutes will take you to your quarters; and as the Bann is close at hand, you can put up your rod and be at work before nine. There is a return train, which leaves at 5-30, and reaches Belfast in the evening in time for the boat; so nearly a whole day's fishing may be had, both on the day of arrival and the day you leave; and this is no small advantage. Moreover, you can pack your fish in ice, send them away any morning at half-past twelve, and they will be delivered in England in good time next day. The village itself is but small. It contains one hotel, the O'Neill Arms, and two shops. Rooms may be had at either of the shops, or at the hotel.

The people are chiefly employed at the large eel fishery. It extends right across the river (a small passage only being left at each side for salmon and boats), and is worked in this way:—Four walls of wicker-work are arranged in the shape of a very deep letter W, with the two angles pointing down stream. Each of these angles ends in a long pocket net, and the eels, going down to the sea, are directed by the wicker walls into the nets. From these they are transferred to a large floating pontoon, whence they are removed as occasion requires. The eels sent over to England last season

(from June to January) filled 1547 boxes, each box weighing 105 lbs.

The fishing at Toome, both for salmon and trout, opens in March, and closes at the end of October; but I would not advise anyone to go after the end of August, especially if the season should be wet. A little later than this the flax crop is being steeped in large tanks; and if heavy rain comes, the poisoned water overflows into the Lough, and from it into the river. It does not kill the fish, but sickens them, and they will not rise at a fly. The best month is, in my opinion, July. Since 1875 I have visited Toome every summer, and have always had good sport—and never better than last year, when heavy rains had raised the water some five or six feet above its usual height. Although the Toome Bridge trout run large, the size of fly used is by no means in proportion—small patterns being found the best killers. At least two rods should be taken—more than two by those who are fond of trolling and spinning. The trout fishing, both in lough and river, is free. A salmon license can be had from Crighton, the water bailiff, who lives in the village. I have seen men who know the river kill three or four salmon, with a large number of fine trout, in one day. Last year there were no salmon taken on the rod on account of the floods. My average basket of trout, however, was about fourteen brace. I managed to get some over two pounds by dibbing in the deep pools.

Lough Neagh is sixty miles round, but its depth does not correspond with its area, for it does not much exceed

a hundred feet anywhere. The principal feeders are the Maine, the Blackwater, the Six Mile Water at Antrim, and, in County Derry, the Magold and the Ballinderry. In these five rivers are the spawning grounds, and excellent fishing can be had in all of them. There are, here and there, islands in the lough. A group called the Three Islands will well repay a visit. It is about a two hours' row from Toome, and no fishing time need be lost, as trolling, either for trout or pike, can be tried each way. Large trout are taken at the islands by fishing good-sized flies off the rocks. The only inhabitants are gulls and other birds, so by all means let those who go there provide themselves with a well-filled luncheon basket. For a distance of half a mile from the river the lough is very shallow and can be fished by wading. This shallow ends in a weir, and though the entire body of water is large, the stream over it is not, as a rule, unwadable, but can be fished from side to side—some four hundred yards.

Lough Neagh is *the* home of the pollan (the grayling so-called of the fishmongers). They are taken principally in nets, but I have caught small ones sometimes when "cutting," that is trailing the flies after a boat, with a long line out. I have also got large baskets of nice trout in this way. Trolling with a spoon or Devon minnow is often successful in the lough. I remember trying it one afternoon with my friend J——. A fish took his minnow and leaped out of the water several times. If he wasn't a ten pounder he certainly looked it. The line, however, a new one, had been coiled

loosely on the reel, and fouled. There was another leap for liberty, a sudden snap, and we never saw our trout again. This accident "bothered us entoirely," and it was only after a pipe, and just "the laste taste in loife" of "old Coleraine," that we regained our composure.

The Bann is about a hundred yards wide, and is best fished from a boat. It is just as well to secure one by letter. The charge is five shillings a day, and this includes the services of a man to row. Patrick Mc.Kinless, Edward Mc.Elroy, and his son William, are boatmen I can speak well of. Sometimes sport may be had from the bank. I remember one evening, when my friend had taken the boat out on a trolling expedition, fishing from the side, near the County Bridge. Before his return I had landed five trout which weighed together seven and a half pounds. The two largest were three pounds, and two and a half pounds, respectively. The pike in the river are but small. They average two or three pounds, and seldom exceed six. Last year however several men hooked a large one, near what is known as the "Bend," but they were broken without bringing the fish to the surface. I happened to get hold of one, which I think must have been the same. He took out about twenty yards of line, and, after a few shorter runs, finally settled down at the bottom, no doubt under some obstruction. We rowed the boat over him, and reeled up all the line we could, but our efforts to dislodge him were vain. Our friend was master of the situation, and so he remained. About two miles below Toome the river enters Lough Beg. There the

pike are very numerous. I have known forty or more to be taken, within the hour, by a boat trolling spoon or large Devon.

There are to be seen on the water at Toome, the season through, nearly every day, two boats; the one white, the other black—the one owned by a gentleman who lives on the stream, the other by a London man who has fished the river for many a year. The two men are afloat early and late, wet or fine—fishing sometimes, sometimes reading. Two seasons ago the Londoner was fishing the Lough, and getting too near the weir, in a heavy water, was carried over into the river below. The boat was capsized, the man all but drowned. His first words to a friendly boatman rescuer were these:— "Dear me, I'm afraid I've lost my fish!" True brother of the angle! Worthy follower of old Isaac! May he live to lose, and oftener still to basket, many a right good fish.

Below Lough Beg, at the Ferry and Port Glenore, are net fisheries for salmon. Six miles lower still is Kilrea, a good station for the salmon rod fisher. The charge here for two miles of water is a pound a week. Lower again is another excellent water, fished by an association, and reserved for members and their friends.

At Randalstown, nine miles from Toome by rail, there is a ruined castle, and close to the castle gates an hotel. Anglers staying at this hotel can fish the Maine, which runs through the castle grounds into Lough Neagh. The fishing is excellent. There are several weirs on the river, where I have seen large numbers of salmon

waiting to go up. The fishing is free from hampering restriction. Larger flies are used than at Toome, and the best patterns can be bought in the neighbourhood. The trout fishing is open, and the salmon license for the Toome water is also available here. At Antrim too there is fishing, but, I am inclined to think, not so good.

There is at Toome, on the Derry side of the river, a large building, called "The Temple of Liberty." It is commonly used for pic-nic parties. Occasionally a ball is given there. In case a quorum of my associates should ever find themselves by the banks of Bann they will do well to hold a festive meeting there, to sing—there's a fine organ by the by—to sing their anglers' songs, and, in a word, to hold "An Anglers' Evening."

"THE SHADOWY LAKE." —*Wordsworth.*

Drawn by George Sheffield.

A DAY ON A STAFFORDSHIRE MERE.

BY DAVID REID.

UR party was well chosen. From first to last the rod bent but brake not; the line paid out easily; the reel sang musically.

Our clerical friend Lily joined us merely as a "looker on." His voice was soft, measured, and low. In person he was tall and well formed, with an eye at once piercing and persuasive. His peers call him the "Prior of Walshingham;" but on this particular occasion he became "Friar Tuck."

Our friend L., "the learned Bellario," it was a treat to see. His cheerful manly face lit up with "laughter holding both his sides," his merry voice fresh and inspiriting as the early breezes of a summer's morn, who could possibly think of the troubles of life in *his* society? "What! Carbon in the dumps; Bulrush growling; the jolly old æsthetic Lily sighing! Eh! what? I'll show you a place that will put life into you, and clear away the cob-webs"—and of a truth he kept his word. This was our "manne of lawe," cool, clear-headed, and calm in business;—in pleasure bright and cheery. May all wearied clients, worn out and sick at heart, find such an adviser in

difficulty. "Order, method, and good government" were his watchwords, and he took charge of the expedition.

Bulrush, a canny Scot, is, in outward appearance, a lang-legged chiel, thin about the middle, and awfu' heavy aboot the head, who wobbles in the breeze, makes an unco' swish and swirl with his leafless stem, and times gaes floondering ower head and heels in the water. Yet the lad means well wi' a' his fauts. His was the post of chancellor of the live baits.

Lastly, there was Carbon. But who can venture to describe one whose reputation rests on the creations of his own genius. His pleasant face was always goodly to look upon, his eyes twinkling with humour, and his tongue wagging with wit and wisdom.

I need not describe too minutely the incidents of our travel, for all railway journeys are pretty much, in one sense, on the same lines—unless, indeed, there intervenes somewhat of a telescopic character, and this form of interruption we happily escaped.

"Change here, gem'en," at length cries the guard; "bait all right? Shall I give them water, sir?" He is a good angler, I'll be bound.

"Now, Lily, look after the luggage; Bulrush, see to the bait-cans."

Away he went, and found a porter just in the act of changing the water.

"Stop, man, stop!" cried Bulrush.

"Why, wot's up?" was the reply.

"That's the very water that killed the fish the other day; try another tap."

It is a fact that at this station there is water so impure, taken directly from the canal, that Lady de Trafford lost a number of valuable store fish by having the carrying tubs re-filled there. So much for modern pollution.

A sight met our anglers' eyes before entering the station that caused many expressions of sorrow—the junction of the head waters of the Bollin. One tributary, issuing from the town, carries all the defilement and impurities that bad government in these days allows—its waters black, thick, and filthy, and its merry music hushed, as if for very shame. It glides silently and slowly onward, to be joined by a bright sparkling stream rushing down from the hills, and seeming like a good angel, full of light and love, that strives to win back an erring, fallen sister to the paths of purity and life It is to this pure, refreshing rivulet, and a few others like it, that the trout in Bollin owe their lives.

The train, hasting on its way, after passing through the country famed for lads, lasses, crack volunteer regiments and cricketers, and at full speed careering across the cheese-making county, soon enters the shire that surpasses all others, over a large part of its area, for blackness, ruin, and desolation. Treeless, grassless, birdless, and containing the saddest phases of human degradation, it is most fitly called the "black country." Yet, in some of its corners, it has the loveliest bits of mountain, meadow, and mere that ever delighted an artist's vision or ministered pleasure to a fisherman. It was one of these more favored places that our anglers

were now approaching. Soon they pass the head waters of the Dane, here a prolific trout stream, and in a few minutes they see their mere—as beautiful a bit of nature as could be desired.

It is about three miles long by half-a-mile broad—its margin broken up into bays, small headlands, and miniature precipices, combined with shelving gravelly shores and receding fields and meadows, that were already beginning to show promise of a fruitful harvest. One end of the mere—the narrowest—is banked up with romantic broken hills and rocks—quite a Rhine-like view on a small scale, or, better still, a bit of Western Highland landscape. The grim and picturesque Scotch firs on the crags lend grandeur to the scene. Rich green woods stretch upwards from the water's edge. Here and there is a dwelling-house, elsewhere an old ruin, in another place a broken and disused fountain, and in the far distance a range of hills. The water of the mere at its narrow part is *deep*, *black*, and *dowie*. At the broad and upper end it is dotted over with innumerable water-plants—the white lily, now in full bloom, forming near the shore a beauteous fringe. Swimming on the surface may be seen many varieties of wild fowl; while below it, hidden from all eyes save an angler's, may be discerned the gliding forms of fishes. In the air may be heard the wood-note of feathered songsters, and the whirr of the partridge or startled pheasant.

"Well! what is to be the order of our fishing, Bulrush?" exclaimed Lily, as we gazed upon the scene from the carriage window.

"Good my brother, we will first try for the big ones; a twelve-pounder or two would not be amiss in our creels. We had better troll up the sides of the mere, then zig-zag across, alternately fishing deep and shallow; the baits, a fine dace for one rod, the spoon for the other. If that won't do, change to a phantom, and I will try the eel tail. Then we'll to the top of the lake, amongst the reeds, and fish live bait and the 'pater.' One or other of these plans should bring pike to the basket, and later in the day, if we like, we can try the perch for an hour or two."

But here "a change came o'er the spirit of our dream," for in the meantime the train had glided *into* Reedsmere station and *out* again. *Bulrush's bag was on its way to Euston!* and that bag held all his creature comforts, and, worse still, it contained the tackle of the whole party. The light and shade depicted on the faces of those four brothers in distress was curious, and the thunder that followed was fearful. The good old prior raved; L. stamped with vexation; Bulrush was uncontrollable; while Carbon laughed, chaffed, and danced with fiendish glee. Bulrush vowed never again to rely on a lawyer. "Talk about 'order, good government, and method!'" said he. "Ah! confound every one of you for beguiling me of my bag!" Here was a pretty state of things—the tackle away to "Mugby Junction," and nothing left but the cans of gudgeon! Even they seemed to kick the livelier at the prospect of release. "We'd better have them fried for tea!" suggested Carbon, with a grin.

If ever a mess was made of an angling raid here was one; but Necessity, as usual, was the mother of Invention, and a scratch outfit was soon made up of what could be begged, borrowed, bought, or stolen. Good humour reigned once more, and presently the four friends were afloat and a-fishing.

The programme was adhered to as well as the broken-down kit would allow. Trolling brought one pike to the basket. Then the clouds, that had been threatening for some time, began to lower. Dark shadows came, and a thunderstorm, with squalls of wind, broke over the mere. After struggling against the weather for some time, perch fishing, at anchor in a sheltered bay, was decided on. This soon proved successful, and lively sparkling fellows, from half-a-pound each upwards, at regular intervals were hauled aboard, and so evening came on—then the pull home, the supper, the pipe, and the after-chat—"*The Angler's evening.*" There were mutual congratulations on the successful ending of a day of disaster, and after a little refreshing "Nap," the Prior of Walshingham counted up his treasures and went off to bed. The rest soon followed, for they had agreed to be up and doing again by "cock-crow," and they actually stuck to the agreement—all four of them!

The morning meal was ready, and they were soon afloat. Good trolling ground was tried, and L.'s rod presently shewed life with nodding top and sweet music of the reel; but, alas! "the learned Bellario" lost his case (which was a good one), and after fighting hard, decree absolute was pronounced, with all costs to pay. Then a

fine perch took the spinning gudgeon, and the fun began in earnest. Stories were told too, and gradually a Waltonian feeling prevailed. A conversation ensued on the subject of fly-fishing as compared with bait-fishing, and it was unanimously voted that there is much false sentiment on this matter. "Truly," quoth the Prior, "I maintain that the kind of pleasure we are now enjoying is more in keeping with the 'contemplative man's recreation' than thrashing a river and floundering over rocks and stones can be." "Methinks," he continued, "there is more refreshment in it to body and mind. I mean not to disparage trout fishing, for 'tis a noble sport in all senses, but trout fishing and real sportsmanlike pike and perch fishing may well go hand in hand. I need not recall to your memories, my brethren, numberless delightful pictures from our common Father's writings. We should all remember that the *Complete Angler* drew its inspiration absolutely from ground or bait-fishing, and this leads me to tell you, my brethren, that our friend and brother Carbon, in honour of these few hours we have so happily spent together, has promised to illustrate some of the scenes and incidents of our fishing. The offer does credit to his heart, and we shall be much beholden to him for the same."

At last we let go our anchor, and went in for perch fishing, pure and simple. It was no uncommon case for all four rods to land a fish at the same time; Carbon beat them all, and the fun of the thing was that he despised the top point of his rod altogether. He just

tied half a trace to one of the rings and began to fish. The biggest fish all fell to his share.

"Landed, Bill?"

"Aye, landed," echoed round the boat, à propos of a yarn from Carbon.

Here's the story, almost in his own words:—

"Walking one day on the banks of the canal at Worsley, I came across whole miles of anglers having a match. They were pegged off—say ten yards apart—squatting down, some on stones, some on baskets, but all in earnest contemplation of their floats, watching for the faintest nibble. The men were of the working class, evidently colliers, most of them. At last there was a commotion that stirred the whole column with life. Bill had a bite; better still, the fish was hooked. Then came the tug of war. The fish wriggled right and left, up and down, here and there, but Bill played it with the greatest skill, and at last netted and *landed* it—a splendid gudgeon.

"'Landed, Bill?' spoke his neighbour, in whispered breath.

"A nod and an aye from Bill—'Aye, landed.'

"The word was passed along—'Bill's got one;' 'he's landed one!'

"'What! Bill?'

"'Aye, Bill;' he's landed!'—and so on, and so on, right to the end of the long line you heard the word of rejoicing. Then the next club took it up, and so on *ad infinitum.*"

"Now, after all," remarked Lily, "isn't there some-

thing to be said for these men? Consider how few are their opportunities. They cannot pay for preserved waters; they are debarred, therefore, from nobler sport; so they take all the pleasure they can in fishing a canal for perch, or dace, or gudgeon. These hard-handed sons of toil enjoy on a Saturday afternoon, far from the besotting influence of the gin palace, deep draughts of country air, by the quiet water side. They *must* see the beautiful in nature, they *must* hear the birds sing, they *must* think and feel and reflect, and so they will be made better men. Let us, by all means, bid them 'God speed,' and hold out to them a helping hand so far as may be."

Lily's thought was a brotherly one, and it was voted that even "Bill" and his fellow clubbists might well be reckoned amongst the followers of Old Isaac.

At last came the time to "up anchor" and count the catch. There were seventy brace of good perch and one pike. All were "landed" safely, including "Bill." The last catch of the day was the home train; but the best catch of all was the promise of "Illustrations by Carbon."

IN MEMORIAM.

BY FRANCIS FRANCIS.*

. L. ROLFE, *ætat* 57, died on Monday, the 29th of August, 1881. Art loses a devoted follower, and the whole angling fraternity experiences a loss which cannot be replaced. We may have another fish artist, but another Rolfe we certainly shall not soon find.

There was no pleasanter lounge, or place of gossip, than the little studio of "the scaly painter" (as his familiar friends pleasantly called him), in Nicholas Lane, City. Cutting from the street of the Lombards, where Plutus is worshipped in many an enormous temple, through to the busy thoroughfare of King William Street, the main artery to London Bridge, is one of those narrow little thoroughfares with which the city abounds. If you walked through it, about two-thirds down it, on the left hand side, you would probably be struck with some one picture out of a dozen, exhibited in a modest, unpretending window—a "Herring," probably, or the work of some other equally popular and well-known artist. Peeping in at the open door, inside, beyond the *entresol*, you would see a small apartment, to which the window pertained,

* Mr. Francis is an Honorary Member of the M. A. A.

thronged with pictures of all sorts and sizes. If you were known and had the *entrée*, or if you desired to transact business with the proprietor, you would enter and see, beyond a half drawn curtain, the studio, a wee cozy nook, with "the Baron" himself (as he was called), seated at an easel, touching, and re-touching, a noble salmon, which is bounding from the water with a fly in his mouth and a broken cast attached, and which is entitled "A Leap for Liberty," probably, for he was fond of apt titles for his pictures, and very clever in devising them. The glittering scales come out life-like and clear under his skilful touch, as he chats away pleasantly with some old friend the while, smoking the inseparable pipe, without which he never did anything, and on his head the almost equally inseparable fez, a striking figure, much over six feet in height, with very handsome features, which a grave kindly smile from time to time overspread, rarely deepening into anything approaching laughter. Let us listen to the conversation. His companion, probably some angling friend or fellow clubbist, or haply a customer from one of the great business centres adjacent, is speaking.

"I tell you, Baron, he behaved shamefully, and I will never look over it."

"Now, now, now, look here, old fellow. I know B—— well, and I have known you for years; you are two good fellows, and you two shouldn't quarrel and be ill-friends; I will not hear of it. If he said anything of the sort I'm sure he never meant it unkindly, or as you take it; I'm sure you're mistaken; why should he

say a thing like that? You had not given him any reason?"

"Not I, not a bit, and I never——"

"No, no, of course not, nor did he, you may depend on it; there is some mistake, some misunderstanding. Don't fall out, you'll both be sorry for it afterwards, if you do. I shall see him at the club to-morrow, and I will talk to him," &c., &c; or—

"Well, if so and so did so and so, I am sorry for it; I don't want to remember it, and, if he speaks to me at the dinner, I shall take no notice of it. It is a pity there should be any ill-feeling."

He hated scandal, and always put it aside. He could not abide quarrelling or ill-blood, and if two friends fell out he was quite unhappy until the breach had been healed again.

There was a great deal of the simple, kindly, Waltonian feeling in the dear old painter, which made him beloved by all who came in contact with him. Charitable and liberal to a degree in all his dealings, no struggling friend could ever want a helping hand, if Rolfe could by any means compass it. His art and his purse, a kindly manner, and a persuasive tongue were at the service of his friends at any and all seasons. He was always giving a presentation picture to help this or that society all over the country. His works are too well known to need special notice here. In earlier life he illustrated largely in the old *Sporting Magazine*, and some of the most beautiful engravings there were from subjects of Rolfe's creation.

As an angler he was chiefly devoted to spinning, being but an indifferent fly-fisher. Indeed, he rarely cared to handle the fly-rod, but with his "bottle of pickles," as he called a small bottle of preserved minnows, which he usually carried about with him, and about which many amusing stories are told, he was very deadly. He was one of the earliest visitors to Slapton Ley, and did more than any one to make that lovely sheet of wild water known to the people. In many of his fishing sketches and studies are bits, jotted down at the time, or taken from memory, from the Ley. He was an excellent and successful pike fisherman, and I well remember once going into his studio and finding the floor nearly covered with big pike, up to 12lbs. weight, which he had taken the day before, on "a bit of the Colne," as he said. He was always rather reticent as to where he got sport. Somehow one has to be reticent in the City, or the sport will not last long. The take had been made on a lake at Amersham, many miles from the Colne proper, though the feeder (the little Misbourne), which makes the lake in question, falls into the Colne near Denham, some twelve miles down.

But, alas! he will never handle rod or brush again. The busy brain is still, the lively fancy quenched, the pliant, dexterous fingers stiff and cold, and the bright intelligence gone back to Him who gave it.

QUARTER OF AN HOUR ON THE WYE AND THE WHEREFORE.

BY GEORGE SUMNER.

ORE than twenty years ago, under the roof of a quiet country vicarage in Bedfordshire, there lived, *in statu pupillari*, four "pups." They were shortly going up to the "'Varsity," and once in the bosom of their *Alma mater*, they were "*men*." For the present, however, they were known to their friends as the vicar's "pups." Now whether the word "pup" in this connection means "a young dog," or whether it is simply "pupil" writ short, I am unable to determine. Either explanation would serve, since both terms would apply. And here I may say that if, in these papers, you didn't look to find riverside jottings only,—information, sketches, hints, experiences, bearing directly or indirectly on the science which is uppermost in your thoughts when you meet together in this room—I mean the science of catching fish—if it were not so, I say, I should be tempted to break faith with you, and instead of giving you "A quarter of an hour" (*un mauvais quart d'heure*, I fear,) "on the Wye and the Wherefore," I should give you a ramble a little longer than that with "The Parson's Pups." Unfortunately, however, the young

dogs in question had little opportunity of earning distinction as rodsters, except "on the bottom." Their superfluous energies were of a decidedly *sportive* character, but they went in for the *ram-rod* rather than the *rod*—for the *hare's scut* not the *hare's ear*. Our squire—I was one of the pups—was surely the best of men. He knew that we potted his pigeons; he gave us his rooks. He knew that we poached his partridges; he asked us to shoot his wild-fowl and his snipe. He knew that we killed his hares; he kept a large kennel of greyhounds for his own private amusement, and never coursed without us. One of these coursing days I remember as well almost as if it were yesterday. With an incident of that day I am now concerned. The biggest, fattest, lustiest, laziest of our quartet was posted to keep watch and ward over the only gap in a twenty-acre field. He was enjoined to allow no hare to pass that way. It is said, with some truth I believe, that a hare can't see straight before her, at any rate it seemed so on this particular occasion. The beat was soon successful. There was a welcome "so-ho"! The blue puppy Blue Ruin, and the red and white ticked dog Spot-white-on-red, in the slips at the time, were brought to their game. A handy clod set her going; "loo-loo"! was the cry, and, in a moment or two, the hounds were slipped. Poor puss headed straight for the well-known gap. Our friend M. stood there, his legs slightly apart, as motionless and as silent as a statue. The blue and the red, straining every nerve for the lead, had almost picked up their hare, when between the extended calves she rushed, like a jet of steam through

a safety valve, and, in the ditch beyond, there struggled Spot-white-on-red—Blue Ruin—M!

Gentlemen, this is a parable. M. was a stop-gap. Your humble servant is a stop-gap. Stop-gaps sometimes come to grief. The conclusion is obvious, and you've already had a specimen of the extremely discursive character of this paper! M., however, picked himself up, and I must e'en try to follow his example. The fact is, our secretary announced the other day that this would be an open night, unless some one volunteered to *do* something in the meantime. One man suggested that an open night was a good thing, and that we might "have larks." I am inclined, after "cogibundity of cogitation," to think he was right, but your secretary promptly booked my offer of "a quarter of an hour," so you are not spared the infliction after all.

Seriously, however, I am not sorry to have the chance of doing what I can to raise amongst you an interest in my favourite stream—the Derbyshire Wye. I believe that after a little experience and a fair amount of patience, even if light creels at first were the rule, perseverance would be rewarded by good baskets of trout and grayling, and that you would soon be compelled to feel grateful to the little river for days that you would have good cause to treasure in your memories.

The Wye is a stream that grows upon one. Some of you, no doubt, have discovered this for yourselves; and to this small minority I have nothing to say that will be new, unless I wander into the realms of fiction

and tell them something that isn't true! The number of men in this association who really *know* any considerable length of the Wye is, I think, very small. One visit is made, perhaps a second; each day has proved a blank, and the Bakewell or Rowsley meadows see their visitor no more. This at any rate is my idea, and this is "Why" you are listening to a paper on this particular fishing ground.

As to the "Wherefore" of my line of title, I will do what little I can to account for lack of sport on days when there should have been no lack. I venture to hope that there may be found here a hint, there an assertion, elsewhere an experience, that may suggest perhaps a trifling change of style, or method, or *something* that will make all the difference in days to come. Pray don't so far mistake the position I have taken as to suppose that I am *making* the smallest claim, or that I *have* the smallest claim, to speak with a voice of authority on Derbyshire fishing. Each season as it comes round finds me still a learner—a learner with lots to learn. I kill a few fish there sometimes—that's all—and I find it easier to do than I did at first.

The part of the stream I have usually fished is the length between Bakewell and Filliford Bridge. The Rowsley meadows, too, are not altogether unknown to me, but the upper waters I have not fished at all. In case I have one listener who has never seen this ground, I can give him my assurance that the valley of the Wye is, as a bit of scenery, just perfect. It has a quiet beauty of its own, which, like its merits as a fishing station

keeps growing upon one. There is one condition of the atmosphere particularly, in which the distant hills are well nigh as blue as the sky above them, that gives an effect in Nature that it would be impossible to suggest the faintest idea of on canvas. Men have tried—they always fail. It has struck me more than once, in my rambles by the Wye-side, that whenever the valley is more than usually charming to the eye, the fishing is a failure. Is it because there is soon to be a heavy downpour of rain, and that the fish are fasting in anticipation of their "Diet of Worms?" or is it that they too have a sense of the beautiful, and are unselfish enough, under *such* circumstances, to give the flies a chance of enjoying it with themselves? How this may be I know not, but this I know, that any one who goes to the Wye is certain of either an eye-feast of the beautiful or of a fair chance of sport. In either case he will be in sympathy with the three jovial huntsmen who "powlert up an' down a bit, and had a rattlin' day."

And now to the river itself, as a fishing stream. The scenery on its banks needs no words of mine—it is always there to speak for itself.

I daren't even try to give you a picture of famous old Haddon,

> "Where the sun shines bright upon tower and tree,
> And the meads smile green as green may be,
> And the dear little dicky-birds carol with glee,
> And the lambs by the river skip merry and free,"

> "For painting's an art I confess I am raw in,
> The fact is, I never took lessons in drawing."

I believe that to attain a fair amount of success in the Bakewell or Rowsley meadows, some knowledge of the stream is essential. Nine out of every ten men who fish these waters treat them as they would probably treat other waters of an apparently similar character, and nine out of ten fail in consequence. Nearly every one you meet *strolls* down the river side, and *fishes* down, in full view of the fish. He flogs over a mile or two of water, finds the creel still empty, and either rigs up a new cast or retires to his inn in disgust. Often enough he has been working his flies on the surface, and he could not hit on a safer method of putting a Derbyshire trout off than that, especially when using winged flies. If you watch the different varieties of river insects going down the water, they are, for the most part, perfectly motionless, just floating down the stream, taking a short flight perhaps, but the little flutter they make being in the air not on the surface of the water. Now the fish in the Wye are very particular. They are thoroughly acquainted with the curious vagaries of an artificial fly injudiciously handled, and they require careful humouring and careful stalking. So when the wind obliges the angler to fish down the stream (I don't say, mind, that this gives the best chance of a good basket)—there are a few simple rules that he will do well, I think, to follow.

1. He must keep as far from the bank as possible. 2. If there is a rise on he ought even to kneel. A pair of loose macintosh leggings will prove invaluable for this purpose. 3. He should fish *his own bank* very carefully,

for the fish there cannot have seen him. 4. Let him sink his flies, and allow them to be taken down by the stream. If they are on the surface, the current pulling one way, the line the other, they can't look natural. 5. Hackles are superior to wing flies for down-stream fishing, though the former will often kill if they are not allowed to spider. 6. It matters little what colour a man's coat is, because it must be kept out of sight, but let him

> "Avoid fancy trousers!—their colours and shapes."
> Says Ingoldsby "sometimes lead folks into scrapes!
> For myself, I confess
> I've but small taste in dress,
> My opinion is therefore worth nothing—or less—
> But some friends I've consulted,—much given to watch one's
> Apparel—do say
> It's by far the best way,
> And the safest," to wear, with the Premier, "Scotch ones."

7. The angler should fish as long a line as he can. I don't mean as long as he can cast, but as long as he can fully command. 8. It is quite unnecessary to *strike* when fishing in this particular way. The moment a rise is *felt*, for it can't be seen, the fish is either hooked or away. 9. The tackle must be of the finest to be had for love or money, and the flies should be tied by a man who understands exactly what is wanted for the Wye. 10. Hangs are very numerous and cause some trouble—let the rodster beware of them. 11. And here I may say something in favour of a tapered casting line. Until this season the whole of my cast was of the finest gut I could get hold of, but this is not necessary. Not only does a tapered line cast far truer than an untapered one, but if you *do* get your point fly or middle dropper

fast in a stake, just haul away, gently at first, and you'll generally find you've lost little or nothing. The loss of a whole cast will scarcely happen once in a season. It is obvious that, if your flies vary in size, the *smallest* should be fished at the *point* of a tapered trace. I know this is unusual, but you will lose nothing by putting up a cast with a true taper throughout—at least until your fish show a marked preference for something *big*. *Then*, of course, let them have it.

So much for the method of down-stream fishing. You won't kill very many trout that way. The basket will consist almost entirely of grayling, and any one who tries it in the later months of the year will, I feel sure, have small cause for regret. In the months of April, May, and June the grayling are many of them out of condition. I say many of them, for it is a fact that some of the grayling taken then are as sound and firm as fish can be, especially the smaller ones. I suppose these are barren fish.

I may now discuss what I think is the most killing, as it is certainly the pleasantest and most scientific, method of taking trout with the fly. South country anglers, in streams like the Test, are Past Masters in this branch of the gentle science. I mean up-stream fishing with a dry fly. The plan is both simple and effective. For this particular style of fishing, two flies are better than three; one is better than two; a winged fly is superior to a hackle. The first thing to do is to find a good rising fish, some fine old fellow sucking down the duns under the shelter of an overhanging bank, alongside a

swirling eddy. On anything like a favourable day you won't have far to seek. Having found your fish, study his surroundings. Choose your most favourable position below him, though not, if you can avoid it, directly below him. Aim at a point, not in the water but in the air, a little up-stream of him, and about a yard above the surface. Take two or three preliminary shots for the purpose of drying your fly thoroughly, and accurately measuring your distance, and then make your cast, still at the imaginary point above the surface. In this way you'll put your fly over him as lightly, as naturally, as possible. The delusion will be complete; you'll see a welcome little break in the water, and the disappearance of the fly. Then strike—pretty hard, for the trace, in coming down, will have given you a foot or two of slack. It doesn't do to raise the point of the rod much, if at all, for fear of the spidering motion it might give the fly. Strike pretty hard, I say, not with a "turn of the wrist,"—that's a popular fallacy,—but with a quick upward motion of the hand. A turn of the wrist is apt to involve a preliminary downward movement of the rod's point, and at best it loses time, when even a small fraction of a second is valuable. Strike, and you have him; and now it will be either the fault of a stake, or of a hang, or of a bed of weeds, or of bad tackle, or of your noble self, if you don't bring him to basket.

I have known a good fish to be taken in this way by an old Wychamist, who had seen him rising two days running in exactly the same spot, and refrained from bothering him, because there was no favourable slant of

wind for putting the fly over him neatly from the only coign of vantage that promised a successful issue. The third day he was more fortunate, and that fish *ought* to have been a two-pounder, but he was just a shade out of condition. It is not difficult, in this style of fishing, to kill from three to six brace of good trout during the rise. And now-a-days this is not a result to be sneezed at.

The size limit in the Wye is ten inches, and it is a peculiar feature of the stream that you rarely get a fish under that length. I am quite unable to account for the absence of small fish, but as a matter of fact they are few and far between. There comes, though, curiously enough, occasionally a day in which you can kill nothing else. The weight of the Wye fish runs from half a pound to two pounds, both for trout and grayling; and above this weight there is here and there a monster, but—— you won't catch him.

Quite lately, as some of you may have heard, there was at Bakewell a little dog, "with squab figure, black muzzle, and tortuosity of tail, that curled like a head of celery in a salad bowl."

' On an unlucky day,
Why, no one could say,"
He went out for a swim one fine morning in May:
" But was lost to view
Like the morning dew;—
He had been, but was not—that's all that they knew."

The fact is, a patriarchal pike—pike? no, trout! a trout, my masters!—feeling hungry, made a grab at the curly-tailed pup, and if he hadn't met with a more *dogged*

resistance than he expected, would have swallowed him with all the gusto of a heathen Chinee. There was a hitch, however, in the operation—the curl of the tail caused a choking sensation, and the father of all the trouts in Wye, in a flurry like that of a dying whale, was ignominiously brought to bank in the landing net of a casual angler. He scaled—without the little dog, mind, which all too late he had disgorged—just eight pounds and a half. I wonder whether I ever hooked that fish. I remember once, just on the edge of dark, getting into something that felt, for a brief moment or two, like a lordly salmon, and then his place—his place I mean at the end of my line—knew him no more. I always fancy my finger must have touched the running gear. I wish it hadn't!

I have mentioned two distinct styles of fishing. On most days a combination of the two styles will be both practicable and desirable, especially late in the season, when a mixed bag of trout and grayling will usually be the result. A wet day, particularly a day of small drizzling rain, nearly always gives good results until the water is so discoloured as to be unfishable. On these occasions you may get near enough to the bank to try the opposite side in places where, if you were casting a long line, you would have no earthly chance of success, owing to the intervening stream laying hold of it, giving the flies an unnatural pull through the water, and destroying all chance of striking any fish that might happen to rise. I remember two wet days in succession, in which the water was moderately coloured, when I fished

across in this way at rising fish, getting as near them as I could so as to shorten the line, and the results were, on both days, very satisfactory, The odd feature in the case was that on one day every fish was killed with the quill gnat, while on the other every fish fell to the sand fly, both flies having a fair chance each time, at any rate until the fish made a very decided selection.

It may not be amiss to say a word about the May-fly season ; and à propos of this, I may mention that for about a fortnight before the drake comes on there is little fishing to be had. The trout, it is supposed, are feeding on the May-fly grub—either this, or they are fasting that they may enjoy their annual feast the more. Artificial floating drakes I have found to be useless, *why*, I cannot tell; and many fairly successful Wye fishers keep away from the stream when the drake is on because they have made the same discovery. There is, however, a pattern of hackle-drake (which may be obtained from Hensbergh, the keeper) that kills well, fished under water. I got three brace of large trout with it last June. Another man was fishing the same fly, and also killed trout, besides a number of chub—one of them an unusually large one, I think he said three pounds. These were caught, of course, in the still deep pools which the choicest of the chevin seem to arrogate to themselves. They often rise pretty freely in these places, and it is amusing to watch the patient way in which a man who is a stranger to the water sometimes casts over them with his small trout flies. Probably the biggest and blackest of big black beetles, or the busiest of busy

bumble-bees, or a cheery cockchafer, or a curly caterpillar, or even a cockle, would be more in their line.

There is also a word to be said about a style of fishing I have not yet alluded to—I mean, of course, the up-stream method advocated by Mr. Stewart. Though my rod is not exactly built for quick, short casts—it is scarcely stiff enough—I have fished the rougher parts of the river, the strong streams and the broken water below the falls in this way, with marked success. Indeed, I have had a new top-joint made, with the object of securing better chances in the future than I've hitherto given myself. I am quite certain that, with a southerly or south-westerly breeze, up-stream wet-fishing would succeed admirably. Besides it would be a thing the trout in Wye have had no experience of, for one never sees a man working up—or if not never, well hardly ever. There's a fine opening there for Mr. Mackenzie. I hope he'll try it. Perhaps the most serious drawback to this style of fishing is that wading is not allowed. Still a good deal can be done from the bank; and "why or wherefore" one never sees it going on in the Bakewell or Rowsley meadows is "a thing that no fella can understand."

There now remains but one other topic on the fishing proper, that I wish to touch upon—the evening fishing. After a really good day there is frequently not much to be done. But in the months of July and August, especially in hot weather, the large pool below the bridge at Bakewell, and that other stretch of water under the weir and as far down as the iron bridge, are

completely dotted over with rises. The sport is often fast and furious, and then is the best chance of getting hold of something perhaps over two pounds. The sand-fly, coachman, white moth, and evening dun are the proper flies to try, and not more than two should be fished, on a strongish cast. The pool holds a good many weeds, and you'll often have to drag your fish over them; beside, there isn't time to waste in unnecessary play, for one inexorable rule of the water is that there is no fishing allowed after nine o'clock in the evening, so the weight of your basket depends generally on what you can manage to put into it in the course of an hour. A tangle, a break, a hang in some unnoticed branch, while the big trout are rising in shoals, is not "a consummation devoutly to be wished." Hence these precautionary measures as to number of flies, strength of line, and, I may add, length of cast. It need not be excessive.

The best part of the pool, for the last hour of the fishing day, is probably the side furthest from Bakewell, in the little plantation where stands the marble mill. The water is deepest close to the edge, where there are no weeds, and here the big trouts are sucking down the flies. But what careful fishing it needs with the trees round you! The game, however, is decidedly worth the candle, and with a little practice a cast can be made without allowing the flies to get behind you at all. By no means the least of the danger is when you've hooked your fish. There seems to arise, at the critical moment sometimes, an unaccountable curiosity as to how high the point of the rod will reach amongst the branches of

some over-hanging tree. The result is occasionally disastrous. In the evening fishing there is no need whatever to move about much. The trout are doing that, and they generally give you plenty to do, if you just stop where you are and keep on casting. It would be a great boon, if, during the months of July and August, the fishing hours were extended to ten o'clock. I fancy, too, it would not be an unmixed evil to allow minnow-fishing—just for a single month. Possibly the minnow might clear out a few of those puppy-swallowing monsters who think nothing of breakfasting on a half-pound trout. And whilst making suggestions of this sort, I may add that every fisherman on the water would give an enthusiastic welcome to another consignment of trout from the Lathkill. Those that were introduced a few years ago have altogether changed, and have vastly improved, the breed in the Wye. One other hint to the authorities—the last—the bridge pool might well spare one half of its weeds.

I have been talking about the fishing pure and simple, until I fear I have overstepped my promised "quarter of an hour." To the Wye-side anglers I must apologise for having seemed tedious in telling an already thrice-told tale. To you, the others, I have spoken in the hope of meeting you occasionally at the Rutland Arms Hotel at Bakewell, and hearing you discourse of the where, and the when, and the how, and "the why, and the wherefore," of the capture of each of the big fish on the big dish that has just been consigned to the wire safe in the sheltered corner of the yard.

Just a stray scrap or two of waterside or fireside experience, and I have done. On a fairly good rising day, about two seasons ago, I was working down from Bakewell with an eye to the grayling. In the last field of the upper meadows, a little above the stepping stones, I noticed a large man, plying a large rod, with large two-handed industry, in a favourite haunt of the chub. On getting well past him, I felt relieved, for I had a sort of instinctive dread of being interviewed by the gentleman. The rookery stream, however, looked too tempting to be left untried, so I fished it carefully down. I had barely turned the corner, when a voice hailed me from the rear. "Hello! Mister; what luck?" "I've picked up a brace or two of grayling, that's all." "Eh! have you, let's see 'em." So I opened the creel for inspection, and noticed on an eighteen-foot rod (eighteen more or less) a line like a cart-rope, with a gut trace and flies to match. I was surprised that he hadn't got hold of a chub or two under such favourable circumstances. "Oh! so them's grayling!" he exclaimed, "They are," said I; "good morning and good sport to you!" "But, Mister, here, just wait a minute, can't you,"—and then followed an interminable string of questions. I couldn't shake the fellow off. He stuck to me like a leech. The moment I began to fish a favourite stream, down he came upon me, and right under my nose, lashed a heap of flies into the water with such determined violence that he seemed to be trying to plumb the depth of the river with them. I hurried on, so did he. One or two good streams I missed in the hope that he would stop to try them. All

was of no use, he was determined not to be gotten rid of, so I was rude to him. He flopped his flies in, just in front of mine, as before. I reeled up, gazed at him earnestly, and enquired "in tones most decided, yet mild," "Sir, have you ever been out fishing before?" He didn't see it, but replied in perfect good faith, "Well, rather, I've been a fisherman off and on, ever since I was a little lad." Then followed another string of questions, and, irritated beyond endurance, I asked the gentleman if he had ever heard the story of Little Dick. "Little Dick?" said he, "No, what was that?" "Why, you see, Little Dick was a man who made a large fortune by minding his own business, that's all!" But again he didn't see it, and I was reduced to despair. Fortune, however, favoured me at last. We heard, close to us, the sharp bark of a colley. The dog was doing his best to head back a fine old Derbyshire sheep that was evidently putting in all she knew to make good her point between ourselves and her pursuer. His evil genius seized our friend of the salmon rod. He struck at the sheep as if he had had a whip in his hand. The cast was an excellent one; every fly held; and the run-away, on doubling back, found herself pursued by a second enemy, worse than the other. The rod top was the first thing to go, and in about fifteen seconds there was a tangle of wreckage, with a man at one end and a sheep at the other! In another second they parted company, somehow. I thankfully made my escape. I was amply avenged. An ye doubt the veracity, my masters, of this very circumstantial story, enquire, the next time you are in the Wye

valley, for the shepherd who, at shearing time, with a rusted fish-hook, pierced his thumb!

During the drake season, especially, I fear many an angler is strongly tempted to do a bit of amateur poaching with the natural fly. I remember going down to fish one day, and putting up my rod on the Bridge at Bakewell, sometime about the middle of June. My point fly was a small artificial drake, and I let him fall gently over two or three rising fish. No result, beyond a short investigation, and a prompt retreat from the neighbourhood of a dangerous temptation. There sat, all unsuspicious on the stones, a particularly fat and tempting May-fly. He found himself annexed to his unnatural brother, and offered in due course to a feeding fish. The offer was accepted. A friendly parson, who happened to be handy, seized the landing net, ran round to the water side, and lifted out a pounder. This incident afterwards gave rise to a lively discussion (and this is my only reason for mentioning it at all) as to whether a man is strictly within his right, or not, in fishing with any bait he chooses, and in any water, so long as he stands on the Queen's highway. My own opinion is that he has such right, but with all deference to the united wisdom of my brethren, I invite a further discussion on the point. Later, on the same day, another angler calmly fished the natural drake, but he was *not standing on a public road*, and an observant rustic threatened to "tell Robert." The two presently adjourned to the Bridge Inn. Possibly the fisherman had heard the story of the judge at a flower show, who claimed to have satisfied all the exhibitors,

because there was a refreshment tent in which he explained the reasons for his decisions!

I *have* seen a gentleman by the water side, in the drake season, with a large hook adorned with just a remnant of artificial wing, two or three dozen natural drakes in his creel, one or two clinging to the inside of his net. I have seen such a gentleman accosted by the aforesaid "Robert," who evidently thought it at least a case for suspicion, told a few touching stories of men who had been warned off the water and even fined, smiled grimly, and went his way. Prevention, thought Robert, was better than cure, and faith he was right, though, mind you, my masters, I don't speak *feelingly*. I have seen——but the details would be too harrowing. I gently draw the curtain! I remember Little Dick!

There are other little Wye-side experiences I should have been glad to relate, but I don't want to weary you. I don't want to wear out my welcome. I *do* want to leave off with an appetite, and I should be sorry to trouble *you* with a fit of indigestion, so I must e'en wind up my reel as fast as I can. There is, for instance, a story of a hook and an eye, it would have been pleasant to enlarge upon. There stands before me a brother in distress—the scene is as distinct as a photograph. Some unlucky squall of wind, or some unlucky *something*, had driven home the cruel barb into the lid—(ah! how we rejoiced it was not the pupil)—of an eye that, may be, is upon you now. To the rescue rush two brethren of the craft, the one with sharp steel scissors bright, the other with prehensile pair of pliers. Both weapons work right

well. From the fly the scissors clip the wings and hackle, the pliers gave an inward twist, then seize the point of the offending hook, and gently draw it through, leaving behind, to mark the spot, one drop of blood—no more. Meanwhile the distressed brother stands—there wasn't a seat handy—"like Patience on a monument," and smiles at grief.

Did time permit, one might have been tempted, spite of all herein-before declared lack of artistic power, to give a short account of that side of Haddon which does *not* form a part of the scenery—I mean the in-side. There may be seen the bedstead of the Virgin Queen, but surely 'tis cruelest irony to have placed in closest nearness the cradle of a child! An' there be spirits, and spirits there be—I've seen them oft-times in the valley, and had a taste of their quality, too—an' there be spirits, the ghost of good Queen Bess hovers o'nights over that cradle with flashing angry eyes, or is it with gentler regard of wistful yearning—who can tell?

Did time permit, one might have discussed the question, "Do trouts ever suicide?" Seldom, perhaps, yet have I seen it done; or rather I should say that no other hypothesis seems to meet the case I have in mind. The day was a bright one, the water as clear as crystal. Into the depths I stood gazing, watching and admiring a handsome trout—the trout apparently returning the compliment, seven or eight feet at most between the two pairs of eyes. The point fly I held slipped unnoticed from my fingers to the surface of the stream. The trout moved upwards, lazily enough, and as I saw him move, I

saw the fly. Presently that fish was creeled. Now, my masters, was he tired of life when he thus untimely ended it? Possibly. Yet he seemed, when he felt the prick of the steel, to have thought better of his resolve to die, and the length and the strength of the rush he made for liberty clearly proved his late, yet all *too* late, repentance.

Did time permit, one might tell the tale of the mighty grayling, that, after many a twist and twirl and reel-revolving rush, did safely navigate himself and half the cast beneath some friendly, sunken, tree-bough, water-logged—of how his gleaming back showed, plain to see (one foot of water over, an unknown depth below) ten feet or more from high o'erhanging bank, and how the landing net was all too short such distance to encompass—of how a hail brought brother angler on the scene, and, rod transferred to hand of friend in need, two staves of nets were spliced together, and how—all done, and all thought won, the line came home, and grayling thither went, with tongue in cheek, adventures new with less of danger, more of profit p'r'aps, to seek.

Did time permit, one might describe a course, in which one dog made all the points, for faith there was but one to make them—a course of a white and brindled terrier in full view of a well-grown leveret. The course was long and well-contested. The leveret strove to save his scut, the hound, hampered by warning halloo from his owner, strove to effect a kill, and did so. Poor Crib received the thrashing he'd earned; the leveret was left where he lay, and half-an-hour later, children three, two girls and a boy, their search among the rushes

directed by an observant angler on the other side of the stream, retrieved the game, and bore their treasure, in triumphant procession, doubtless with views gastronomic, to their home at Bakewell.

Did time permit, one might talk for another half hour or so of evenings, most delightsome evenings, at the Rutland—of the little assemblies there of the brethren of the angle, of their yarns, their successes, their failures, their right good company. But time does not permit. The quarter hour has already been long exceeded. Still there rises a memory, which for the moment repudiates rejection, of a brace of barristers from Lincoln's Inn (their names only differing by a single letter), of three under-graduates—one the champion miler, and all of them schooled at Winchester, the best fishing school the country through. There rises a memory of well-contested rubbers and much good fellowship; and to the three Wychamists aforesaid, you and I are indebted for more than one of the little hints contained in the lines I've read to you. That we may once again meet round the hospitable board of the Rutland, your petitioner will ever pray. One word more and I have done. I am indebted to my old favourite, Ingoldsby, to whom I am already under several obligations.

"Don't sit up much later than ten or eleven!—
Be up in the morning by half after seven!
And when you *do* fish, mind you always fish fair,
And, lastly, I'd just recommend you beware
Not, on losing *one* trout, to give way to despair;
But kindly reflect, 'There are fish, and no doubt on't,
As good *in* the river as ever came *out* on't.'"

WE'LL ALL GO A-FISHING TO-DAY.*

BY GEORGE DAVIES.

HERE'S a chance for a trout,
And the rods will be out;
There's a hatch of the fly going down;
For the snow-broth is gone,
And the rise is just on,
So, hurrah! for the deadly March-brown.
See! anglers are wending their way
Their skill by the stream to display;
Let us leave the rude throng
That goes jostling along,
For we'll all go a-fishing to-day.

CHORUS:

We'll all go a-fishing to-day;
We'll haste to the river away;
Let us leave the rude throng
That goes jostling along,
For we'll all go a-fishing to-day.

* This song is an imitation of "The Hunting Day," composed by Mr. W. Williams, and published by Messrs. Sabin and Stockley, of Birmingham.

There's the truant whose book
To a fly-feathered hook,
Now the water's right, has to give way.
Rid of *qui*, *quæ* and *quod*,
The light *cane* in his *rod*
Does the *flogging;* he's fishing to-day.
There's a breeze from the south'ard, they say,
And the sky's of a dull-looking grey;
So he cuts the old school,
And slips off to the pool,
Where you'll find him a-fishing to-day.

There's the lover whose dream
Is to be by the stream,
When the trout in the river do play.
Though he loves the dear girl
With the bright auburn curl,
He must leave her for fishing to-day.
Returning light-hearted and gay,
He'll call at the farm by the way,
For he knows very well
That his own darling Nell
Will forgive him for fishing to-day.

There's the lawyer, his brief
Cast aside with relief,
Who drops in at the office to say,—
"You may tell Mr. Brown
That I'm call'd out of town,
For I must go a-fishing to-day.

As for Robinson, costs he must pay;
With Jones we'll no longer delay;
And our client, old Tait,
He can very well wait
Until after my fishing to-day."

There's the vicar turned wrath
In despite of his cloth;
"There's a time for all things," he doth say,
"I'll wed them to-morrow
For joy or for sorrow,
But I must go a-fishing to-day.
So saddle the chestnut—or, stay——
I think, John, I'll ride the old bay;
I've a touch of the gout
I could well do without,
So I'm off for some fishing to-day."

There's the doctor's old drag
With his fast-trotting nag;
Ne'er a visit he's going to pay,
For he means, when he's out,
To prescribe for the trout,
For he must have some fishing to-day.
If sent for, he's left word to say—
A pressing case calls him away.
When Jane answers the bell,
Why of course she don't tell
That the doctor's gone fishing to-day.

There's the merchant his books
Poring over, with looks
The reverse quite of what we call gay,
Till he springs from his stool
And exclaims " I'm a fool,
For I ought to be fishing to-day.
There's a motion proceedings to stay,
And accounts to collect and to pay,—
They may go to Hong Kong,"—
And he bursts into song,
"Yes! I must go a-fishing to-day!"

There's our President too,
Our Vices, and you
Brother anglers, to whom I would say—
" As your years shall increase
May your pleasures not cease,
Or grow dull on a fine fishing day;
And when you're too old for the fray,
May your grandchildren talk of the way
That you kill'd the big trout,
Or the salmon got out,
Long ago, on a fine fishing day."

PATERNOSTER, OR BOILED COCKLES.

BY GEORGE DAVIES.

N ardent angler oft had tried
A likely pool without success;
All sorts of days he thither hied,
In hopes kind Fortune him would bless.
He sat there morning, noon and night;
He fish'd when it was wet or dry;
Or hot, or cold, or dull, or bright,
Save when he'd other fish to fry.

He tried the various flies he knew,
Or angler e'er had tried before;
Fish'd when 'twas calm, or when it blew,
Fish'd with long cast, or close in shore;
Tried brandlings and the larger lob,
Tried minnows, wasp-bait, all in vain;
He neither got a rise nor bob,
Though broil'd with heat, or drench'd with rain.

At last, one midnight, as he lay
In "pleasing dreams and slumbers light,"
A ghost dropped in, a call to pay,
And he beheld a wond'rous sight—

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THE COCKLE STALL.

A sight he would not soon forget,
  Or could not, if indeed he would;
A spirit form his vision met,
  And by his bed the spectre stood.

And this it said, or seem'd to say:—
  "Dear Paternoster, I have seen
"Your patience tried from day to day,
  "Beyond endurance too, I ween.
"There is a trout which you must catch;
  "By but one bait can he be foil'd;
"Get that, and then you are his match;
  "But keep it dark—*'tis cockle—boil'd!*"

Next morning, got up in his best—
  Top hat, frock coat, frill'd shirt and kids—
To market Pater goes in quest,
  And for a quart of cockles bids—
Then hurries home to get them boil'd;
  He's got the "tip;" there's no delay;
The "good thing" might, he fears, be spoil'd,
  If he should waste a single day.

So off he started, blithe and gay,
  With creel, and reel, and trusty rod,
And cockles!—eager for the fray,
  While still the dew was on the sod.
He chose a likely-looking place
  To hold a goodly trout or two,
And hoped he'd get at least a brace,
  For there the shelt'ring alders grew.

Nine hours he sat upon a stone,
  Nine hours without a blessèd bite,
Nine hours, all by himself, alone,
  Nine hours, till "witching time of night,"
Nine hours of unrewarded hope,
  Nine hours, and not one beauty grassed,
Nine hours,—but "by the Holy Pope!"
  The Pater has a bite at last!

He strikes; the line runs off the reel;
  The supple rod bends to the strain;
The fish tries hard to cheat the creel
  With mighty rush, but all in vain.
He sulks; he leaps; twists in and out;
  For long he makes a gallant fight;
But Pater deftly lands his trout—
  A good three-pounder—honour bright!

Then home he trudged, still blithe and gay
  With creel and reel and lusty fish,
And thought of buxom Mrs. J.,
  And frolic Fan—then murmured "Pish!
My heart 'gainst widows' wiles is proof,
  And though Susannah may be clever,
It never melts on her behoof—
  That is to say—well—"hardly ever!"

And still the Pater tells the tale
  Of how that three-pound fish he foiled,
And how the baits that didn't fail
  Were ghost-invented—cockles boiled.

"NINE HOURS OF UNREWARDED HOPE."

Nay more—to let the whole truth out—
  (Confession some folks think a duty)
He didn't care to keep the trout,
  But Fan received the speckled beauty.

And this is where the fun comes in;
  The nuptial knot bound Pater fast;
That three-pound trout a heart did win,
  And he's a Benedict at last.
And when his friends around him throng,
  The dish most honoured, never spoiled,
The dish that oft inspires their song,
  Is—keep it dark—is—*cockles—boiled!*

A WEEK IN MID-WALES.

BY JAMES LAUDERDALE WILSON.

OME years ago B. and myself went for a short holiday to a little watering place on the Welsh coast, to find what we could of amusement combined with the business of trout-fishing. The trout-fishing was very moderate, but there was no lack of amusement.

The place we went to was a little village in a valley shut in on both sides by fine wooded hills, and through which ran a river which up to the village was tidal.

We arrived, after a long journey, in time for a six o'clock dinner, and as we were discussing it we observed with delight some magnificent fish rising freely in a pool within sight of our window—a performance which I am sorry to say they never repeated during the whole of our visit. We often tried for those fish, but so wise were they in their generation that we never succeeded in getting a rise out of one of them.

The next morning we devoted our energies to seeing what the fishing was like. We tried the river without success, for the stream was so fine and low that (the fly only being allowed) nothing was to be done, and in this state it continued persistently.

Tired of this, we tried a little stream which fell into the river from the hills, and discovered in it sundry small trout, the largest of which was about five inches in length. We learned afterwards that these small fish lived in a state of terror, being persecuted without intermission by the whole of the native community, who at all times of the day were in pursuit of the unfortunates, with every device that ingenuity could suggest. They tried them with fly; they tried them with worm; they tried them with grubs; they tried them with maggots; in fact with everything but minnow, and the only reason they did not try with that was that there was not a trout in the stream which could have swallowed one. We, of course, heard the usual stories of monstrous fish—the noble and patriotic Welshmen apparently thinking it necessary to lie magnificently for the honour of the Principality—but the fact that there was scarcely a place in the stream where a decent fish could lie seemed to us sufficient reason for disregarding their testimony.

Balked again here, we made further enquiries, and at last heard of a lake in the hills.

"Are there any fish in it?"

"Yes indeet, very fine fish."

"Are they to be caught?"

"Not without a boat."

"Is there a boat there?"

"No."

"Has any one a boat?" They didn't know.

At last, after many questions we heard of a man who

rejoiced in the name of Griffith Parry, and who not only had a boat but actually lived in one. This paragon of a Welshman we sought. We found him with his children, his ducks, his cocks and hens, his wife, and all that was his, living two or three miles down the river in a kind of modern Noah's Ark. Griffith Parry had in his youth been a sailor, had served on one of H. M.'s warships, and had been several times round the world. He had in his wanderings acquired such a habit of restlessness and so great a dislike to living ashore, with its consequent ties, that he had vowed never to do it; and so he had bought, hired, or stolen a non-descript kind of old vessel, built an extra cabin on her deck, and lived in her. When he was tired of one place (he explained to us) he just sailed to another, and anchored there till he was weary of that, when he repeated the process. He had a boat, and would send it up to the lake for us.

Having arranged for this we returned to the inn, and after dinner found some amusement in studying human nature in the smoke room.

Presently the old keeper came in for his evening glass, and we learned from him what we could of the fishing thereabouts. We had noticed, in our walks down the river, a fine deep pool with a peculiar rock near the middle of it, and this, the old keeper said, had a hole through the centre, under water.

He spoke of there having been an enchanted salmon there in years gone by, but it was not until he had had several glasses of cwrw and whiskey mixed, which it

appeared was his special vanity, that we induced him to open his mouth and tell us the legend, which was somewhat as follows :—

"In the gravelly stretch above this pool was born, and in this pool there lived, a noble Ancient British salmon. In his youth, when as an innocent pink he jumped and dashed at almost everything, he had twice felt how sharp is the steel hidden in silk and feather, and seeing the error of too great impetuosity, had resolved to fall no more a victim to such rashness. In his annual migration to the sea this wise fish had seen both men and cities, and as each winter gave another twist upwards to his under jaw, so did it add another wrinkle to the many already stored in his receptive brain. At last, by the time he had attained his full girth and weight, his wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all other salmon. In vain was the fly jerked above his head; in vain was the minnow twisted past his nose; in vain was the insidious worm dropped gently before his eyes. They were to him the world, the devil, and the flesh respectively, and he being a truly wise fish, and well brought up, renounced them all. The natives, having often and often tried to ensnare him, gave up the attempt in despair, attributing their failure at first to satanic influences. Afterwards, however, they made a merit of their inability, and at last held this salmon to be highly sacred, and by no means to be fished for, being fully persuaded that if they could not catch him neither could anyone else. But into these then little frequented parts came an undergraduate, fresh from Oxford, and he, with that noble contempt for general belief which is not

unfrequently entertained by young Oxonians, hearing of this salmon, braved the public opinion of the village, and—fished for him! He had in his book a fly known as "Great Medicine" everywhere, and this he presented very judiciously to the great fish in question, who, whether in a moment of unaccustomed weakness, or justly irritated at the presumption of this youthful scoffer, took it. Then commenced such a battle as the oldest Welshman in that valley had never seen. The fish seemed to be in all the corners of the pool at once. He rushed up and down the river—he sulked at the bottom—he ground his nose against the stones. The Oxford man (no freshman, evidently, in the use of the rod) was sometimes in the river and sometimes out of it, but he held on, and at last it seemed as though the fish was beaten, for he allowed himself to be drawn gently to the side. The gaff was ready, and was all but driven home, when the wary old salmon made one supreme effort. He thought of his rocky retreat; he recollected his ancient cunning; he bolted right through the familiar arch and over the top of it, twisted the line round the stone as he went, and then, putting his tail to his nose, with a mighty leap broke the hold of the hook and fell into the water the conqueror. But his heart was broken. His confidence and trust had been too rudely shaken. He, the wisest of all salmon, had been hooked. He could not bear the loss of his prestige in the eyes of his former admirers, and he left the pool, never to be seen again by the eye of mortal Welshman."

The keeper ended his story, drank off his whiskey, and

wishing us luck for the morrow, left us to dream of monstrous fish and enchanted pools.

As our boat could not be on the lake till the day but one following, we spent the next morning in exploring the neighbourhood, and found, some four or five miles off, a very nice-looking stream in which we understood was a fair amount of fish, and in which leave could be obtained. So we wrote to one of the proprietors, from whom we afterwards received a very kind permission for two days' fishing. In the evening we went to see a man who was said to have some of the real blue hen feathers so well-known in Wales. He kept a little inn at a village some distance away, and had in his younger days been a well known fisherman. We found him in a somewhat disguised condition, but he insisted on knowing our errand. His fowls were all gone, he said, but he thought he had some feathers, and produced a greasy old book. From it he extracted, with an air of triumph, a solitary specimen, and said he would make us a fly which would kill anywhere and everywhere. He put on his spectacles, and after many trials produced a fly which, if it ever killed a fish, would do so by fright alone. It was like nothing of earth, air, or water, and it still remains in B.'s book, labelled "Tommy Lewis's own," a curious monument of misdirected talent.

We were told that some years ago Mr. Lewis had been the happy possessor of a coch-y-bondhu cock, whose feathers he greatly prized, and that when the water was in ply he used to catch the bird, pull out two or three feathers, and dress what flies he wanted for the day. On

one occasion some boys, knowing this habit of his, and having heard him say he was going to fish on the morrow, caught the cock over night and plucked all the feathers out of the neck of the unfortunate bird, which they then put back on his perch. Next morning they waited about and had their amusement in seeing Mr. Lewis with the cock in his hand, vainly seeking a feather and speechless with wrath. For ever after, to ask about that little incident was to let loose a torrent of the purest and most emphatic Welsh.

The next day, as the weather was very still and fine, we determined to try the river, and leave the lake for the following day. So we started early, and striking the stream at a point about three miles from the hotel, proceeded to fish it up. For a while we did no good, and saw scarcely any fish, but as the day grew warmer we observed, all of a sudden, the trout coming here and there out of corners, and from beneath stones, and taking up each his station. It was a curious sight and one we had rarely seen. We fished with varying success, for the brightness of the day made it a difficult matter to rise the fish, but with fine tackle and casting we succeeded in picking up, by three or four o'clock, some two dozen trout running from a quarter to half a pound.

The river ran through a fertile valley, and its banks were all along a perfect picture. Wild roses and honeysuckle grew in great profusion, and here and there was a clump of the golden globe-flower. The trees in many places met overhead, and the river, falling over the moss-covered rocks, looked quite green in the reflected light.

Towards four o'clock the fish went off the feed, and we began to think about our own. So we put up our rods, and walking quietly back, arrived at the hotel in a very appreciative state of mind so far as concerned dinner.

The next day being the last of our stay, we went up the hill to the lake. We had a walk of about two miles along a narrow path, which ran for a great part of the distance through woods of oak and ash. After this we came on some fine wild moorland, and then to the lake, where we found our boat waiting. There was little or no wind, and we tried in vain for a fish, for they seemed to stop rising as the boat got near them.

A brilliant thought struck B., who suggested a cross-line, and our moral sense on the subject proving too weak in the face of these tantalising fish, we soon fashioned our unsportsmanlike engine. We began with great expectations, but soon repented of our iniquity. It was no case of *pœna pede tardo.* The line could only be worked from the side of the lake, so B. went ashore with one end, whilst we in the boat rowed gently along with the other. After several attempts we got on for a few minutes very well, and had had some rises and hooked one fish, when our further proceedings were stayed by the appearance of a lively bull, who, having assumed to himself jurisdiction to act as judge in the case, and having caught us *flagrante delicto,* proceeded to execute judgment on B., who had two courses open to him. He could hold on to his end of the line, and take his chance of being made food either for the fowls

of the air or for the fishes of the lake ; or, he could make a bolt for a stone wall which ran down to the water's edge from the hill. We in the boat had the Lucretian pleasure of sitting calmly in safety, whilst we beheld B., whose movements are usually deliberate enough, let go his end of the line, and beat an undignified and hasty retreat over the wall. We looked on the occurrence as a warning not to indulge any more in cross-lines, and after picking up B., hauled ours in, and coiled it up in the stern. We had not, however, seen the last of it.

All day long did the calm continue, and there was nothing to be done; and as evening fell we began to think we were to go home with empty baskets, but at last we felt a breath of wind, and in a few minutes there was a nice ripple on the far side of the lake. Thither we rowed. "I have hold of one now," shouted B., as his line ran out with a whirr, and after a few minutes he landed a nice half-pounder.

For an hour the fish took well, and we landed between us thirteen good trout. The last of them rose at B.'s fly, and gave him considerable trouble. This astute fish bolted right under the boat, and succeeded in twisting the line round our cross-line, which in the excitement had got loose, and was trailing behind. B.'s language was anything but parliamentary. His wife, who sat in the stern, and who had evidently been out fishing before, said nothing till all was done and the fish safely landed. Then she remarked, " Really, Tom, you oughtn't to say such things ; it's quite unpleasant to hear you." B. turned round, with an injured countenance.

"Why," he said, "I never opened my mouth the whole time!"

As it was now growing very dark, we landed, and soon set off home, but not in time to avoid the storm of which the sudden breeze had been the forerunner. Before we had gone a quarter of our way the rain fell in torrents, and we arrived at the hotel wet to the skin.

Talking of our day's sport at supper, a lady asked us what weight of fish we had caught.

"Oh," said B., "about ten pounds."

"You're quite mistaken," said a small boy on the other side of the table, "they weigh six and a half pounds."

"What on earth do you know about it?" was the indignant response.

"Oh," said our young friend, "I took them out of your baskets and weighed them!"

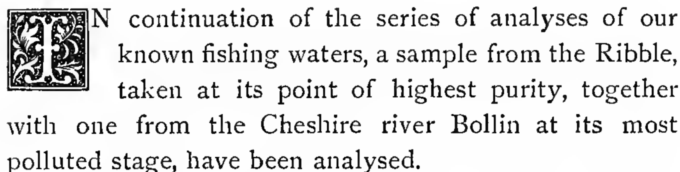
"*Enfant terrible*," growled B., and collapsed without another word.

So ended our short holiday. Next morning we returned to Manchester, and after a parting toast to the success of our next expedition, we went our monotonous business ways once more.

ANALYSIS OF FISHING WATERS.

THE RIBBLE AND BOLLIN:

BY C. ESTCOURT, F.I.C., F.C.S.



IN continuation of the series of analyses of our known fishing waters, a sample from the Ribble, taken at its point of highest purity, together with one from the Cheshire river Bollin at its most polluted stage, have been analysed.

The Ribble springs from the peaty moorlands at the highest point of Ribblesdale, near Newby Head, just below Wold Fell, which is 1,829 feet above the sea level. Within a few miles three other good fishing rivers take their rise. The Wensleydale Yore, which runs in an easterly direction; the Eden, which goes north; and the Dee and the Rowthey, which, beyond Dent, join and become the Lune, running as that stream through Lancaster.

The Ribble from its birth amongst these hills runs over a succession of the upper series of limestone, shales and sandstone, and besides deriving a peaty colour from its birth-place, it also becomes largely impregnated with lime salts dissolved out by its

passage over a rocky bed. It then flows over the lower limestone shales until it passes, at Horton-in-Ribblesdale, through the midst of the Upper Silurian formation. Here, under the shadow of grim old Penyghent, run the new waters of the Association; and it was at Horton, about the centre of the fishing, that it was determined that the chemical test as to purity should be applied.

At Horton then (seven miles above Settle), on a fine cold day in September, with the wind in the east, four days after what was said to have been a high flood, the sample was taken, the analysis of which is to be found below. There had been no rain in the meantime. The Ribble, which rises and falls in this vale with great rapidity, was very low. The recent flood had cleared away beds of mud and other causes of chemical impurity, and it may be taken for granted that the sample analysed represented very fairly the normal condition of Ribble water.

The samples from the river Bollin were obtained on Saturday afternoon, the 17th of September.

One was taken about a hundred yards above the point at which the sewage from Bowdon enters the river, and the second sample was taken a hundred yards below the same point.

There had been no rain for some few days before, and the river was at about its mean height.

On comparing the results of the analyses of these two samples, it appears that to some extent, by the precipitation of soluble matter, the Bollin is improved

by the sewage affluent. The nitrogenous matters, by which (as the analysis shows) the presence of sewage is best evidenced, being here oxidised to innocuous nitrates and nitrites, the actual addition of sensible impurity to the water is not so evident. It may, indeed, I think, be proved, that by far the greatest sinners against the purity of the Bollin are the large towns higher up. Macclesfield and Bollington, by pouring in both their manufacturing refuse and their sewage, convert the river, from what was a pure mountain stream, into an eyesore in the midst of otherwise beautiful scenery.

DETAILS OF ANALYSIS.

GRAINS IN A GALLON.

	RIBBLE.	BOLLIN. 100 yds. above Bowdon sewer.	BOLLIN. 100 yards below Bowdn sewer.
Chloride (as Chloride of Sodium)	0·9940	1·8450	2·2360
Nitrogen (as Nitrates)	0·0000	†0·0612	†0·9300
Ammonia.. Ureal	0·0008	0·0011	0·0002
Ammonia.. Albumen	0·0032	0·0140	0·0154
Oxygen absorbed in four hours*	0·0400	0·0176	0·0175
Total solid matter	9·84	21·14	18·34
Mineral ditto	4·96	13·90	11·76
Loss on ignition	4·88	7·24	6·58
Hardness*	8·04	14·40	14·60
Do. after boiling	6·07		
Appearance	light coffee color. quite clear	yellow tint turbid.	yellow tint turbid.

* The peaty matter in the Ribble water not only absorbs oxygen largely, as will be seen in the above analysis, but to some extent appears to increase the amount of hardness, the mineral matter present being insufficient to account for the whole of it.

† The Bowdon affluent makes the nitrogenous matter of the Bollin fifteen times as much as it was before.

Probably the most interesting point in connection with the Bollin is, that the length to which I am drawing attention (about five or six miles from its mouth) is preserved by an influential angling association. This association hatches (but not in the Bollin water), and annually turns in, some thousands of fry; and its members do really catch some very fine trout in the preserved length. I fancy no better contrast could be presented of the difference between pollution and non-pollution than is to be found in the subjects of these analyses. The one swarms with trout, no breeding or stocking being required; the other contains many good-sized fish, but each one of them is only another proof of the law of the survival of the fittest, since, of the thousands of fry annually turned in by the association, comparatively few, and those the strongest, are able to survive the struggle for existence in such water.

The reason of this is not far to seek; indeed the Scripture text, "milk for babes, and strong meat for men," conveys the whole explanation.

Thus, in a polluted river such as the Bollin, the constituents which in the infancy of the fry prove their destruction, will to the few that arrive at maturity give the strong food necessary to great increase in size.

Many examples of this might be given, of which the Thames affords a striking one. Small fish are rarely caught in that river, and the largest and best-fed ones are found near the places where the sewage runs in. It is indeed ever true that "life is one of the results of what we call decay."

CERTAIN CHRONICLES OF PEN-Y-BONT.

PART I.

BY DAVID REID.

CHAP. I.—*INTRODUCTORY.*

UR home in the Principality, our fishing quarters for the year of grace 1880, was by the side of old classic Dee, a stream whose very name recalls crowds of associations—historic and other. One's thoughts travel backwards through the lapse of centuries to those troublous times that marked the struggles of the descendants of the Ancient Britons, for in this valley the greatest of their conflicts probably took place. The whole neighbourhood still rings with traditions of their heroes, and still contains proofs of the reality of their power and influence. If to the rule of Imperial Rome the Celts, with their Druid Chieftains, were compelled to bow, they seem, for some twelve hundred years, against Saxon and Norman, to have held their own; and it was not until the reign of the first Edward that the sons of the Cimbri lost their independence. We have, even now, one frail memorial of olden days which forms a

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PEN-Y-BONT.

connecting link of the past with the present, and belongs, so far as I know, to the rivers of Wales alone. I mean, of course, the fishing skiff of wickerwork and hide—the coracle. The angler of to-day, as he sits working with one hand the paddle, with the other the rod, claims brotherhood with the fisherman of two thousand years ago.

The Dee valley is at once grand and beautiful—a combination of water, wood, and mountain, ever changing, ever new. From the fishing-house upwards it opens out into meadow and plain, with receding hills ; while below there are narrow gorges, with high overhanging cliffs and rich growths of forest trees. The house itself is a model of all that an angler could wish—an old-fashioned farm inside and out, with old-fashioned customs and old-fashioned ways. It has an entrance hall, reception room, and ancient kitchen, all in one. It has a study in black and white—a ceiling with dark, time-worn oaken beams. It has a quaint staircase, oak furniture black with age, easy settles in the ingle nooks, a wonderful collection in pewter, and a fireside that realizes all that is cosy and comfortable. There, after a hard day on the river, may brother anglers discuss their day's experiences, and spin their yarns, and sing their songs, and crack, in mirthful mood, their jokes.

Than the surroundings of the place could anything be more refreshing to those who live in a crowded city, with scarcely room to breathe? Here we have a farm steading and all the delights of a country life. The garden is well worth calling one. It is crowded and somewhat rough ; but here again are old-world, old-fashioned friends—the

box at your feet and the yew that keeps watch at the gateway, the green bay tree in one corner and the juniper bush opposite, the great tea rose at the gable and the more precious one at the porch. There are gnarled tree roots on which grow delicate ferns. There are all the simples that our grandams culled; and by the bed of savoury herbs may be seen fragrant lavender and lad's-love, with, you may be sure, a fair sprinkling of the bachelor's own—his "button." Talk to our hostess about them, and what a tale she will tell you. Every plant and tree has its history. A sigh here, a smile there, elsewhere perhaps a faint suspicion of a blush, and with the touch of an artist, she paints you little scenes of the domestic drama. Through the garden there ripples a stream, and to its gentle music the birds sing for us weary toilers of Manchester their "strains of unpremeditated art"—their songs of love.

Farmer Hugh and his wife Mary, the joint keepers, managers, proprietors, and general engineers of Pen-y-bont, are Welsh, Sir,—no mistake about that,—and a better matched pair could not well be found. Hugh is sturdy, hard-working, and long-headed; while Mary has all these qualities, combined with a large supply of shrewdness and knowledge of human nature. She is a good business woman, yet brimful of wit and humour; can make a bargain and stick to it, and has plenty of reserve force and energy which she is not afraid to expend for the well-being of those around her. What can an angler desire more than such a home, such a neighbourhood, and such homely people to care for him?

I first went down to Pen-y-bont, with two fisher friends, in winter-time, when all nature was at rest. Frost, with its power of seeming death, was everywhere triumphant, and the silences reigned supreme. Never will the highly favoured three forget that day of days when they climbed Moel Ferna's side, and saw from the summit a panorama of mountain tops and valleys, when every rivulet was stiffened into fairy caverns and grottoes and bridges of ice. Brooks, waterfalls, and rushing fountains, all were stilled, arrested in their flow, by the magician Frost. The queen of the Berwyns, as she appeared that day, may be likened to a mighty throne, buttressed by a number of lesser ones, all white as alabaster, the steps formed by a frozen stream. Far below might be seen a carpet of mosses and evergreens, in all the beauty of their golden and emerald hues. No sound escaped the lips of the climbers; they were spell-bound by the Spirit of the Mountains.

CHAP. II.—*OUR OPENING DAY.*

WHAT an inspiriting thought—a first Spring fishing day! Is there an angler, worthy the name, whose heart does not leap responsive to the sound? The "Pleasures of Hope" he has been feeding upon for weeks. The "Pleasures of Memory" he will feed upon for the weeks to come. Mark his eager steps, as he sees from the crest of the hill the river at his feet, and feels

that he is to wave once more the favourite wand o'er pool and stream. * * * * * *

Thus, eager for the fray, did a quiet reserved disciple of good old Cotton, and myself, set out from the Association home for our first day amongst the trout, and thus in fisher talk did we beguile the way.

"Well, what think you of the prospect for the spring fishing, and of our sport to-day? The water is high, and of good colour."

"It is so, but I have learnt during the many years I have fished this river, not to count my chickens before they are hatched, for, believe me, it is a somewhat uncertain water. Both as regards times of feeding, and kind of food, we have much to learn. There is such a large variety of insect life below, in addition to the winged flies that we see on the surface, that we can scarcely expect to take fish at all times, either here or elsewhere—especially, perhaps, in Dee. The morning is fine; the weather seems favourable for the time of the year, but there is still the snow-broth in the river, and it is likely to foil our efforts; yet we will try for a trout or two, and probably may get hold of a salmon kelt that will give us some sport for the moment."

We fished the upper water, and tried all the likely flies and the minnow. We fished both up and down, but with very little success—just an odd fish here and there, and at last sat down on the bank, and took out our pipes.

"Think you there are many fish in the river?" exclaimed he who had never tried Dee before.

"You only ask a question," returned the other, "that I have heard hundreds of times, but always from one who happens to be a stranger here. To such a one it is almost of no use to call attention to established facts."

"Then you know of some who have made good catches?"

"Aye, many and many a one, and I've not only known of catching, but I've caught, myself. What do you think of forty brace to one rod?—from a coracle, it's true, but the fish were there! What do you think of a blank day until evening, and then in *one* place, at the head of *one* pool, a basket of fifteen brace? I remember once a party of friends from our city coming to fish, all good anglers. I had caught in a very short time nine brace, and everything promised well for the morrow, but some change had taken place in the night—merely, as far as we could see, a slight increase of wind. Anyhow, for the next three days, only a fish or two was caught by the whole party, and by myself absolutely none. But we ought to be fishing. Suppose you try that stream below; it is the best water for you under the circumstances. I will stay here."

"Best 'under the circumstances,' how do you mean?"

"Well, you see, I am wearing trousers, you stockings, so you cannot wade here in the deep water, but there are more fish in such places than in the runs. You will think this heresy, no doubt, having so often fished the brawling streams of the North, but in Dee it is as I say, and I'll tell you all I know about it. You must have noticed the long, broad, silent reaches of this river, several

feet deep. Wade in there, to mid-stream if you can; cast a long line; let your flies float down—don't be afraid if they sink—work the point of your rod slightly (you need not work very fast), and as much as possible work under the bushes right and left; then finish your casting in the middle of the water. In this way you'll kill fish—good fish and plenty of them—providing always, as the lawyers say, they are rising. This method is opposed to the modern school of fishing; yet if you try it on the reaches of the Dee, you'll catch fish there when others are only *trying* to do so."

I have since had many opportunities of proving the soundness of my friend's advice. It does not apply, and was never intended to apply, to all rivers, but down-stream fishing, deep, certainly pays in Dee. As a matter of fact, on good fishing days, the *wind* is for the most part *down*, and fishing up-stream and up-wind, if not impossible, could scarcely command a large measure of success.

After our little talk we fished on for another hour or so, but basketed only a few trout, and at last they stopped rising altogether, so we sat down on a moss-grown stone under a thorn tree, and told stories. Here is one of them; the moral of it is the simplicity and guilelessness of the natives of the Dee valley. It is a report, without permission, of a confidential conversation.

"Good morning, Mr. Jones. What a quantity of little birds you have hereabout; why, it seems as if your farm-yard is the winter home of all the birds in the valley; surely they must eat a lot of your grain."

"They do indeet, Sir, yes Sir, whateffer; but they looks nice and homely, Sir; the boys plays with them, and the missis likes them, and the grubs goes against the corn, Sir."

"Well, no doubt you are repaid by them in a thousand ways, but what a number of different sorts there are."

"Yes, Sir, there was great lots of them; you should see them in the hard weather in the pig-stye, Sir; they all sleep with the pigs, and you show a candle and thousands will come out. Old Parry of Llangollen comes here, Sir, and catches them; he pirdlimeses their legs all down, and they sticks, Sir, whateffer."

"Ah, you get the bird-catcher here, Jones?"

"Yes, Sir, they sells them down at Llangollen and other places, Sir; they do get two shillings a-piece for them; yes, Sir."

"What, for all kinds?"

"Oh no, Sir; the nice ones, the nichols, Sir."

"The nichols; what's a nichol?"

"That's one, look you, there she goes; she is a peautiful pird, Sir."

"He is indeed, Jones," and we saw our old friend the goldfinch.

"Ah! Sir," (and here our host opened wide his eyes, and looked quite innocent as he drew his fingers through his hair), "they does things at Llangollen quite funny, Sir, whateffer."

"Indeed, what do they do?"

"They makes nichols, Sir."

"Make nichols, Jones? How?"

"They do, Sir; they make cock-sparrows into nichols, Sir."

"What, at two shillings each?"

"Oh! yes Sir, that is what they do them for; they paints them—they rubs their feathers with paint, Sir! There was one Roperts at Corwen, he pought one of old Parry; and there was Mr. Evan the minister—he asked to see the peautiful pird; and there was Roperts the putcher, and Mr. Williams at the Post Office, and Mr. Davis the magistrate, and more, several, Sir; and they had a great meet, and there was prizes for the nichols, Sir, for them that was peat the others; and Roperts put in his pird, and it was cock-sparrow, Sir, and they chaffed him, and he said pig words, aha! and they do now call cock-sparrows 'Roperts's nichols, two shillings each,' Sir, whateffer!"

After a little further chat on the homing instinct of bird and beast and fish; of how the salmon returns to the very spawning bed he came to life upon; of how the swallow seeks once more the familiar eaves where she had nested; and of how even the mountain lamb may be left for months in safety on the unfenced upland sheep-walks, because she strays not far from the spot where she was yeaned; we two once more, with fly and minnow, sought to tempt the wary trout. One of us, after a shower of rain, found them in the humour at the mouth of a small brook, and soon secured four brace and a half of good fish; but to the other there came less pleasing fortunes. He slipped on a shelving rock, disappeared in the depths of Dee, and was presently to be seen fast

homeward scudding, with a broken rod, in a broken trot, apostrophising in broken words the roguish kelpies of the stream!

By no means the least enjoyable hours of "Our Opening Day" were those spent in the evening, at Pen-y-bont, with our brethren of the craft. Each contributed something for the entertainment of the rest. The old farm house became for once a house of many *stories*—some good, some otherwise. *Vive la bagatelle* was the ruling sentiment. He who was the very life of the party could be, on occasion, as grave as a judge, as melancholy as a gib-cat, as dull as a beetle, but his fancy once tickled he set the table in a roar. Jones himself sang a song about a Welsh cobbler. No one understood one word of it, but it was funny enough to provoke a smile even from a toad under a harrow!

"Did you ever hear the story of the Welsh pigeons?" said M., during a pause in the conversation.

"No," cried they all.

"Well, it's a story of native simplicity and English duplicity. A friend of mine, who was fond of pigeon shooting, had many opportunities of visiting a farm somewhere hereabouts. 'Evan,' said he to the farmer one day, 'couldn't you get some pigeons, and let them breed?'

'Oh! yes, certainly, Sir, whateffer. How many would you like?'

'Oh! get as many as you can; try for a hundred or two.'

'I will, Sir; I shall puy some from Bryn-a-tan, and

some from Cefn, and some from Bryn-a-sold. I will puy them for you, Sir, as cheap as possible.'

'That will do. I'll ask my friend M. to come down in the autumn and help me shoot them.'

'Surely, Sir, whateffer.'

'Well, how are the pigeons?' enquired X, a month or two later.

'Oh ferry well, Sir, I pought as many as you will be wanting, and I have put them all down in the pill, Sir.'

'All right, Evan, will that pay for them?'

'Thank you, Sir. They were nice pirds.'

The shooting day came, and so did old Evan, with sorrowful countenance.

'Ferry sorry, Sir, put the pigeons did not seem to like stopping, and the catses took some.'

'Well, but not all, surely; where are the rest?'

'Oh! I tid puy them, some at one time and some at another, and the pigeons tid come over the hill, and took others pack away with them; they was hen birds, Sir, and ours was cocks; some of them are at Bryn-a-sold now. Ferry sorry, Sir, put will you send us some *English* pigeons, Sir, these is *Welsh*, Sir, whateffer.'"

The story and its moral were intelligible enough, even to English ears, but what followed I defy any man to make either head or tail of. But judge for yourselves and draw your own conclusions. The witching hour was drawing nigh. The fire was getting low. Shadows, uncanny and weird, filled the chamber. Our anglers had gradually drawn nearer the hearthstone, and tales of "derring do," and local superstition became the order

of the night. Jenkins, the Historian as he was called, was asked at last for his contribution, and was earnestly adjured for once to speak the truth.

"Ah! brethren," he began, "I am probably better acquainted with the people of this valley and their doings than you all; and let me tell you there is more in their stories of ghostly influences than at first sight appears probable. We have been speaking of the unseen and the uncanny, and of the sympathies of the physical world with the world of spirits. This reminds me of a weird and frightful experience that a poor mortal passed through in this identical valley, and that was connected with this very farm. You are well aware that this house is built on buried bones, and that there's not a stone hereabout but, if it could, might speak to you of a fearful past. Probably no homestead in the vale is more intimately associated with him whose bones lie in the mound within sight of the door of this dwelling. These very chambers are watched (so saith tradition) by beings of the other world, and within reach of brother Swainson there, only hidden from human gaze by that thin partition of wood, are kept the mortal remains of the now elfish spirit of this house. No eyes may look at them save those of reverence; no hands may handle them save those of the head of the family, and it is only on certain days, and at certain hours, that a stranger may obtain a sight of them.

Well do I remember the night when outraged spirits of the mighty dead seemed to have risen as though to defend a sacred trust. The awful mound, with its pine-clad

canopy 'neath which the magician sleeps, gave forth, to eyes and ears alike, portentous signs of warning. The hollow skull and shrivelled bones, enshrined in secret recesses of Pen-y-bontine closet, sympathised with the spirits attendant on Glendwr. The night-wind moaned. The river mists were wreathed in strange fantastic forms. Tall spectral figures were seen stalking o'er Corwen's stoneless bridge. Mischief was abroad on the highways. Influences, invisible to human ken, played antics on four-footed beasts. Lorn travellers were unhorsed, saddles reversed, bridles bewitched and useless. On the river lights were seen flitting o'er Llanellen's deep pool. Were they not the corpse-candles of the drowned? 'Twas thought they were by some. The usually silent depths of Tabach-nagla seemed, on that night, to gurgle and die away in horrible rhythm, as if gloating over a terrible disaster. 'Twas then that suddenly the cry of "Lost" was heard far and wide through the vale of the Dee. "Lost! lost!" sounded on Berwyn's rocky sides; "Lost! lost!" was shouted from Bwl-coch; "Lost! lost!" re-echoed from Peniarth's dark caverns. The owls of Rhaggatt took up the cry. The solitary raven on Ferna's wild crags croaked in unison; and the dwellers in Carrog's mystic close" * * * * *

"Oh, stop, stop! Historian, no more! no more! Why, he is laughing in our very teeth; and there's old H. so overcome by the tale that he's making frantic efforts to get up-stairs through the window!"

PART II.

BY E. G. SIMPSON.

AN APRIL HOLIDAY.

Dear Mr. Editor,

When a party of the Manchester Anglers was starting for the fishing-house at Pen-y-bont, to spend a short holiday there, you asked me to send you a report of our doings; and though there is not much to tell in the way of "a glorious success" in the fishing, I think the experience we gained during our five days' visit may be of some service to the members of the Association. I would in the first place explain that our party was not a regularly organised party of friends going by arrangement, but was composed of four members of the Association who had separately come to the determination to go to Pen-y-bont on a certain Thursday, and who had never met before for a fishing excursion. I mention this because, during the five days which we spent together, there was not a shadow of difference amongst us—not a cross look or word to mar the perfect harmony—and (though anglers are proverbially friendly and sociable) I think this speaks volumes for the "composition" of the Manchester Anglers' Association.

The journey down was made pleasant by friendly

chat, and in course of time the train steamed into Glyndyfrdwy Station, and there an agreeable surprise awaited us. On the platform we found our friend E., a member of the Association who had come down the day before, and who was staying at his old quarters, the Berwyn Inn. He is a master of the art, and has fished the river for more than twenty years, and as soon as we saw him we made anxious enquiries as to the state of the water, what sport he had had, and so on. The answer was worthy of a true brother-angler. "River very low, and bright. I've been out to-day and got nine brace and a half which I have brought for you, so that you may have some fish for breakfast." Our good friend had heard that we were coming down, and had been waiting, I don't know how long, on the platform, for the arrival of our train ; but then he is one of those unselfish men whose greatest pleasure in life is doing a friend a good turn.

On arriving at Carrog Station we found Mr. Jones ready for us, and the boys soon had our luggage over at the house, where the hearty welcome of Mrs. Jones made us all feel at home directly. What a comfortable old place it is—why, Mr. Editor, it is worth taking a journey from Manchester to spend an hour in the *kitchen* at Pen-y-bont; it has a chimney-corner wide enough and quaint enough to gladden the heart of my friend Edwin Waugh himself. The old oak chairs at each side of the fire, the dresser with its load of fine old pewter platters, so carefully kept that they shine in the flickering fire-light like burnished silver, the tables white as snow, and everything about the place clean and shining as a new pin ; the home-

cured hams and sides of bacon hanging from the ceiling, and the healthy genial face of that fine old Welsh yeoman, Hugh Jones, as he sits quietly smoking his pipe, make up a picture delightful to the eye of any true angler. The bed-rooms too, are comfortable as can be, with clean sheets, plenty of bed-clothes, and last, not least, a good large hip-bath standing ready for one's use. How I blessed the care and forethought of the Fishing-house Committee as, on the Friday morning, I turned out of my warm bed and into my cold bath; and what a breakfast we all made of ham and eggs and trout—such ham—and such eggs—and such trout! Why, Sir, after Manchester it was Elysium, and, as I threw my bed-room window wide open, I thought that even if I did not catch a fish, I had done right in coming down to Pen-y-bont.

Friday was not a promising day, but we all turned out —some of the party going up the river on the Corwen water, our friend B. and myself going down. Fishing tickets, 2s. 6d. each, we got at the railway-station. The wind was in the east; the water was clear as glass; the sun was shining in a bright blue sky, and everything seemed against us for fishing; but the beauty of the Dee is so great that I forgot all these drawbacks, and after spending some hours in whipping the water with no other result than catching a great number of salmon parr (which were all duly thrown back into the river) we returned to Pen-y-bont, tired, yet full of life—disappointed at our lack of sport, but feeling in our hearts a deep thankfulness for having had one more delightful day with nature.

And then there followed the evening meal, so nicely cooked and served, the lighted pipes, the stroll across the bridge to the Grouse Inn, where two of our friends (not members of the Association) had taken up their quarters; the further ramble in the bright moonlight, the chat, the chaff, the jokes, the one last pipe before turning in—and then—the end of a day of pure enjoyment.

Saturday morning broke on us with a sun shining bright as ever and still the east wind blowing; so after our previous day's experience we determined to take advantage of the fine weather and walk to Bala. We looked up our friends at the Grouse, and, after a charming walk of sixteen or seventeen miles, which was enlivened by many a tale and joke from our friend the "Anecdotist," and a friendly argument with the "Professor" as to whether "fishing" meant "catching fish," or "trying to catch fish," we arrived at Bala, had a capital tea at the White Lion Hotel, and returned to Carrog by train in the evening.

On Sunday morning we had a great gathering at the fishing-house. The first to appear was our friend E.; then came the "Professor" and the "Anecdotist," and our party was soon afterwards increased to ten by the arrival of our Librarian and a friend who had come over the hills from the valley of the Cerriog.

With true hospitality we brought out to our thirsty brethren the best wine we had in the cellar; in fact, Mr. Editor, we brought out *all* our wine. Worse still, Sir, we, the ten thirsty anglers, regardless of the untarnished

respectability of the fishing-house and the credit of the Association, actually drank *champagne*—and liked it!

This is told you in strict confidence, Sir; for if the Association heard of such disgraceful conduct we might be severely reprimanded, or perhaps expelled—unless indeed the exceedingly small quantity consumed be taken into account.

Thus refreshed we had a glorious ramble on the hills. The day was perfect—I never remember so fine a day in March. The sun was pouring down rays of summer heat, and when we gained the top of the hill we were glad to throw ourselves down on the heather and drink in the beauty of the scene. Far as the eye could reach, mountain towered above mountain, whilst in the valley at our feet the lovely river rushed flashing over the rapids, or glided peacefully between high banks clothed with vegetation, on which the tender tints of spring were even then beginning to show. The hum of insects, the song of birds, sounds of life from below, mellowed by distance, served only to increase the feeling of perfect calm and repose; and as I lay there the lines of the poet came into my head, and into my heart too, and preached to me in language far more eloquent than words:—

> This our life, exempt from public haunt,
> Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

On Monday, to our great delight, the wind changed, and for two or three hours blew from the west. Till it shifted again to the old quarter we had very fair sport. The water was as bright as it possibly could be, and as

the river was at summer height, fishing "far off and fine" was the order of the day. The flies which did most execution were the March-brown, and blue and orange duns; and it may be as well to say here that the Dee is so rapid a river that "down-stream fishing" is often necessary. There were plenty of fish rising, but they came short, and were not really well on the feed. We managed to make a moderate basket, but many of the fish were small, and not in very good condition. The salmon fry were also a great nuisance, but the first good flood will remove many of these, and materially improve the fishing. Tuesday morning saw us sorrowfully packing up our traps, and in a few short hours we were again in busy Manchester.

And now, Mr. Editor, I will conclude my letter with a few hints which may be of service. To fish the Dee properly you have to wade *deep*, and trousers are much better for the purpose than stockings. A good strong landing-net handle, with a spike at the end, is a great help in wading. Hugh Edwards, one of the best fishermen on the river, lives close to the fishing-house, and from him may be obtained useful information, and flies suitable for the season and the water.

Mrs. Jones furnishes everything that is requisite in the way of provisions, and charges a moderate price for them, whilst some of the best beer in Wales can be obtained from the Grouse. Here also, if the fishing-house is full, comfortable quarters can be had at a most reasonable rate.

Perhaps I may as well state that the expense of my

trip, from leaving Manchester on Thursday afternoon to returning on the Tuesday following, including railway fares, trip to Bala, fishing tickets, provisions—both eatable and drinkable (exclusive of the champagne, which was an extra, and not taken into the account)—amounted to £2. 3s. 6d., and if, Mr. Editor, you or any other man can show me how I can get a greater amount of pleasure and health for the same sum, I shall be glad if you will do so.

And now, Sir, let me point out to the members of the Association, that within four hours' railway journey from Manchester they can, at the Pen-y-bont fishing house, have, at the minimum of cost, capital fishing-most comfortable quarters, and the means of blowing off the cob-webs of Manchester by a ramble through scenery so glorious that words cannot possibly describe it. By all means let them try it, provided they don't *quite* fill the house, for I am selfish enough to hope that before long I may again find myself in comfortable quarters there, with three or four as jolly good fellows as have, in my recent visit, been the companions of yours very truly,

THE EARLY BIRD.

PART III.

BY ROBERT BURN.

"GLORIOUS SUMMER."

SIT down to write on one of the last days of October, with a strong north-east gale howling through the trees and among the chimney pots, and heavy rain beating against the windows, and if it were not that a happy memory recalls those delightful days spent in the valley of the Dee, the present circumstances would almost make one disbelieve in them.

In July the country was in the height of its summer beauty; but for want of rain the fishing was bad, and though we toiled early and late, it was with little result. But June, July, and August are always bad months for this river, and with water so low as we found it, and sun so bright, we could not expect sport. Our united baskets showed only three trout and two grayling.

We have all heard of the way in which anglers often multiply their catches. A fisherman staying at the Grouse Inn was the best hand at this practice I have met for a long time. One evening he told me that great numbers of sea trout were up, in fact that the water was "stiff wid 'em." He had caught nine the day before weighing fourteen pounds, and as he was fishing for

ROCKIE ARE THY WAYES ALL OVER."—*Herrick.*

Drawn by George Sheffield.

salmon they were quite a nuisance. Not having any sea-trout flies with me, I at once wrote to our Hon. Sec. to ask for a supply. He kindly sent me an assortment such as he had used, and caught fish with, in Scotland and Ireland, and which he thought would do for the Dee. Next night I was out early, leaving word at the house that they must not mind if I was late in getting back, as I was going in for a great catch. Four long hours did I fish; then, my wife coming to look after me, I had to tackle up, with one sea trout—weight half a pound—the only rise I had. Next day, making special enquiries, I could not hear of anyone having seen those nine fish weighing fourteen pounds. They had never been taken into the Grouse, and must be looked upon as mythical. Another day this veracious angler told me of a grand salmon, twenty pounds or over, which he had played for half an hour above the bridge, but which broke away (through fouling a floating tree) with seventy yards of line and part of a new rod. Again, one morning, he passed me when I was in the middle of the river. In reply to the usual question "What sport?" he said he had just killed a salmon. I looked to see some signs of the fish, but there were none; his bag looked empty. Afterwards I learned that he had secured a noble specimen of—one pound weight.

The greatest proof of all, however, of his wonderfully elastic imagination we had one night when H. was over. He was fishing about two hundred yards lower down the water than our veracious friend, when he heard a yell of "I've got him! I've got him! Keeper, bring the gaff." The

keeper, however, was out of the way, so H., who is always ready to do a good turn, got out of the water and rushed up the bank, to help to land what he supposed, from the noise, to be a monster. Just as he got up, he heard an exclamation both loud and deep: "Confound it, he's gone!" Then the man who had lost the fish stamped his feet and gaff on the bed of the river, and blessed his luck for about five minutes before he could explain: "I'd hooked a salmon, six pounds or over, played him for twenty minutes, and then he went," and once more he took refuge in very strong language. Coming down the bank, half an hour later, I found him solacing himself with a pipe, and he told me the sorrowful tale, how he'd "hooked a salmon, *twelve pounds*, if an ounce, played him for *half an hour at the very least*, and then lost him for want of some one to use a gaff!"

From that man's vivid imagination I feel convinced that when he tells the tale now, the salmon weighed thirty pounds, and he played him an hour and a half.

Our pleasantest day was spent at Bala. The whole family went, and we were on the water six or seven hours. The weather was charming, and we saw the lake and its surrounding mountains to the greatest advantage. We were fortunate in getting a good roomy boat, and the most respectable, intelligent boatman I ever met with. He did all he could to find sport. The perch were in the best possible condition, strong firm fish, perfect pictures of beauty. Our man told us the heaviest he had taken during the season weighed

three pounds, and that he had had others a little under that weight. The fishing had been better this year than ever he knew it. Perhaps this may be accounted for by the fact that the lake has been much lower than usual. Pike, too, are numerous. A man trolling from a boat showed us half a dozen taken during the afternoon. I would strongly recommend anyone who is fond of pike and perch fishing to spend a few days at Bala. The lake is fourteen miles from Carrog, and the trains are very convenient.

We have often had described to us the charms of fishing a brook with worm in bright sunny weather. One blazing hot day, three of us set off to fish Morwynion in this way. After a stiff walk of three miles over the hill, we got down to the water, and the look of it was so promising that we shook hands and congratulated each other that at last we were going to have a day to be marked with a white stone in our angling memories, and a day we had—such as none of us are likely to forget in a hurry!

The brook is most carefully hedged in on each side, with only here and there a place to get a rod top through. The adjoining fields are small, with strong high hedges. After struggling for three miles we compared notes. Not a fish had we seen or touched! We had scrambled over, or through, some dozen of the stiffest fences I ever met with, and hot, wearied, and out of temper, we sat down to consider the situation. Five hours since breakfast, six miles from home, nothing to eat or drink, and no place to get anything. To make

matters worse we were confronted by an indignant Welsh farmer, who, speechless with wrath and want of English, could only say—"Trespass—break down hedges." We told him that Mr. Jones had said it was all right; but that only set him off again. It was a comical scene—he knew little or no English, and we no Welsh. At last the difficulty was solved, as such difficulties have often been solved before, by the production of a tobacco pouch. We made him understand that we had no wish to trespass any further, and that our only anxiety was to get to a decent road that would take us home.

One of the party was an angler from London, who had been tempted to the Dee by reports of sport. Never was a man more disgusted, and this day gave him the finishing stroke. We were almost convulsed with laughter at his repeated declarations that nothing would ever tempt him again from his "dear old Thames." There he could have sport in comfort. There was no necessity to tramp miles, scramble over hedges, and run the risk of being chased by a bull. Had he not captured thousands of roach and bushels of gudgeon, played and landed mighty barbel up to twelve pounds weight, and had an exciting struggle for half an hour with a Thames trout, without any of these inconveniences? A good roomy punt with a well-stocked locker and a man to do the work was his ideal of sport. He had been on the Dee nearly three weeks, and had only got about half a dozen trout and a few small grayling. In despair he had gone in for eels, of which

he had taken nearly a hundred. The garden of the cottage in which he lived stretched down to the river, with the Morwynion running along the side, and joining the main stream. A man of keen observation, he had carefully watched the water, and as a great treat he took us on the Sunday evening to show us a real live fish—a grayling of half a pound, which had taken up its abode under a great tree. This fish he had watched for nearly a week, without ever seeing it move more than a yard from its haunt, and he declared it to be the only decent fish he had seen in Wales.

Although our sport was bad, I am not disposed to condemn the Dee as a fishing stream. The season has been exceptionally dry, and the river lower than has been known for a long time. Men who have fished it for years, and know the water thoroughly, have done badly, and in many cases have not even put their rods together. Another year things may be very different, and I look forward with pleasure to trying my luck there again under more favourable circumstances and, I hope, with a better result.

WE'LL ANGLE, AND ANGLE AGAIN.

See "Walton's Angler," Chap. XVI. Original Setting for Two Voices (Tenor and Bass) by HENRY LAWES; the second Tenor part and the Accompaniment for Pianoforte arranged for the Manchester Anglers' Association by HENRY STEVENS, Mus. Bac., Cantab.

sor - row, and short as a bubble ; 'Tis a hodge-podge of bus'ness And

vain, short as a bub-ble ; 'Tis a hodgepodge of

sor - row, and short as a bubble; 'Tis a hodge-podge of bus'ness and

mon - ey and care, And care and mon - ey and trou - ble.

bus -'ness and care, And care and mon - ey and trou - ble.

mon - ey and care, And care and mon - ey and trou - ble.

But we'll take no care When the wea-ther proves fair, Nor

But we'll take no care When the wea-thér proves

But we'll take no care When the wea-ther proves fair, Nor

will we vex now tho' it rain; We'll ban-ish all sor-row And

fair, Nor vex tho' it rain; We'll ban-ish all

will we vex now tho' it rain; We'll ban-ish all sor-row And

sing till to mor-row, And an - gle, And an-gle a - gain.
sor - row, And sing till to - mor-row, And an-gle a - gain.
sing till to mor-row, And an - gle, And an-gle a - gain.

Chorus.
We'll ban - ish all sor - row, And sing till to

- mor - row, And an - gle, and an - gle a - gain.

Note.—Bar 19. The major chord on the minor seventh of the key is retained as in the original, being a musical idiom of the age in which HENRY LAWES wrote. The modern musician may object to the "false relation" which results from the use of this chord. He cannot fairly be denied the privilege, but he must settle his dispute with HENRY LAWES, and not with

HENRY STEVENS.

A FISHING ADVENTURE IN JAPAN.

BY EBÉRU ÉWODU.

S usual, I was much exercised in my mind, as Whit-week approached, to decide where I should spend my annual holiday.

I carefully read through the Manchester Directory and Johnson's Dictionary without finding any help, but at last a brilliant idea struck me. In the exercise of my ordinary household economy, I had bought a pound of tea, which I found to be wrapped in a piece of paper giving a graphic account of Yeddo, and a gorgeous picture of some natives fishing. That settled me; I resolved to go a-fishing in Japan.

As Thomas Ingoldsby says, "next morning I was up betimes." I went to Victoria Station, took a third-class return ticket for Yeddo by the Lancashire and Yorkshire express, and in due time, after an uneventful journey—except that we got over the line in crossing the equator, and ran full tilt into a monsoon—I heard the porters cry out, "Yeddo! Aw' yo' chaps fro' Manchester mun ger eawt 'ere." Of course I alighted, and having partaken of a bowl of bird-nest soup in the refreshment-room, asked my way to the Micado's.

A man in a calf-skin waistcoat, who wore a handsome pair of clogs, offered to show me for "tuppence," and he kindly carried my fishing-rod, a postage-stamp, and a tooth-brush, which constituted my luggage.

In polite terms he said to me, "Neaw then, kum on." I followed him until we came to a large red house with a green door and a brass knocker, and depositing my luggage on the door-step he bade me adieu, telling me I could "oather knock or purr."

At that time I did not know the exact meaning of the Japanese word "purr;" so I knocked loudly with the brass knocker, and after a short delay the door was opened.

During the interval I heard confused sounds of shifting machinery and human voices, but could only distinguish the following words, which I have not been able to translate: "Thee goa, wilt'ee, awm o' suds."

The lady who answered the knocker was dressed in the height of fashion. Let me commence my description of her costume at the top, that is at her head. The hair was worn rough, the back part being made into a coil from which stuck in all directions a number of hair pins; over a part of the head was thrown in a negligé manner a head-dress of what appeared to be rather soiled lace or net work (I am not acquainted with the technical terms Japanese ladies apply to these materials), and a double row of frills, as though made on a tallow candle, went all round the front portion of it. Two flowing strings of a material similar to the head dress completed the becoming adornment. The lady's face was rather red, the nose especially so, and this is considered a great beauty

in Japan. A blue mantilla, covered with large white spots, was negligently thrown over the shoulders, and secured to the point of the gown or dress by a very palpable pin or two. The cut of the dress was sweetly simple, and short enough to show the lady's ankle, about which more anon—as the poet says. The dress "material" (I believe the expression is correct) appeared to be a Lancashire print; the front of the skirt was tastefully turned inside out and carried round to the back, where it was probably secured by a dainty *épingle*, but I could not see it, for Japanese ladies always avoid turning their backs on strangers. The turned-up dress discovered the petticoat, striped black on a blue ground. The fair one's ankles were clothed in sky-blue woollen, and then came the coverings for the feet, which were of a curious and complicated description. They were evidently made of leather, and had buttons and button-holes, but the negligé style of the lady's dress was with admirable consistency continued here, for the sides or flaps of the boots were open, and just as there are cracks and wrinkles in the finest Japanese china, so there were cracks, chinks, and tears in these charming boots. But this was not all; over them was a sloping strap, tied with tape and fastened to a thick wooden slab that was in this manner bound to the foot. The slab, in Japan, is not allowed to touch the earth, from which it is raised by an oval rim of iron, attached by two uprights also of iron, and about two inches high.

This particular dress for the foot is called locally a "patten." The *tout-ensemble*, if I may use such a word

here, was striking to a foreigner, and as the door opened it certainly struck me, for the lady, by some mischance in moving one of her feet, projected the wooden slab, with its iron hoop, rather forcibly against my waistcoat, and caused me to press my hand upon my heart and make her a very polite bow.

"Is the Mikado in?" I asked.

"Shure an' he is," the lady replied; "is it wanting to see him ye are?"

"Indeed, fair madam, I am," I said, knowing that Japanese ladies require to be addressed in language of a somewhat high-falutin' style. "Would you graciously hand my ticket to his majesty?" with these words presenting the card of the Manchester Anglers' Association.

The lady clanked away, leaving me on the door-step, and in a moment the Micky came running out, crying, "Come in, come in, you're the first Manchester angler that's been here. What will you have to drink?"

I told his majesty I would have a bottle of pop, and then saying "Now to business, old man," I explained that I had come to Yeddo to fish, and wanted him to make it right for me wherever I should go.

"To be sure I will," said he, and taking down a large school-slate which was ready to his hand, he chalked on it—"This distinguished man is a Manchester angler, *fee, fi, fo, fum*,"—the most liberal permission that could possibly be written, even by a prince.

Before I left the royal presence, he enquired if I wanted alligators or green turtle, and being assured that I only required such fish as are taken with a small fly,

he showed me on a curious map, which I cannot here describe, where I should go, and putting his head out of the door shouted for "Tom," telling me that the man who speedily answered the summons was at my service. Tom soon took me to the water, and pulled out his fly-book, which was filled with imitations of sparrows, cuckoos and partidges; but thinking these unsuitable, I tried a cast of my own make, and I regret to say without success.

"Aw'll tell thi what," said Tom, "thee just try a grub, an' tha'll ha' one i' no toime;" and he began to root in the ground, and found before long a large, fat, white grub the size of a silk-worm. This he put on a hook he supplied me with, and I threw it into the river. Tom was right. No sooner did it reach the bottom than I found I had a bite, and that the fish was hooked. I know the savage rush of a salmon, the determined fight of a trout, even the stagnation of a snig, but I was unprepared for the behaviour of my first Japanese fish. He was not disposed to come out, nor to run away with the line. Slowly, at an even pace, as though someone at the bottom of the stream were winding it up, did he take out the line, and I saw that the fish, with uncontrollable force, but at his own measured pace, was making straight for the other side. Inch by inch had I to give way, and then at forty yards' distance I saw a large fish, perhaps sixty-five pounds in weight, slowly emerge from the stream, with my line hanging from the corner of his mouth. He winked at me as he got up the bank, and then, after walking a short distance, began to climb an apple

tree. I knew now what I had got—it was a climbing perch.

"Hooray," said Tom, "yo' just bide 'ere, Mester, whol aw fot th' blunderbush, an' we'll ha' him as sure as my name's Tum."

"All right," I said, holding the fish as tight as I thought advisable, and prepared to wait until Tom returned with the "blunderbush," which I took to be a kind of gun used in Japan; but when my assistant departed and I was left to my own devices, I found myself completely unable to decide what course to follow. The situation was quite novel; my fish was not behaving at all

like those I had ever hooked before, and to tell the truth I was getting rather afraid of him. As for the perch, he looked like one of those lions in the den who didn't care —— for Dan'l. At one time he would put out his tongue; at another he cast up his eyes with a sanctimonious look and wagged his fins at me in derision; then I don't know what he was not going to do, but Tom came in sight, and I saw him raise a huge trumpet-mouthed weapon to his shoulder. The perch saw him too; and with a deliberation which characterised all his actions since I had hooked him, he took a pair of scissors from his pocket, and cut the line!

The supple rod, suddenly released from the heavy strain, sprung violently back, and I fell heavily to the ground, with my feet sprawling high in the air; at the same time the line twisted itself in several coils tightly round my throat, my eyes almost started from their sockets, and my countenance assumed a ghastly hue, as

I could plainly see from the reflection of myself I observed in my boots, which had been carefully polished with Japan blacking. The last thing I took notice of was the perch standing on his hind legs, preparing to take a header into the river. Then I heard a bang and a shout, and remember nothing more, for I became unconscious from strangulation, and in that state, with my eyes closed, and the line wound round my neck, I still linger. If I recover I will let you know more, but it is manifest that I must stop for the present.

A LETTER FROM NORWAY.

BY AN ANGLER'S WIFE.

* * * *Hotel, Norway,*
August, 1881.

Y dear Mary, * * * * * * this letter would have been written long before now, had my good resolutions borne fruit instead of rushing off (I've rescued them at last) along the road

> Where, instead of wood blocks and such modern inventions,
> The Paving Commissioners use—good intentions."

I have delayed from day to day, hoping that I might have something to tell you worth putting in a letter and paying twopence halfpenny for the postage thereof; but, really! a series of extracts from the rainy pages of the *Meteorological Journal* would best describe the weather since our arrival here, and Time's progress has resembled the "slow and deliberate step of a man working by the day." Should this epistle be tinged with melancholy you must make excuses for me, as my ideas are nearly all washed away. "Does it still rain in Bergen?" enquire the Dutch skippers when they hail a Norwegian craft. "Yes, confound you!—is there *still* a fog in Holland?" is the answering remark.

The scenery here is magnificent, to judge from the

glimpses one has of it through the mists and the rain,—to quote the guide book phrase, "there is an ever-changing vista of new views," a remark which I find this morning to be strictly true. Every now and again a solid wall of mist divides, and I discover behind it a valley hitherto unseen and unsuspected; or I gaze at what appears to be a mass of grey cloud, which suddenly lifts to show the mountain, six thousand feet in height, which it has concealed. This uncertainty adds a great zest to one's life. Just at present there is, as Dick Swiveller remarked of his lodgings, "a fine prospect of over the way,"—"over the way" consisting of a mist which *might* hide the finest view in Norway or a back street in Manchester—it would be all one and the same thing.

The little hotel is fairly comfortable, but it is about the noisiest one I ever was in. The kitchen is close to the sitting-room, and the racket that goes on there from morning to night is something astonishing. The banging of doors, frying of fish, running of water, and washing of crockery is unceasing, and to crown all, the domestics are continually chattering at the top of their voices,—the result being that their conversation sounds to me like a Norwegian dictionary on the rampage, and you would imagine they were all quarrelling with might and main, whereas they are only discussing the most trivial details of their household work. The landlady is a motherly body, with a good-humoured face suggestive of hot buttered toast and well-aired sheets; only, as one never by any chance gets toast—hot, cold, or tepid—in

Norway, her looks belie her. She walks about the house with a can of oil in one hand with which to replenish the lamps, and in the other a duster which she whisks over any promiscuous article that lies in her way, and which she fancies may be benefited by the application. I think she must be first cousin to the German woman whose idea of Heaven was sitting with a clean apron on, singing hymns for evermore.

The landlord is a great stout individual, the very converse of the definition of a straight line, for he is all breadth and no length! He is a great nuisance in the house, for he has a habit of walking up and down the whole day long, and in a wooden building, where every sound is audible over the whole place, this is no small annoyance, especially on a wet day. The family sitting-room opens out of the public one, and he tramps from end to end of it for hours at a time—solemnly and steadily. I feel convinced he has worn a groove in the floor, as the unfortunate prisoner of Chillon did in his cell. When he grows weary of the sitting-room he retires upstairs, and continues his promenade just over my distracted head. As the floors here are only one plank in thickness, and, like all Norwegian floors, uncarpeted, and as he can never have paid for any of his boots in his life—to judge from the creaks which have accumulated in his present pair!—he nearly worries me to death. A caged lion in the house on a wet day would be bad enough, but there would be a certain amount of vitality about *him;* but a caged hippopotamus is several degrees worse, and not nearly so exciting. I have come to the

conclusion that I have discovered the Norwegian edition of the Wandering Jew.

The worst infliction of all is embodied in the only son and heir! When I tell you that he resembles the individual whom the Yankee described as comprising in his own person nine separate and distinct sorts of fool, I have sketched his character exactly. He does nothing —I mean nothing for his living,—and he plays all day long on a huge accordion. One morning I discovered him playing to himself in an empty barn, and dancing to his own music. As if these were not inflictions enough and to spare, there is a great bell over our bed-room, which rings every morning in the middle of the night, and instead of doing its work like a decent and respectable bell should, it is so enamoured of the sound of its own clapper, that it continues ringing until sleep is effectually banished, and I hear smothered growls proceeding from C.'s corner of the room. This is about four o'clock, and I believe there *are* some folks who get up at that dreadful hour—unfortunate farm labourers. There is also a cock that crows! and a dog that howls!!

I composed some verses, which I wanted to write in the visitors' book, as a small token of remembrance, but C. would not let me :—

> If once the landlord could be tethered by his l. e. g.,
> That evermore a walking nuisance he might cease to be;
> If but the lunatic, his son, were in a mad-house shut,
> And if his cracked accordion could in kitchen stove be put;
> Could once the clanging clapper of that bell be broke in twain,
> And crowing cocks and howling curs be never heard again—
> P'r'aps this hotel. a trifle changed, *might* be a pleasant spot,
> But at this present moment—well—most certainly it's not!

As it is so late in the season, we have the place pretty much to ourselves. Two dreadful specimens of the travelling Englishman have fortunately taken their departure. As they returned from a walk yesterday, they loitered on the bridge over the river to watch C. fish, and one was heard to say to the other, "Come, Arry, it's goin' to rain, let's be off 'ome"—*Ex pede Herculem!*—There is a young Dane staying here who, when not climbing mountains, lives, moves, and has his being with a huge carved wooden German pipe in his mouth, at which he solemnly puffs all day long; and there is also an Oxford tutor with four pupils who are classed together as the "Coach and four." The few remaining visitors are of the potato tribe, wholesome no doubt, but singularly uninteresting, and it is impossible to conjecture the motives which led some of them to leave their native shores.

We are pretty well. I have a cold, which is not wonderful considering that the atmosphere is an omelette and the ground a sponge. C. has daily attacks of *Delirium Piscatoris.* You wish to know whether he has succeeded in indoctrinating me with a love of the sport? (Sport indeed!) My dear, were I to say "yes," I should too greatly resemble that person who was never on speaking terms with truth. If Mrs. Malaprop's theory be correct that "it is best to begin with a little aversion," my love for fishing and all its *et ceteras* ought, one of these days, to develope into an absorbing passion. I do not like to say much on this delicate subject, for the last time I gave you my private opinion on fishers and fishing, my letter was basely intercepted, and read before an

assembled multitude of fishermen,—I mean anglers,—and afterwards published (can degradation further fall?!!)—nevertheless it is doomed to immortality, for every one knows that when *Shakespere*, *Proverbial Philosophy*, the *Saturday Review* and the *Field* (which by the way had the impertinence to call me a "gushing bride") are buried in oblivion, the *Anglers' Evenings* will drift down to posterity's remotest ages, the topmost bubble on the stream of literature!

I do sometimes patronize C.'s hobby and go a-fishing with him. Did not I, two years ago, in March, sit in a boat on Loch Tay for nine hours a day, in the teeth of an east wind to which razors and lemons would have been mild? We were there for a week and caught *one* salmon which I calculated cost forty shillings a pound at the very least. But did this disenchant C.? On the contrary, it only added to his expectations the next time he went on a similar expedition.

The other morning he thought he would "have a turn at the river," so *pour passer le temps* I consented to go with him. His costume was fearful and wonderful, showing a supreme contempt for fashion-plates. He wore a soft hat with every variety of fly stuck on it, and a coat of which to say that it had "seen better days" were to pay it a compliment, for I don't think it had ever *had* any better days to see. The rest of him was swathed from sight in a gigantic pair of macintosh waders which came nearly up to his arms, and he wore an enormous pair of hob-nailed boots, to which a navvy's would be dancing pumps in comparison. He carried in

one hand a gaff, and in the other about seven yards of weaver's-beam which he called a salmon rod. When I came downstairs, after making preparations to enable me to set the weather at defiance, I found C. tying to the end of his line a great bunch of something resembling a rainbow-hued feather-brush, but which I discovered was intended for a salmon fly!—No wonder so few salmon are caught when they are insulted by being asked to swallow a thing like *that* and believe it a fly!

After a long and exhaustive study of anglers and their ways, I have found almost invariably that their want of success is attributed to the day being too hot or too cold, to its being too sunny or too cloudy, to too much wind or too little, to too thick water or too thin, but seldom to their pet fly being in fault, and *never* to their own incapacity.

The river here is supposed to be capital for fishing, a succession of rapids and pools, and the water curiously tinted like soda-water mixed with a little milk. There is a curious notion among the natives here that no salmon is fit for food until it is at least three days old. The other evening, as it was growing dusk, C. saw two men, with a lantern, stooping over a hole in the ground, on the edge of which a mysterious-looking box was lying. This was a fine situation! C. thought he had discovered a murder at the very least, but the box, instead of containing the remains of the supposed victim, proved only to be the prosaic ice-box in which the fish were kept, and out of which the men were taking a salmon for our supper!

But to continue the exciting narrative of our doings and sufferings. We reached the river about eleven o'clock, and C. and his rod waded out into the middle of the stream at once, and commenced operations. I selected the softest-looking stone in the neighbourhood, and sat down, after carefully scrutinising its surroundings to make sure there were no peripatetic hordes of spiders, ants or tadpoles lying in wait to make a study of me. The ground was more or less a swamp, but fortunately it had ceased raining, and wreaths of mist floated amongst the trees on the river side, like the ghosts of departed anglers. I sat there, with an umbrella by my side and a Tauchnitz novel on my lap, the very incarnation of Patience on a monument. By and by a gleam of sunshine managed to struggle down to earth. Some of the dense clouds lifted, and I caught a glimpse of the magnificent mountain in front of me. I called to C., urging him to admire the lovely view. He was standing nearly up to his waist in a pool, whirling the feather-brush over his head at intervals. "Ugh!" was all the response I received. Then for a season I devoted myself to my book, until I was aroused by something moving, and discovered that the Philistines were upon me in the guise of a colony of ants running about my boots. To jump up, shake the dust off my feet, and look for another resting place was but the work of a moment, and I moved lower down the stream to C., who was fishing patiently with expectations which had not then become realizations. He crept slowly along, casting his fly with care and judgment over each likely looking spot, and

reminded me, in his absorption and earnestness, of a horrible German picture of the Evil One fishing for souls with a golden bait.

I think that somewhere about this point I must have fallen asleep, for I was suddenly roused by hearing an unearthly shout. I jumped up, thinking C. was drowning, but it was occasioned by nothing so trivial! That bunch of feathers floating so tranquilly on the water had disappeared! There was a splash—a commotion—the glimpse of a vanishing tail—and then the sound as of a whole cotton mill at work as the reel whizzed round, and the salmon darted down the stream, with C. after it. Would that I had the pencil of an artist to depict that exciting chase! C.'s face was glorified, and he was so utterly oblivious of all surroundings that I might have drowned myself within five feet of him, and he would have been none the wiser. Boulders, pools, and trees were as less than nothing in his wild and breathless career! He scrambled over every obstacle that fate or nature placed in his way, skipped hither and thither on the slippery stones, tumbled into unobserved and treacherous pools and scrambled out of them again, and hopped over tree roots with the agility of a young and playful gazelle. I gazed after him with horror and amazement, but spoke not a word, for I knew I might as well expostulate with the winds, and attempt to check them in their courses, as try to stop a man at one end of a salmon rod when he has a fish "on" at the other! After a frantic rush down stream for some distance, the salmon suddenly pulled up and "took a

header" to the bottom of the river, where it lay, like a lump of lead, in the sulks. Pulling at it was like pulling at Old Norway itself, for move a fraction it would not. I thought of going to the rescue, and offering to stir it up with my umbrella, or throw stones at it, but after mature deliberation judged it more advisable to keep my ingenious plans to myself—gratuitous advice is never valued in this world. Suddenly the salmon changed its mind, and dashed up stream again with the same energy which had characterised its descent; I have, however, but a hazy recollection of the next half-hour, for the river, C., and the fish seemed inextricably muddled up together in one huge commotion.

I thoroughly admired my husband's firmness, coolness, and skill, but I was strongly reminded of the hero of *Kavanagh*, who once delivered a lecture upon "What Lady Macbeth *might* have been, had her energies been properly directed." Imagination failed me when I attempted to picture what C.'s talents would have made him had he been a philosopher instead of a fisherman, and I could but mourn over the loss the world had sustained.

After infinite patience and tact on the one hand, and infinite obstinacy on the other, the man (and the gaff) proved too much for the fish, and when I had scrambled down to the scene of the battle I found C. in an exhausted condition, embracing a salmon which, to my excited imagination, seemed to weigh about a hundred pounds. I must say that as far as personal appearance went, the fish had the best of it, for it was

clean, whilst C. looked as if he would never be a respectable member of society again. He was soaked through and through, and what with mud, slime, and fish scales, he looked—well—an angler!

Ah! my dear, I can but remark of fishing, as the Irishman remarked of spinach, "I'm glad I don't like it, for if I did I should eat it, and I hate it." * *

C. says that neither before nor after the capture did he present the "ruffianly" appearance which I have ascribed to him, and that the fish did not weigh a hundred pounds. * * * * * *

THE CONDITIONS OF VISION IN FISHES.

BY THE HON. SEC.

HERE is a general concensus of opinion—it is the experience of every one who has ever thrown a line, that the one thing needful in trout-fishing is to keep out of sight; and notwithstanding this fact—notwithstanding that every angling book you can take up advises you to be invisible, only one author, so far as I know—Mr. Ronalds—has gone into the subject of the vision of fishes, with the object of showing under what conditions it is possible to preserve your invisibility, or under what circumstances your presence is made specially noticeable to fish.

I have held conversations with many people upon this subject, and am almost invariably met with the assurance that as we are not fishes, we cannot possibly put ourselves in the condition of fish, and therefore can only speculate, and that speculations are vain. "Keep out of sight, whatever you do," everyone says, and I confess that when I was younger, and knew trout-fishing more in theory than in practice, I was greatly puzzled to know how I was to go to the water-side—say to a broad Scotch stream with a pebbly strand

and no true shelter—and still "keep out of sight." Then I read *Stewart's Practical Angler*, and found that the way to be invisible is to fish up, because fish all turn their heads up-stream, and their eyes not being placed in their tails, receive no impression of your presence when you are below them. This is sound sense, and I became a convert to up-fishing, feeling that by no other system was there any possibility of taking trout.

But when I came to the water side, I found men who fished down taking fish, although according to Stewart the fish they caught must have been staring the angler in the face at the time they took his fly. I caught them so myself, caught more right opposite me on the other side of the stream, at the extremity of my cast,—nay, in this manner I caught fish that I actually saw, before I threw for them, and I became convinced that they either did not see me at all, or saw me only very imperfectly, or they would not have been caught.

On one occasion particularly I remember fishing in the Esk with one of the members of this Association. He was in advance of me, and he sat down on the strand, in the shade of the trees, to wait my coming. When I reached him, I stood by the water side while he directed my attention to three or four trout, in a perfectly still pool away out of the rush of the stream, on the other side of the river. I saw the fish distinctly, and not expecting to do anything more than frighten them away, said to him that I would have a cast for them, and throwing over the pool, I raised, hooked and landed one of them.

I remember I plumed myself very much on this achievement at the time, and considered it to be a marked example of my skill, but I know it was nothing of the kind, and that under such circumstances the fish could scarcely be aware of my presence at all.

The fact is (and at the first blush I know I must be condemned by nearly everyone who has been a-fishing, when I say it), in the matter of sight, we, as compared with fish, have the best of it; we see much better into the water than they see out of it, and consequently we take them at a disadvantage.

It is by no means necessary that we should become fishes to know how they see. It is all a matter of comparison. Our eyes are optical instruments, the construction of which we pretty well understand. The eye of a fish is also an optical instrument, differing from a human being's, or a quadruped's; but by analogy we know what its action is, and we know what will be the effect of the denser medium—water, in which fish live, as compared with the rarer one—air, in which we live ourselves.

It will be necessary in considering this subject to do it in a very technical, and I fear it may be a very dry and uninteresting manner. To begin at the beginning we must mention some well-known physical facts as to rays of light which traverse air and water, or *vice versa*, water and air. Everything we see is made visible to us by an infinite number of rays proceeding from the object to our eyes; but in the diagrams we shall have before us, and in the references to them,

we shall have to simplify matters by treating the rays singly, and we shall have to reduce their number to one only. This is the common and only intelligible way of dealing with them.

If a ray of light strike a surface of water the portion of it that penetrates it is refracted or bent in a certain manner, the other portion is reflected. When we see a distant view of our grimy Irwell, and note the waters dancing in the sunlight, as though the river were the clear pellucid stream it is not, it is because the light is reflected from the surface, and we see the glory of the sunlight instead of the filth of the stream. But if the Irwell will do for an example of reflection, it will not, I fear, serve for one of refraction; there is no refraction there; no ray of light which strikes its surface ever gets further down. In clear water it is different. The ray is turned from its path "towards the perpendicular" as it is expressed; that is, towards a perpendicular to the surface of the water at the

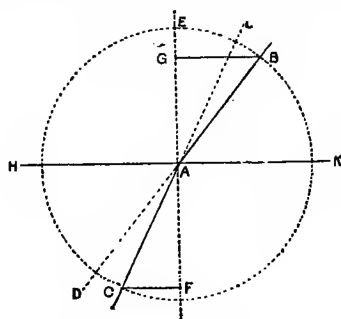


FIGURE 1.

point where the ray strikes it, as shown in figure 1, where H K is the surface, B A the incident ray, and A C the ray turned aside instead of going on in the direction of D. Now the extent of the turning aside is known exactly, but it is difficult to express it without using some terms which are not quite intelligible to everyone, and the use of which therefore is unpleasant. However, it is, that the sine of the angle of incidence is to the sine of the angle of refraction as 4 to 3 (or nearly that). This is a sad way of putting it, but it means that the line G B, which is at right angles to the perpendicular E F being taken as 4, C F also at right angles to the same perpendicular is 3. Now I hope we shall have nothing more to say so mathematical, and so unsuited to an anglers' jovial evening, as this. The meaning of it all is, that a ray B A falling on a surface of water H K, is turned aside, as A C; or taking it the other way about, a fish located at C, and looking upwards to A, will not see to L but to B instead, though B will appear at L as a continuation of the line C A.

One disadvantage under which fishes live as regards their vision comes in here, but cannot well be explained without a separate diagram, though the principle of it depends upon what has just been said.

In *Ganot's Physics* it is stated:

> In consequence of refraction, bodies immersed in a medium more highly refracting than air, appear nearer the surface of this medium, but they appear to be more distant if immersed in a less refracting medium.

The first of these principles is shown by the well-known experiment of a coin in a bowl of water, where

the invisible shilling is made to come into view by the basin being filled with water, when the coin is rendered visible, or made to "appear nearer the surface." The second principle, that objects appear to be more distant if immersed in a rarer or less refracting medium, can only be shown by a diagram. Here, if we suppose

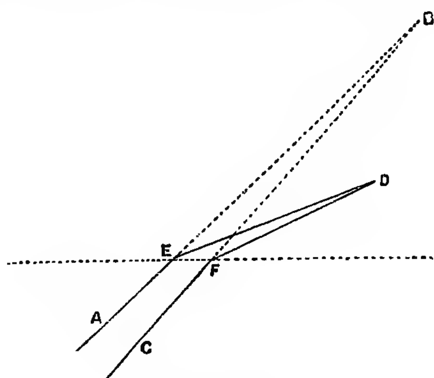


FIGURE 2.

a fish's eye to be located at A C, and looking upwards in the direction of B, it really sees not B but D, but it sees it, not placed at D, but at the more distant point B. In this case the point D being taken, and D E and D F being supposed to be the two extreme rays that would enter the fish's eye, the lines E A and F C are drawn in accordance with the law which Figure 1 illustrates, and these being continued until they meet, give the point B as the apparent place whence the rays would originate.

You see then the disadvantage under which a fish is placed, so far as apparent distance of an object viewed from the water is concerned.

I have mentioned that we see light partially reflected by water, and we have now to discover that in the same way, fishes sometimes see light entirely reflected from the under surface, instead of refracted as in Figure 1. The angular direction where refraction ends, and reflection begins, from water into air, is known, and is $48\frac{1}{2}°$, or the angle shown in Figure 3, O E D, or which

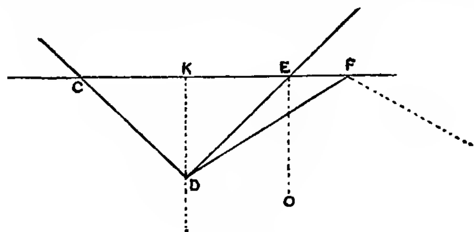


FIGURE 3.

is the same thing, the two being equal, the angle K D E. If a fish situated at D directs its vision to F, which is beyond the angle of refraction and within that of total reflection, it sees a mirror, in which the bottom of the river is clearly reflected, much more clearly indeed, supposing the surface to be calm, than if it were a silvered glass. Guillemin, in his *Forces of Nature*, has a few words on this subject (most of them taken from Sir J. Herschel):

> A diver immersed in perfectly still water, and having his eyes directed towards the surface of the liquid, would witness singular phenomena. Refraction will cause him to see in a circle of about 97° in diameter (the angle C D E), all the objects situated above the horizon, more distorted and narrowed, especially in height, as they approach the sensible horizon. Beyond this limit the bottom of the water and the submerged objects would be reflected, and would be portrayed to the sight as distinctly as by direct vision. Moreover the circular space of which we have spoken would appear to be surrounded by a perpetual rainbow, coloured slightly, but with much delicacy.

In this distortion of objects near the horizon lies the safety of the fisherman, and of course the taller a man is, the more plainly he is to be seen. Without considering the scientific reason for it, every angler feels instinctively that he is rendered more invisible by stooping or kneeling as he approaches a stream.

But if it is possible for a man to partially conceal himself he cannot in the same way conceal his rod, which not only towers above him, but has also to be frequently in advance of him, and in a position favourable for observation by the fish. The rod is, however, but a twig, and a fish being accustomed to twigs waving over his head, need not be particularly alarmed by it. But he is not accustomed to twigs that flash in the sun every time they move, and though rods which shine like mirrors with coachbuilders' varnish may be pleasing to the eye, it cannot be doubted that the one which approaches in appearance the dead surface of a twig, is much less likely to alarm fish than the one which throws flashes upon the water every time the sun shines, after the manner of the highly-polished weapons it is customary for fishing-rod makers to turn out.

Neither will the angler be protected from the effects of the sun shining at his back—a condition much more fatal to his sport than absolute exposure; for not only is his shadow thrown over the places where he perhaps ought to fish, but the river bottom near his feet, which is darkened by his shadow, is rendered visible by being reflected in the under surface of the water.

I once had a striking example of the effect of a

shadow at Galway, where Nicholas Brown took me up to his lodge to see the salmon in that extraordinary length of river extending from the bridge to the weir. This has often been described, but most people, like myself, do not believe it till they see it. A friend whose visit preceded mine, told me that salmon there were as close together as sardines in a box, and the expression is hardly an exaggeration, for they lay, on the day I saw them, in close array for some one or two hundred yards, if not as close as sardines, certainly as close as soldiers in marching order. The sun was shining at the time, and I walked at the edge of the river, protected by the embankment, the fish taking no notice of me ; but the moment I mounted the bank and my shadow fell on the water, away rushed every salmon the shadow came across, and as I walked down the entire length of the embankment, I may say I routed and put to flight the whole army.

Like most trout fishers I am a good deal given to wading, and the reason why I have always done it is not only that it enables you to reach water you could not otherwise get at, but that in addition, by diminishing your height, it tends to reduce your visibility. This latter particular will be conceded by most anglers, but its practice has limits. Under certain conditions, a man by wading renders himself more conspicuous than he would by remaining on the bank. Where you have rough rippled water, wading can do no harm, so far as interference with visibility is concerned, but it is otherwise on smooth or nearly smooth streams. In this case

not only are a man's legs to be seen by direct vision, but they are also made visible, by reflection, to fish which are at a considerable distance from the fisherman. This is only the case when the surface is tolerably smooth. If it is broken into ripples, presenting a thousand reflecting surfaces, there is too great a confusion of objects for there to be any danger to the would-be invisible angler.

Some of the above-mentioned phenomena can be shown to a certain limited extent by a simple experiment with a tumbler, or better by a glass jar, filled with water. If any object be put in, part of it immersed and the other part above the surface, it will be found that only the immersed portion is visible when looked at from below, and in the under surface of the water it is clearly reflected. It is not until you look right through the bottom of the jar, that the upper part of the spoon or other object becomes visible.

This is, however, not a perfectly satisfactory experiment, because glass and water do not refract in the same degree, and the curved surface of the glass adds to the difficulty of forming a correct impression. I have tried the experiment by turning myself into a fish, filling my bath as full as possible, lying on my back, and carefully observing the objects that are visible, but it is not easy to get a satisfactory result. The surface of the water is rippled to a considerable extent by your going down, and you cannot remain long enough. All I have observed is, that such objects as can be seen, suddenly rise, as our figures show us they must

do, and appear to be much further off, as also our diagrams would lead us to expect. On one occasion I tried walking into a river with big stones in my hands, but I could not keep myself at the bottom, and no good came of it. On another I was bathing in a very clear lake, and got two companions to tread water while I went down; but though it is very easy to go down, it is another thing to stay there, and I only satisfied myself that though I could see the lower parts of my friends' bodies curiously foreshortened, I could see nothing of their heads and shoulders.

If any of you have ever observed the surface of the water in a large aquarium, such as that at Southport or Brighton, you will have noticed that it seems to be perfectly opaque, and quite like quicksilver, on which every bubble and particle is rendered strongly visible by the impression or indentation it makes. Nothing is to be seen through this surface, it might as well be a deal board, but you may see the rocks of which the tank is made reflected in it, and as a fish approaches this mirror-like surface you see that it really is a mirror, for the fish swims double, like the drawings we sometimes see of the zodiacal sign Pisces. Just such a silvery surface does the water present to the fishes themselves, when they look upwards at such an angle as we have been looking into the aquarium, and just as strongly visible do your flies become, the moment they touch the water, as those motes and specks are to you. Until the moment they fall on the water, the surface has been pure and the foreign body falling on

it with absolute suddenness, is from the singular impression it makes in the water when seen from beneath, rendered very distinctly visible.

Look upwards through the tumbler or glass jar what a hole your finger end makes in the water if you dip it in. If this teaches us anything, it is that it is not so difficult for trout to see very small flies after all, and that they are much more visible on the surface than below it. Stewart says "the moment the fly alights is the most deadly of the whole cast," and the reason is, I believe, that at that moment it is by far the most visible. I know it is generally supposed that the reason is that natural flies are in the habit of alighting on water, and that therefore the moment your artificial flies fall is the one when they behave most like real ones. But how is it if, like me, you fish with spiders continually? Spiders do not fly about and light like gossamer on the water. I confess that this is begging the question; neither you nor I can tell what the trout take our flies to be. They rise at them, and that is all we know about it, or can know, but I believe my reason is a sufficient one, why the fall of the fly is the most deadly time.

It is the custom of fly-fishers to speak of their art as the very highest attainable handicraft, and the world has given them a certain amount of credence, so that one occasionally hears a non-fisher excuse himself for having never become an angler, on the ground that the art of fly-fishing is so difficult that he could never attain it; and sometimes, though it is hard to think it, I

really imagine he believes what he says. In the same spirit of justifiable brag, anglers represent trout as being the sharpest-sighted creatures that live, instancing their lightning movements in the water as proof of the assertion. But I do not believe in their clear sightedness, they would never be taken by artificial flies if their eyes were half as sharp as we persuade ourselves they are; and such things as one sees called artificial flies, too! Would it be possible to make up anything reasonable in size, of fur or feathers, that would not raise trout? I do not think so. I have brought a trout to the top several times with a bit of paper that I have filliped into the stream a few yards above where I knew he lay. One sees artificial worms, cockroaches, minnows, and what not in shop windows, and I presume fish take those things or they would not continue to be made; but would any sharp-sighted creature ever make such a fool of itself as to mistake them for the real thing?

I would rather agree with the anonymous author of the *New System of Nature* (1792) who says:

> We have no evidence of any fishes seeing at a considerable distance; and the case where many of them are deceived by different kinds of bait prepared in imitation of their food, gives room to suspect that objects are not very distinctly perceived by them even when near.

In his *Study of Fishes* Dr. Gunther says—

> In the range of their vision and acuteness of sight, fishes are very inferior to the higher classes of vertebrates, yet at the same time it is evident that they perceive their prey or approaching danger from a considerable distance.

And if we concede that, it is as much as I should be willing to acknowledge.

In the foregoing remarks no consideration has been paid to the eye of fishes itself. This is somewhat peculiar, and one main peculiarity consists in the shape of the crystalline lens, and its great density. In man it is a double convex lens, and so it is in fishes, but in the latter it approaches a sphere very closely. The eye-ball, as it is called, of a cod-fish, as most of us as boys have discovered, is as round as a marble, and the eye of a trout or a salmon is nearly of the same form. The consequence of this is to correct in some measure the vision of fish, so far as direction is concerned from their own element to air, but it does not give distinctness of vision for distant objects. I do not doubt that a trout is just as much terrified by a cow on the bank, when he sees it, as by a man with a fishing-rod; and when I hear of anglers carrying branches of trees in their hands, like Macduff's army, and hiding behind the foliage, I can only say they deceive themselves, for I do not believe that fish can perceive much difference between a walking man and a walking tree.

The editor of *Cuvier's Fishes* says—

> The eye can scarcely change its direction, still less alter its dimensions so as to be accommodated to the distance of objects; the iris can neither be dilated nor contracted; the pupil always remains the same, under every degree of light. No tear moistens, no eyelid shelters or wipes the surface; it is in fish only an indifferent representative of that beautiful and animated organ which is found in the superior classes of animals.

And again—

> The images upon their retina must appear confused, and it is therefore probable that they are not susceptible of receiving very precise impressions of forms and objects.

In an article on the "Angler" fish, by Mr. Couch,

published in the *Intellectual Observer*, Vol. I. (p. 359), there is an interesting paragraph on the mechanism of that peculiar fish's eye, which it will be interesting to introduce here. He says—

> Such is the size of the crystalline lens that, with its strictly globular form and its position on the posterior part of the chamber of the eye, close to the retina, or nerve of sight, objects at a moderate distance can scarcely be discerned. But it is here that the special function is displayed of a particular muscle of the interior of the eye first described by Mr. Dalrymple, and known to exist in some other fishes. Its influence is to draw back, as that of the external director muscles is to press forward, the crystalline lens, that by modifying the angle at which the rays of light cross each other, the fish is enabled to discern more clearly at varying distances.

This is very different from quadrupeds' eyes, the lenses of which change their form, or accommodate themselves to the varying distances to which they are directed.

I have mentioned that so far as visibility is concerned, a man may under certain circumstances wade with impunity, but it will not be out of place here to speak for a moment of another peril a wader encounters, and that is the danger of alarming trout by the concussion his steps occasion in the water. It is always necessary for him to tread as quietly as possible; if he goes tumbling and bumping over the stones, he would be a great deal better on the bank, for fishes must certainly be very sensible to sound-vibrations under water, it being a most excellent sound-conductor. As a boy, in the swimming baths, I have often heard a penny, thrown in to dive for, strike the bottom when I have been a considerable distance away from it, and the noise made by steam being driven into the water, though all but imperceptible above the surface, was almost unbear-

able below. A friend who was often my companion in those far-off days, tells me that he has heard a stone struck under water at a distance of a mile or more from the blow. It has been disputed that fishes hear at all, and Linnæus said he was not able to discover any auditory organs, but my impression is that under water they are all ear, so to speak, and though their nerves may be less sensitive than ours, every nerve of their bodies will be conscious of concussion; as we know, an explosion of dynamite in water will kill every fish, not only in its immediate neighbourhood, but for some considerable distance.

That the organ of hearing is not necessary for sensibility to vibrations is shown by a circumstance related by an American lady who teaches deaf mutes to speak. Her children, she says, when they are doing anything they know to be contrary to her wishes, turn their heads so that they may not see her lips, but she is able to draw their attention to the fact that she is observing them, by stamping her foot on the floor, the vibratory motion of which is sensibly communicated to them.

In many angling books the question of the sensitiveness of fishes to sounds is mooted, but it is always presumed that sound can only originate in air, and we are told how guns fired off have failed to affect fish, which have been near.

The editor of *Cuvier's Fishes* says—

> They have in reality but small occasion for the sense of hearing, being condemned to reside in an empire of silence, where all around is mute.

and the following paragraph, though an old one, is

still quite representative of the only manner in which the subject is discussed—

> Experiments have been made on the capacity of water to transmit sounds, and by these it has been found that it is capable of conveying them but a short way, for it quickly deadens the vibrations on which they depend. A man whose head is immersed a foot in water hears voices and words uttered in the air, but when sunk to the depth of 12ft. he scarcely hears a musket shot, though discharged over his head.—*New System of Natural History.* Edinb., 1792; p. 14.

Sound vibrations originating in the air are, no doubt, almost destroyed by water. I know I have often been shouted at by my friends in the swimming bath, but I never heard any of the shouts if I were under water, and at the very time I have heard, as I have mentioned, the gentle fall of a penny, and in water it is very gentle.

After all this theorising what do we learn? Merely that under certain conditions fish which we can see cannot clearly see us; that under certain other conditions the very means we take to render ourselves less visible only serve to make us more conspicuous. One grain of practice is, it is said, worth a bushel of theory, and I quite believe in the adage. My friends will still practice the old games they have found to pay, and I should advise them to do so: but if these remarks should lend some little intelligence to the precautions they habitually take, and should now and then enable them to take a fish they would otherwise not have thought of trying for, they will have done all they can be expected to do, and all that the writer desires.

FISHES' EE-SEET; OR TH' ANGLE O' INCIDENTS.

BY ARTHUR HIBBERT.

E an' my mate Bill wur at th' meetin o' th' Anglers when that there papper on th' "Vision o' Fishes" wur read bi th' honourable secretary. Aw've seed visions o' fishes afore neaw, i'th' fish merket ov a Setturday neet, bo they wurnor o' yon soart, wi' illusterations an' digrums an' things o' that mak. Bo that papper, it let day-leet into sum things, it did so; whoi it wur as plain as cud be, an' as wi went whoam wi geet agate o' talkin', an' aw says to Bill, "that wur foine, Bill, wurnor it? Them angles an' rays, an' propendikelers an' things wur reet gradely; they went off to sum tune, they did that, like fireworks at Belle Vue welly; that's what aw think," aw says.

"Well," says Bill, he says; an' yo' known 'at Bill's no foo—though he isna quite as breet as me—an' he knows it. "Well," says Bill, "as for angles, aw dunnot reetly know what angles is; th' secretary said as they wur A B C's an' X Y Z's, bur aw cudna reetly see what thoos letters ha' t' do wi' um. Aw know o' abeawt rays; aw wur stung wi' won at th' Isle o' Man, last yer; propendikelers aw connot gorm; bur it's o' reet aw

reckon, an' aw think yon papper made it as plain as a bile at th' eend o' yur nose. Iv a mon goos a-fishin' neaw, an' doesna cum o'er th' feesh; what wi so mony things bein' i' his favver, an' wi' feesh bein' welly bloint, whoi it's a chap's own fawt iv he doesna ketch um, is nor it?" An' wi' that he gen his left hont sich a clink wi' his reet, as made me jump loike a inji-rubber bo.

"Neaw aw'll tell thi what," aw says to Bill, "let's be off fost thing i'th' mornin' to Bak'ell; there's rucks o' feesh theere, an' iv wi dunnot goo neaw, they'n o' be ketcht, aw con tell thi. Let's goo off i'th' mornin' fost thing."

So wi sed wi'd goo; an' as soon as aw geet whoam, aw seet to an' made a lot o' digrums as show'd heaw th' feesh cudna see me as lung as aw wur eawt o' seet, an' heaw aw shud see o' th' feesh as wur t' be seed; an' heaw they wur sich foos ut they'd rise at mi flees loike winkin', an' think they wur spiders. An' aw draw'd o my incidents, an' my refractories, an' they lookt grond loike. When aw'd dun, aw show'd um to eawr Sarah, an' aw towd her o' abeawt um; as plain as owt. Bo wimmen han no yeds, an' hoo says, "thee ger off wi' thi hangles and thi sines ov impidence, or aw'll gi' thee a sine as ull refract thi yed agean that wo, an' if tha doesna foind th' critikel angle then, it winna be moi fawt."

So aw shut up, for aw know'd it wurna worth whoile argifyin' wi' th' loikes ov her, seein' as heaw thooas as did understond had a wearyin do for t' put stopper on thooas as didn't, just loike th' secretary had wi' yon chap as wer talkin'; bur aw know'd too as th' talkin' chap

wur yessier to keep quiet nor eawr Sarah, so aw sed nowt—not loikely—an' aw clapt mi digrums i' mi hat, so as t' be o' ready. Next mornin' aw sneak't eawt o'th' heawse as soft as a tum-cat after a spadger, an' went to th' station, wheere aw fund Bill waitin', shure enoof.

Th' train soon londed us i' Bak'ell, an' wi went an' geet eawr tickets at th' Rutland. George wur stondin' at th' back dur, an' he says "Good mornin'" to us as wi wur gooin' eawt.

"Good mornin'," aw says, "wi'st hev um to-day, George, wi shall so. Wi've got um on. There winnot be mony feesh laft i'th' river by neet-fo, aw con tell thi," aw sed.

"Oh, no," says George, "aw doan't think as there will, aw see yo meon bizniss, yo dun. Heaw mitch a peawnd win yo tak for o' th' feesh as yo ketchen? Aw cud loike a tothri to-day, mysen, for moi missis; bur aw think yon baskit o' yourn winna be hauf big enoof, noather."

Aw seed as George wur makkin gam' o' me, seein' as heaw aw'd a baskit as big as a clooas baskit welly, so aw thowt to mysen as aw'd floor him, an' quick, an' aw says to him, "Neaw, George," aw says, "tell me won thing: What's a propendikeler?"

That did for him gradely. Aw know'd it wud do; so he poo'd his billy-cock 'at off, an' he scrat his yed an' 'e said nowt. So aw says to him, "Does tha know what a hangle er incidents is?"

"Be off wi' thi impidents," George says, an aw seed aw wur bestin' him, so aw thowt awd gi' him a regler floorer next, an' aw says, "Did tha ivver see a criticul

hangle, George?" By gum, it wur varry near bein' a floorer for me too, for he up wi' his foot an' he shapped for t' punce me eawt o'th' dur hole; so aw went mysen, t' save him th' trubble.

Whoile this wur gooin on, Bill stood theer as mild as skimt milk, bo when he seed George's boot, he coom eawt just as quick as me, an' aw says to him, "Aye, it's a foine thing is larnin'." Whoi George nivver lookt sich a foo sin he wur born. "Poor ignorant duffer," aw says, "as has never seed a hangle er incidents."

Then wi went on to th' wayter, an' aw says to Bill, "Tha knows, Bill, wi mun goo wheere th' wayter's middlin' widish loike, or else there winna be reaum t' get into that theere angle."

"Does tha say so?" Bill says; "Whoi, heaw does tha mak that eawt?"

So aw towd him he wur a foo (an' he is too), an' aw pood th' digrums eawt o' mi hat, an' aw says, "doesn't tha see? When that theere loine goos deawn theere, it's refractory, an' that's th' sine as it is, seein' as it's on th' propendikeler."

"Oh, aye," he says, "ov coarse, aw see that theere." Bur aw dunna believe as he did for o' that, there's no drivin' science into sum folkses yeds.

Then wi coom to th' wayter, wheere it's broad, yo' known, near to th' watter-fo, an' th' iron bridge. So aw says to Bill, "thee goo o'er theere, an' get thi propendikeler in, whol aw get insoide this ere hangle." An' aw poos eawt my digrum, an' maks a mark wi' mi boot reet across th' gravil walk, an' aw says to Bill, "Neaw,

theer's th' loine A B, an' iv aw ston on this ere loine, th' feesh conna see me, nobbut mi yed, an' that goos for nowt."

"Thee be hanged," Bill says, "tha'll look as lung as Bak'ell church steeple, iv tha stons theere." An' he set to an' made a digrum on th' gravil as plain as cud be, an' aw seed as mi yed wur pood eawt loike a stinguisher.

Bur aw didna loike t' be putten deawn bi th' loikes o' him, so aw says, "thee goo an' put thi propendikeler in, an' then aw'll show thee what fur."

So then Bill went o'er th' iron bridge, an' when he geet to th' fur soide, he sheawts eawt, "Here, Joe, aw hanna getten a propendikeler." An' aw'd nivver thowt abeawt that afore, so aw sheawts back, "Tha puddin' yed, what did tha cum beawt thi propendikeler fur? Tha know'd weel enoof th' secretary sed we mun hev a propendikeler, shusheaw it wus, or elze there cudno be a sine ov a angle o' hincidents. Goo thi ways an' pike won up sumwheere," aw says. An whoile he wur gooin' aw pood eawt mi digrums agean, an' aw thowt to mysen aw conna see wheere them dotted loines, an' them others is. Bur aw know'd it ud be o' reet when aw'd getten th' propendikeler in.

Just then Bill turns up wi' a big baulk o' wood. "Neaw," he says, "neaw, Joe, does tha think this ull do?"

"Aye," aw says, "tha mun drop it reet i'th' middle o'th' refractory, an' wist hev um as sure as mi name's Joe!"

Well, what dun yo think Bill goos an' does? Whoi he ups wi' his propendikeler, and he gan it sich a splash

i'th' wayter, as yo cud ha' yerd o' th' way to Haddon meybe.

So aw says, "Theigher, tha's done it, tha hast. Doesn't tha know that's a concushun, worse bi th' hauve nor wadin. Whoi every fish i'th' river fro' Buxton to Filliford Bridge ull know as tha'rt after him, iv tha goos on wi' thi propendikeler a that uns."

"Well," Bill sheawts eawt, "thee put thi propendikeler in thisel;" an' aw cud see he wur sulkin a bit, so aw took no notis, an' just then aw seed a gret big graylin' cum salin' reet up th' river, so aw nips into th' angle o' incidents as sharp as leetnin, an' then aw know'd that fish wur mine. So aw geet mi flees ready, an' teed um on, an' just as aw wur makkin a cast, aw yerd a gret splash on t'other soide, and theere wur Bill, as nak't as a robin, wi' a big stoan i' oather hont, just gooin under th' wayter.

"What i'th' name o' fortin are tha' doin', Bill?" aw says. An he sheawts eawt, "Awm gooin t' mak a observation," an deawn he went, reet o'er th' yed.

After a minit he coom up agean, an' he says, "Aye it is, it is so; secretary's reet, aw cudna see nowt o' thee, an' aw cud see th' angle o' incidents as plain as dayleet, an' o' th' feesh stondin o' ther yeds."

"Well," aw says, "thee put that propendikeler in neaw tha'rt theere;" an' aw went reawnd to th' fur soide, an' throw'd him th' bawk o' wood, an' he put it stickin straight up.

"Theigher," aw says, "that ull do. Awst hav that graylin neaw;" bo for th' loife o' mi aw cudna tell

wheere th' critical angle wur. So aw whips eawt mi digrum, an aw draws another loine, A B, on th' gravil, an' then aw seed it in a minit.

"Neaw for it," aw says; "thee cum o'er here wi' th' londin net, wilta?" an' aw throw'd mi loine cawt, as straight as a talegraph, an' aw know'd th' graylin mun be theere; so aw waited abeawt a minit, an' then aw gav a pluck as ud hook him, an' aw'll be blest iv mi loine didna lap itsel reet reawnd th' stump, and o' my hooks stuck into th' cussed propendikeler.

"Theere," aw says, "that's a capper;" an' aw seed mi loine made a hangle wi' t' stump just loike one o' them digrums. "Digrums be blowed," aw says, an' aw pood um o' eawt o' my 'at, an' punced um reet into th' river. My blood wur up then, it wur so; "Cum eawt," aw says; an' aw gav mi rod a gret lunge, an' it snapt i' two, reet i'th' middle.

"We'll goo neaw," aw says to Bill, "an' th' next toime aw ketch that secretary, it ull be th' worse fur him."

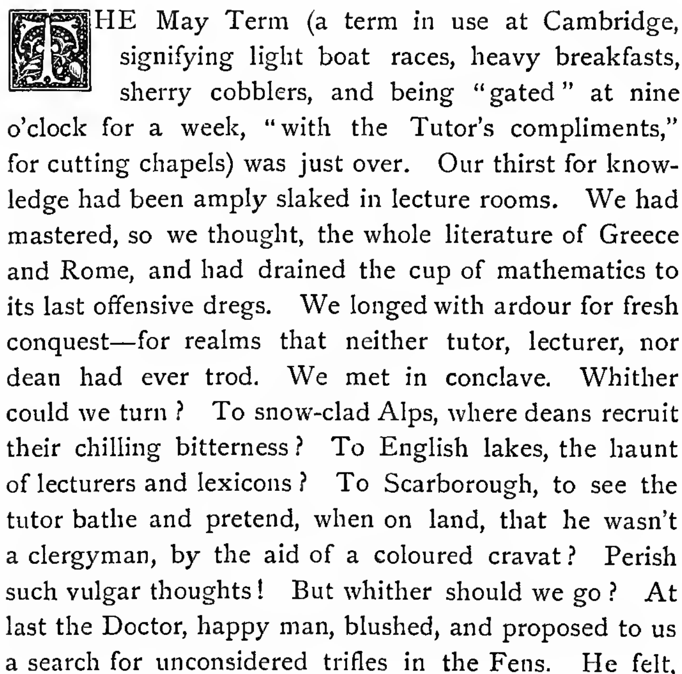
Wi cud ha' done wi' a gill apiece afore wi went, bo wi dursna face George, so wi went reet back to th' station, an' tuk th' fust train whoam.

SOME REMINISCENCES OF

THE FENS AND FEN SLODGERS,

FROM THE LOG OF THE *PANDORA*.

BY CECIL DE GONVILLE.



THE May Term (a term in use at Cambridge, signifying light boat races, heavy breakfasts, sherry cobblers, and being "gated" at nine o'clock for a week, "with the Tutor's compliments," for cutting chapels) was just over. Our thirst for knowledge had been amply slaked in lecture rooms. We had mastered, so we thought, the whole literature of Greece and Rome, and had drained the cup of mathematics to its last offensive dregs. We longed with ardour for fresh conquest—for realms that neither tutor, lecturer, nor dean had ever trod. We met in conclave. Whither could we turn? To snow-clad Alps, where deans recruit their chilling bitterness? To English lakes, the haunt of lecturers and lexicons? To Scarborough, to see the tutor bathe and pretend, when on land, that he wasn't a clergyman, by the aid of a coloured cravat? Perish such vulgar thoughts! But whither should we go? At last the Doctor, happy man, blushed, and proposed to us a search for unconsidered trifles in the Fens. He felt,

he said, his own ability to make a suggestion, because the grandest inventions were often the offspring of untutored minds. Such attractive humility took us willing captives, and we decided to do as he said, and do it at once. We agreed not to interrupt the flow of his genius by idle suggestions, and it was then that we knew the full power of our master. A voyage from Cambridge to Peterborough, on the great fen drains, touching at all points of interest, and interviewing the native inhabitants, would be, he said, "the proper study of mankind," and enlarge our cramped intelligence. He added that we might fish, at intervals, if anyone knew how. On this last point we were all silent. "*Conticuere omnes intentique ora tenebant.*" The people, he said, were interesting, and had been termed of old, by the Dutchmen whom Sir Cornelius Vermuyden brought over with him to drain the Fens, "slodgers" and "yellow bellies," because they lived like eels in mud.

"To-morrow, then, at eight, from Searle's." We all promised, and went to bed "to sleep, perchance to" snore, for it had waxed late, and we had, maybe, indulged ourselves more than need was in the discussion of this thirsty problem.

We met at Searle's in good time, about 10-30. The fleet of discovery consisted of two ships equipped with sculls, oars, and sails, and a heavy bundle which we afterwards learned was fishing tackle—the wherry *Pandora,* a double sculling boat with a large forecastle locker holding a two-gallon bottle and two changes of raiment, and the *Argo,* a pair-oar of undeniable speed,

but of meagre beam and narrow transom. I have so frequently used the word "*we*," that I must give the *personelle* of our company of discoverers. Six, all told, made up our force.

1st.—The Doctor, a Trinity man (from this moment Admiral of the Fleet); he was all he should be and more, full of counsel, full of fun, and a glutton at Civil Law.

2nd.—The Admiral's Hydrographer, Massy, a young man with a good heart and a retiring chin, which endowed him with a sweet modest expression, a child-like air of simplicity to which we soon found he was a stranger.

3rd.—The Chaplain of the Fleet; usual character meek, but wily.

4th.—The Jester, called "Tammy" by his friends; he was peculiarly lazy, like all his sex.

5th.—The Bursar, a fat fellow, who in hot weather fancied he had some subtle power of steering a boat, though it was a gift which the University boat clubs had hitherto declined to recognize.

6th.—Myself—the Admiral's acting Captain.

SOME EXTRACTS FROM THE ADMIRAL'S LOG.

THE fleet weighed anchor on the still summer sea of Cam at half after ten or thereabouts, June 20, a.m., and bore down to Baitsbite lock, where is an inn indifferently well furnished with necessaries, but useful as a reason for relaxing effort for a time during the mid-day heat. The wind, for reasons of its own, was still. The poor

dumb stream crept quietly on, clogged with weed and barrow-loads of short grass cut from river-side lawns, a great hindrance to our oars. While the fleet was passing through the lock I ordered the crews to fish. We caught a very handsome bleak—the largest the polite landlord had ever seen. He was hooked foul, in the tail, and gave us much play. Here a fen-man came, to see us and to buy some beer. He had large warts on his eyelids, which made him curiously like a carrier pigeon.

The heat being excessive, we chartered a horse to haul the fleet onwards, and called him Hippopotamus—a veritable river-horse, and quite unused to the gentle words that wake the heart of a palfrey. But, true to his instincts, he knew the touch of a boat-hook handle, and would flourish his stumpy tail thereto with an emotion that was not simulated.

We glided gently onwards down the stream, a gay boy, the landlord's son, sitting merrily astride of Hippopotamus, "with here and there a lusty shout and here and there a kicking." Thus to Upware, "five miles from anywhere," as the sign-post says, "and near enough too." Here there is the last lingering bit of genuine Fen—still the home of the rarest butterflies. Ruffs and reeves still hold their *soirées chantantes* in the deep of Wicken Fen, and quails fight and marry, and fly away and come again with "*dulce domum*" in their hearts, to visit the spot where their speckled nestlings waylaid the thrifty ant and unearthed his buried brood.

The Hydrographer, in shipping from the *Pandora* to the *Argo*, unwittingly sounded the fairway here, and

found it a fathom and a half, bottom soft—no great discovery for him, or us either, as we were stationed at the inn for three hours while his clothes were roasting in the kitchen. In the visitors' book there is quite a catalogue of rare butterflies, chronicled by the conquering heroes who have brought their nets to Wicken Fen. I also noticed a remark written by a Great Personage when he was an undergraduate at Cambridge, and much prized by the landlord, but I am unable to quote it. No court-martial was held on the Hydrographer, as Mr. Bacchus, the Chaplain, complained of hunger, and had fixed his earthly hopes on Earith Hermitage, a weary stretch, and one which caused him much dismay when he arrived. Here I again gave the word to fish. With a borrowed casting-net we secured two roach, and two other little beauties of such tender age that we could not determine whether they were jack or chub or perch or bream. We passed several smacks engaged in the bream fishery. They answered polite enquiries from the fleet about their catch with scant civility, and mistook our offer of the borrowed casting-net for irony.

An apoplectic enthusiast, sitting on a chair in a barge, was, I regret to say, forcibly presented by Tammy, from a slight distance, with our Baitsbite bleak. In return for this he hurled us an ambiguous blessing, and with many unsavoury words this fat Goliath desired a personal conflict with our representative champion, or with, if we preferred it, the combined crews. I forbade this, as we were unused to bloodshed, and the proposed

victim looked so capable of enjoying life that we thought it would be hard for him to die merely to enhance our character for energy, so I magnanimously decided that for the present he should live and not die, and wished him "Good afternoon." He made no courteous reply, but was not the only churl we saw.

Presently we made the mouth of Ouse proper (called now the Old West River), and saw to starboard, in the distance, the gleaming pinnacles of Ely bravely touch the westering sun, and change from grey to red, from red to grey, and a fine sight it was.

After the fleet had rounded "Pope's Corner" we found that the art of rowing through a nearly solid mass of obstinate clinging weed was a greater task than the resources of our Christian energy could surmount, so we again troubled Hippopotamus, on whom we had spent the sum of sixpence, at a farm, for a forage of wet bran and meal-worms from the bottom of a corn-bin. The poor beast had by no means a jaded appetite, and would lick his nose like a shorthorn if a fat thistle crossed his path.

The pike here, as everywhere else in the district, are said by the riparian aborigines to be of vast dimensions. They never catch them purposely, but sometimes by accident lug out a small one of six or seven pounds with the point of a long-handled scythe, when cutting the river reeds for thatch.

The fleet made progress of two leagues or more in a heavy, hot, leaden gloom, with no signs on either hand of rural life. Mr. Bacchus was, he said, dying of hunger.

Hippopotamus and his gay jockey had instinctively deserted us, and vanished into the thick river mist, to cart betimes next day his winter food, the summer hay. A light was signalled on our port bow, and on a nearer view we found it to be the place of a small landed proprietor. The crews at once stepped ashore at nine p.m. to secure refreshment for the Chaplain, whom we left in charge of the fleet. He was growing rapidly peevish, and was now of no use at all to sustain or comfort any sorrowful soul in Christendom. The door of the house was cautiously unbarred by a fat, forbidding, flat-nosed female, on her name being called aloud, in soothing tones, by Tammy. He had discovered it written in chalk on a donkey-cart, near the main portal which formed the entrance to the stables. We modestly asked for nothing but eggs and milk; but her hens were old maids, and her cows unmarried—so she suffered us to think. After a while, and with much diplomacy in which the Bursar took a large but reluctant share, she spared us just enough for the Chaplain, who knows no more of fasting than an alderman. We agreed in pitying the poor beggar who owned such a remarkably plain wife, but it was our way to spend an enormous quantity of pity upon that particular form of human misery, and we presumed he had made a mercenary match, and deserved to suffer some of its inevitable pangs.

Two hours' rowing through the weed brought us to Earith, which we found, with one consent (not ours), had gone to bed. We knocked without effect at the

Hermitage and other village inns, for no one answered. In the last resort the Jester was hoisted on to the Admiral's shoulders, and vigorously did he shake a bed-room window about ten feet from the ground. By this the lady of the house, the Coach and Horses, was thoroughly alarmed and suspected burglars, so she said. (What odd fellows the Earith burglars must be, if they fly at such game as this, and if that is their mode of attack.) On the Jester's sudden and painful withdrawal from his coign of vantage, she consented to reconnoitre us from the bed-room window. We pleaded, as we stood in a row like six culprits before a magistrate, our long voyage, our high birth, our undeniable peacefulness, and that there was a clergyman with us. That clenched the matter, and after a toilet of intolerable length she let us in. But there was no food in the house, and the Chaplain's fortitude quite gave way. Bread and gooseberry jam was all the landlady could give, and we might sleep on the floor. We lighted the kitchen fire, and she left us the keys to help ourselves to grog and beer, trusting us to reveal to her, next day, the amount consumed—a promise we faithfully kept; the chaplain's item was not the smallest.

Sleeping on a floor, like a mercenary match, is conducive to early rising; but long before we were awake, this good creature of a landlady had driven a mule—a veritable skinful of impiety—to St. Ives, 14 miles and back, and purchased for us a large succulent beefsteak and a pound of coffee. After breakfast the Bursar brought us the bill, which was 8s. 2d. for the whole fleet—so rare an

instance of Fen honesty, that we ordered him, with one voice, to pay two-fold in to her bosom. Our arrival, it seems, had clashed with that of a horde of Irish hay-makers, who had cleared her larder of everything eatable.

The Hydrographer reported to me that here the Ouse proper enters the Hundred Foot River, and that the whole neighbourhood is a promontory, like Cambridge, which the high land throws out on the great level of the East Anglian Fen. It was soon twigged by the Romans as a good site for a strongly intrenched fort, which was surrounded by a moat and inner *vallum*, and called "the Bulwark" by the natives. They still find old pots and rubbish of an early date here. There was a lovely little statue of *Jupiter Martialis*, eight and a quarter inches high, found in the Bulwark in 1814, at a depth of eighteen inches, and made of bronze and silver. It represents an armed warrior with a broken lance in his hand, and was purchased in May, 1871, for £130 by the British Museum.

This morning, June 21, the Chaplain was found with a railway guide, furtively asking a small boy the way to the nearest station, evidently hankering after the flesh-pots of Cambridge. He was promptly put under arrest till the fleet started, and severely censured by me for his degrading gluttony.

At a half after ten we weighed anchor on the Hundred Foot or New Bedford River, and rowing idly for five or six miles, made Sutton Hole. Here I ordered the crews to fish, after offering by the Chaplain's hand, and much to his disgust, a propitiatory libation of grains

and clay to the bream. We caught three stone weight of these greasy idiots in two hours. The largest was less than four pounds by an ounce. We found that they move about very curiously, in shoals, constantly changing their depth. Our way was to fish with three hooks—a point hook on the bottom and two droppers two feet apart. At one time all the fish were caught on the bottom, in half-an-hour on our top hooks, and again on the middle hook, just as the shoal rose or fell, but *always on the same hook for all the fleet.* Some of our largest were cooked for supper, and resembled in flavour boiled flannel pincushions, stuffed with a mixture of clay and broken needles. We distributed the rest to some hay-makers, and earned much ill-spent gratitude. The Chaplain landed a fine eel of two pounds weight, which made such a shocking mess of him and his line that a courteous deafness seized the crews. We agreed to forgive and forget his language towards his captive, in consideration of the suffering he endured. We fancied he was, perhaps, repeating some commendatory ejaculations of an Athanasian type. I told him, by way of consolation, and wishing to throw the blame on Another, that "the Devil finds some mischief still for," &c., &c., and that even the best of men relax some of their sweetness under trial such as his. I am aware that this has been observed before, but I will let the words stand as a humbling proof that I am subject to that immutable law which compels a man with a pen in his hand to be uttering every now and then some sentiment not strictly his own.

At Witchford, our next stopping place, we found a pretty wooden bridge spanning the Hundred Foot River. The Bursar went ashore to look out for victual and to report. The whole population, however, had gone to grass, as he said, *i.e.*, were making hay, and no food was come-at-able. A fine handsome young farmer, riding a black colt bareback, was asked by me if his knowledge of the neighbourhood enabled him to direct us to food. He said there was nothing nearer, and nowhere better, than his father's house, and that he would make us welcome. After thanking him and taking counsel, the Chaplain and Jester alone were allowed to go, as we felt that the whole of the ships' companies would be a monstrous invasion. We begged the Chaplain to be careful, and not forget himself or bring us into disrepute. After a very brief interval, we were addressed from the bridge by six foot four inches of a veritable Fen King, the young fellow's father. He begged us to waive all introductory ceremony and follow him homewards. We can never forget his graceful hospitality. He had left his coat in the hayfield, and apologized for what he feared we should think habitual untidiness We lightly addressed him as "governor," and hoped his "Missis" was "all serene," but he made us feel very small when he asked us in stately form, one by one, to honour him with our names, and presented us to his wife and daughters as "my friend Mr. So-and-So, from Cambridge." He had an inborn courtly manner that would have made the fortune of an ordinary marquis, and had imparted this rare gift to his beautiful children.

The Chaplain, we noticed, was much attracted by the eldest girl, but this was always happening. After dinner I found that this modern saint had furtively begged the lovely Bertha to shew him the church and just to touch the organ, which (we could have sworn) she played divinely on Sundays. I said with considerable firmness that we would all go, which the Chaplain seemed to think unnecessary, but as I was determined not to lose sight of him, he excused himself for inspecting the church on the plea that *we*, forsooth, were "in too worldly a frame of mind" to appreciate such a scene. The good man had evidently forgotten his struggle with the eel.

At a half after four, after signalling to the Fleet, I decided to re-embark; but the crews showed so much reluctance to clear out that, to avoid mutiny, I gave an extra hour's leave ashore, and expressed my wish to the Chaplain that this sort of thing should not recur.

At 5-35 we took our ships out of the water, over the Washes, into the Old Bedford river. These Washes are eighteen miles in length, and about half a mile broad, and lie between the banks of the Old and New Bedford rivers. In summer they carry glorious crops of rank bullock-grass, and in flood time they are used as a reservoir to store the water if it comes down too fast for the outfall at Lynn to discharge. They are then a vast still narrow lake, and in frost the ice is perfect for the Fen champion runners, "Turkey" and "Fish" Smart, to do their almost incredible times. When the water is very low the natives kill countless snipe and

water-hens, and herons too. Herons are delicious to eat when less than two years old, before their loyal crest is full. We saw some nesting in a plantation. Their long legs dangling down look very odd when the old birds are sitting on eggs.

A heron is still the first bird the game act preserves, but no one hesitates to shoot them hereabouts. To see one quietly angling in a little pool creates a demand for human virtues which the moral resources of the place are totally inadequate to supply. I noticed on reaching Welch's Dam, where we entered Vermuyden's Drain, otherwise the "Forty-foot," that the importing merchant, the warehouseman, the wholesale dealer, the retail dealer, the shopman, and the publican, *were all one woman*, who gave us, through the Bursar, some tough, flexible, drab-coloured cloth, made of flour and millstones in equal proportions, and called bread, which we failed to render palatable even with the aid of boiled bream.

The place is noted as being at once the wettest and driest in England; for here there is most standing water and the smallest rainfall. The crews again fished, and some fine perch were secured with gudgeons gently dropped into the water round the piles of Horseway lock. I had caught twelve of these little beauties at Welch's Dam with our casting-net, and they proved an irresistible attraction to the audacious perch, who delighted in the illusion of a fellow-fish-creature choosing such a spot in which to display his matchless succulence. The perch seemed much vexed by our

fishing here without leave, and came out of the water gasping with horror and looking as grim as an army of giants with a thousand years' pay in arrear.

Small boats are here sometimes filled with eels caught in wicker pots like elongated lobster pots, baited with worms, and sunk on the bottom during the day, but kept floating by night, for then the eels are feeding and come up to the surface for the drowned flies and moths and little frogs they find loafing about.

While we were at anchor at Horseway a cat came to look at us, but being like all her sex fickle and devoid of humour, she walked sadly away. Her little daughter came next, to whose artless grace Tammy addressed, somewhat meaningly, a large bottle-cork. For a moment the fitful little thing seemed charmed with the gift, but she quickly recovered her dignity, and after expectorating at the donor passed away, with ruffled plumes, in her mother's wake, to join, we supposed, some other evening party or a concert *à la promenade.*

The Bursar made us laugh by a dreadful exclamation on the irregularities of ladies' tempers and the general wickedness of the age, which we quite understood, as he had told us severally, in the strictest confidence, that there was a wasp buzzing about his own honeycomb somewhere down in Devonshire.

We went into port at Chatteris, where there are traces still of the monastery of Chartreuse, which has left its old name, but none of its good old liquor to this wretched hamlet. In the morning, June 23rd, at ten

o'clock, I ordered the men to explore the place in separate parties, and to report to me any matters of topical interest. The Chaplain, who loves good living, told me on his return from a very brief survey of the place that he wondered how the demoralised inhabitants should care to prolong life after one meal to face the terrible ordeal of the next. The Jester had introduced himself to a divine of austere aspect, and complained that he had suddenly been deserted by this clergyman on offering to provide malt liquor for both at a neighbouring inn, and to introduce him to the Chaplain of the fleet under my command. The Hydrographer reported that there was no hairdresser in the whole town, and that, on enquiry, he was told that the ostler at the "George" would lend him a razor, if that was all. He was so proud of his soft little beard that it seemed very sad to us that it should have been mistaken for an inadvertence. The Bursar brought me word that all the natives had made grimaces at him. I examined into this matter, and found that the population certainly had entailed upon them that disagreeable arrangement of features called ugliness.

On further enquiry our surprise ceased. We were told that this part of the country was settled by a colony of Dutch about the time of the Revolution, which accounted for the squab shape, flat nose, and round unmeaning face which prevails. The crews seemed heartily thankful when I gave the word to launch the vessels and smite again "the sounding furrows" of Vermuyden's Drain in quest of some more genial clime.

We were escorted to the docks here by a deputation of the principal inhabitants, whose satisfaction was clearly manifested by folded arms, unmoved looks, and silent grins of approbation.

The arms and faces of the rowers were to-day much burnt and blistered by the sun, but the Chaplain and Bursar, who generally preferred to steer, had suffered but little. I fancied that perhaps the convex globules of sweat formed little burning glasses!

For many miles we saw very few men, women, or children on our way, but the oxen and sheep, the principal inhabitants of this country, left their dinner and in many places came to the banks of the river to stare at us, and seemed to say they had never before seen so grand and pleasing a sight. The weed, here called "cott," became very troublesome, and made fishing impossible and rowing disgusting; so we towed the *Pandora*, with the *Argo* tied to her transom, for a few miles, to the end of the wily Dutchman's drain where it joins the Old Nene river.

A fenman on the eastern bank demanded a toll of fourpence for hauling; but as he confessed it was not above a fortnight since this new tax was levied, and could give us no reason for his novel demand, we refused to comply, to his evident mortification. He went away, swearing heartily that we should hear from him again by an action of trespass. The crews went ashore and paid a brief visit to the ruins of Ramsey Abbey. This place is a vast improvement on our last port. We found the sex much handsomer, and the

town better built and situated than any we had seen in the fens.

The little girls had many of them Guido faces, with fair hair and good shapes, and expression and life in their countenances. This we attributed to the French refugee blood settled here two centuries ago. We were now in the land of the great fen meres, once the chosen haunt of almost every strange winged visitor, both bird and butterfly. Ugg, Trundle, Ramsey, and the greatest mere of Whittlesea had so recently as 1851 yielded their rich harvest of fish and fowl and reeds to all who came. To us their glory was gone. Their waving forests of reeds and placid silver-gleaming bosoms now give nutriment of a more prosaic form.

As far as eye could reach the meres were golden with enormous crops of grain growing in the inexhaustible richness of alluvial soil, five feet deep. The glory is departed. Its conqueror, a steam pump, spits defiance by day and night over these once happy hunting grounds. The Chaplain read aloud from a cherished book he carried in his pocket what our Cambridge Professor, Charles Kingsley, the pride of Magdalen, and of every honest Englishman, had written of the old Whittlesea he knew and loved so well:

Grand enough it was; while dark-green alders and pale-green reeds stretched for miles round the broad lagoon, where the coot clanked, and the bittern boomed, and the sedge-bird, not content with its own sweet song, mocked the notes of all the birds around; while high overhead hung, motionless, hawk beyond hawk, buzzard beyond buzzard, kite beyond kite, as far as eye could see. Far off upon the silver mere would rise a puff of

smoke from a punt invisible from its flatness and its white paint. Then down the wind came the boom of the great stanchion-gun, and after that sound another sound, louder as it neared—a cry as of all the bells of Cambridge, and all the hounds of Cottesmore—and overhead rushed and whirled the skein of terrified wild-fowl, screaming, piping, clacking, croaking, filling the air with the hoarse rattle of their wings, while clear above all sounded the wild whistle of the curlew and the trumpet note of the great wild swan.

They are all gone now. The monster pike of Whittlesea, one hundred pounds in weight when the mere was drained, is stuffed with sawdust in Mr. Frank Buckland's museum in London.

When the fiercest noontide heat was past, we again pressed on to reach Peterborough before midnight. The water was still horribly weedy and unfishable, though we were told it is a grand place for pike.

When two empty barges are towed together, side by side, as is the custom here, they nearly fill the waterway, and make such a terrible crashing commotion that the pike, lying on the surface of the weed near the side, in their terror jump clean out on to the bank, to the joy of the bargemen. They lie at the side to capture frogs who come down the bank to bathe.

We had still eighteen miles to row, so I forbore to stop long at Whittlesea, and pressed on after a brief easy at the "Falcon," where we anchored, of course to let the Chaplain get a close view of the noble spire of the Parish Church—a landmark for fifteen miles on every side in clear weather. An hour and a half brought us through Standground sluice to Peterborough, where I secured a large sackful of grains and a bag of fragrant brandlings from a brewer near the boathouses, as we

were to be at work on the roach and bream in the Great Nene by five o'clock next morning.

June 24. Midsummer Day. We left Peterborough, down-stream, at five minutes to four, and in half an hour reached a fine deep range of holes full of fish, and all of them hungry. At the cry of grains (*those that stink most are the best*) they came from far and wide to find a bunch of brandlings waiting on a small No. 6 hook as a whet to appetite. We filled the grain-sack about half full of all sorts, but mostly large bream. The river is full of rudd and roach and dace and eels of grand size—the rudd larger than those in the Ouse. We captured three, weighing each (at a guess) two and a half pounds. The dace were very lively and ranged from nine inches to a foot in length. We longed to catch a grey mullet, for which the New Nene is famous, but the tidal water which they love very seldom comes up so far above Wisbech as this, and we had not time to go and pay them a visit. They seem to be vegetarians in diet, and to graze like bullocks, and can only be caught with a piece of cabbage leaf or lettuce. I have often seen the wharf at Wisbech lined with anglers dangling bits of green stuff in the rising tide, and pulling the dainty little fellows out by dozens. They know when the mullet run up in this way. There are generally eight or ten great rafts of Norway or Baltic pine floating in the river to season, near the Wisbech timber merchants' yards. The mullet swim on the surface to nibble the fresh young grass on Nene banks, and finding their path blocked, try, salmon-like, to leap the

obstacle, only to find themselves high and dry on the timber in the clutch of some gourmand urchin, who should himself have been in a gasping attitude on some timber at the Parish School.

> Jamque dies aderat cum nil procedere lintrem
> Sentimus.

At eleven o'clock we re-embarked with our cargo of fish for Peterborough, and left our ships at Hemming's boat yard for a few weeks, till we could meet again to try a new route back to Cambridge at the beginning of the "Long," and enlarge our already happy experiences of the Slodger population of the Fens, and see if possible what the Fen folk of South Lincolnshire are like, and whether the North Level and Middle Level Drains are as full of fish as people say.

On my mentioning this hope, it was hailed with many eager wishes for the time to come by all except the Chaplain, who resigned his commission on the spot. I expressed my confident belief to the others of the crews that, notwithstanding this serious loss to the *morale* of the Fleet, we might still be enabled to preserve due decorum and a becoming resignation of mind—whatever might betide.

PREHISTORIC FISHING.

BY F. J. FARADAY, F.L.S.

HEN, half in earnest and half in jest, as befits our pleasant gatherings, I selected as the subject of my last paper, "The Mind of Fishes," and endeavoured, in an innocent way, to indicate the possibility of the finny tribe being endowed with a larger share of intelligence than is generally ascribed to them, I was prepared to find my arguments not giving general satisfaction. This anticipation has been since justified. Amongst others, our practical honorary secretary, who is a whole public in himself, has revolted against a train of thought which seemed to dissolve itself in transcendental mists, and he has laboured to prove, not only that a fish cannot think in the water, but that it cannot even see straight. Nay, more, it has been contended that the fish is destitute even of emotion, the sweet sister of thought, as "no tear ever waters its eye."

Against this latter argument I might suggest that the fish can have little need to water its eye in this way, and that even if it did weep it would be somewhat difficult to tell where the tear ended and the rest of the liquid began. But it is not wise to contend too stubbornly against superior force. And yet, in retiring

before overwhelming odds, even the mildest-mannered will wish not to let the enemy have all his own way. It has occurred to me that if I have failed to demonstrate the presence of mind in fish, I may have some consolation in showing, *en revanche*, that the fish has not been uninfluential in connection with the development of mind in man. This proposition appears not difficult to sustain before a company of anglers. Recognising, as we do, in the angler, those qualities of patience, charity and contemplativeness which are favourable to the exercise of thought, we do little violence to the probabilities of the case in regarding him as one of the highest results of intellectual evolution; and as all anglers are at one in attributing those excellent qualities which they are justly conscious of possessing in a supereminent degree, to the exercise of their art, it is clear that the fish has had no mean—even if passive—share in the perfecting of mind; for had there been no fish there would have been no anglers.

Here I might well pause, feeling that this assembly would accept my proposition as already demonstrated; but the non-angling world may fail to see the measure of our indebtedness to the fish so clearly as we see it. I propose, therefore, to discuss a few other facts and ideas which have presented themselves in connection with the general question of the relation of fishing to the origin and progress of civilization.

At the outset difficulties present themselves. It is not easy to disintellectualise one's self, and in endeavouring to realise the condition of the missing link this is

practically what one has to do. The moment I try to think of man beginning to angle, I find myself tacitly admitting the presence of the same mental qualities as existed in Izaak Walton. The only difference seems to be that the later man had many centuries of experience more than the other. Again, to ask, "Did all the families of the earth who now practise fishing derive their art from an original angler, or did the art originate independently in different regions?" is only another way of putting the question, "Did the whole of the races of mankind spring from one original stock?" In dealing with the subject, we may conveniently adopt the evolution theory as a kind of framework on which to arrange facts and inductions. It may be impossible to trace one thread throughout the varied pattern which may be embroidered thereon; many threads of varied colours may cross and recross each other, and the result prove exceedingly complicated; but if it does no more than make apparent some of the difficulties of the matter, the attempt will have been useful.

There are said to be stories on record of members of the monkey tribe fishing with their tails. But man himself is not naturally adapted for swimming, and judging from the apparently instinctive repugnance which not only most babes and young children, but a very large number of the members of even civilised communities have to water, there seems to be no predisposition in the nature of man to search for food in that medium. The least educated members of the community are sometimes spoken of as "the great unwashed," and this

implies that familiarity with aqueous life marks a considerable advance in the triumph of mind over matter. The proverb (and proverbs have a scientific value as the epitome of long-continued and varied observation) says that cleanliness is next to godliness. The proverb does not tell us on which side of godliness cleanliness ought to be placed, but it indicates that a love of water is closely associated with the evolution of moral excellence. Now the general appearance and odour of the specimens of the monkey tribe which I have been able to inspect in zoological collections have given me the impression that familiarity with aquatic immersion came much later than the monkey stage in the line of human descent. Such familiarity would occasionally be an accidental consequence of the effort to obtain food from the water. Led by hunger to venture into a stream or into the edge of the in-coming tide, man would become acquainted with the comforts of the bath. The love of pleasure is one of the strongest forces in human nature, and having once become familiar with those comforts, man would not readily abandon them. Thus it may be said that the fish lured mankind to cleanliness, and to all its moral and mental consequences.

But we have yet to solve the initial problem as to how mankind was induced to search for food in the water. It may be worth while to mention here that the gorilla always keeps near a running stream, and that the Carthaginian general, Hanno, met with gorillas on the coast of the African continent. One would naturally suppose, however, that man's earliest tastes would be for

fruits and esculent roots. In this respect he must have been influenced by the geographical and climatic conditions of the locality in which his lot happened to be cast. Letourneau has pointed out the relation between the local conditions under which the various races of mankind dwell, and the food which they consume. In Australia, for instance, there is great poverty of both animal and vegetable food, and molluscs are largely consumed. In New Guinea (a country distinguished for vast alluvial plains and dense forests, for its flat and marshy character, the innumerable fresh-water channels which intersect it, and its shallow coasts, where mud banks run out to sea to such a distance that on one side vessels cannot approach within ten miles of the island), fishing is largely practised by the negro inhabitants. The people of Khamschatka and the Samoyede races, again, are essentially a fish-eating people. Fishing does not seem to be much resorted to in Africa, where we have been taught to look for the original home of the missing link and the centre whence mankind spread; but it is practised on the banks of the higher Nile and its tributaries. It may be said that in tropical countries, where nature presents vegetable food in abundance, the natives live without effort on the fruits of the earth and on such animals as they have learned to capture. In the mountainous regions and over the wild inland plains and prairies, hunting and trapping are practised. In the more desolate regions of the north and extreme south, on the sea-coast generally, and on the banks of great rivers, the water naturally constitutes the prin-

cipal, or at least an important subsidiary source of food supply.

But what were the conditions which induced mankind to spread to these various localities? For we have to assume that, in the beginning, the conditions of existence in the locality generated the particular tastes and habits, not that the existence of the tastes and habits led men to seek the locality favourable to their indulgence. Necessity is the mother of invention; but how did the necessity arise? Could we assume that the various races of men were created, or developed, independently in the localities in which they dwell, the matter would be clear as far back as the date of the actual evolution of each race. But there are phenomena which seem to refute this idea, and if we recognise that the allied plants of Scandinavia and Australia have migrated from a common centre, and that the similar flora and fauna of England and Japan have done so, we are scarcely warranted in admitting a new principle with regard to the human species, but must hold that the various races of mankind have also sprung from a common stock. They have one feature in common—reason, the power of forming abstract or general ideas, expressible and expressed in language—which, so far as we have yet made out, is possessed by no other order of terrestrial beings. Wide as the difference between the Fuegian and the most accomplished Manchester angler may be, it is absolutely infinitesimal in comparison with that between the former and the most intelligent brute. "Wretched as the Fuegians are," says M. G. Le Bon

(who has recently visited them), in a paper read last week before the Paris Geographical Society, "they belong to the race of Prometheus, for they make fires, which the lower animals have never done. They have an industry, for they manufacture weapons of stone and bone, arrows with bone or obsidian points, slings, and a kind of knife. They construct vessels with which they cross the straits of Magellan. They have magicians. They speak an unknown language, which some day perhaps will astonish linguists. Low as the Fuegian is in the scale of humanity, he has the distinctive features which place him in the category of what M. De Quatrefages has justly called *le règne humain*. He is not an intermediary between the brute and man, a specimen left to mark the course of descent and the point of our departure from the brutes. The Fuegian, degraded as he is, is a *man*." The intelligence of man must have been developed up to the level of the Fuegian, taking him as one of the lowest types of the genus, before the original separation.

Assuming that the family of missing links dwelt in a favoured region, free from wild beasts and other foes to human life, liberally supplied with vegetable food, and with an indisposition for cannibalism, a rapid increase of numbers would furnish the impulse to migration.

The gradual pressure upon less fertile districts, and the desirableness of selecting safe localities, would necessitate the widening of the sources of food supply. Climatic and geographical changes may have exercised an important influence. The gradual approach of a

glacial epoch, isolation through the submergence of a neck of land or the inrush of a flood, would do much to induce man to prey upon the animal world. Indeed he would often find his greatest security in places of least terrestrial fertility; and thus an application to the water for food would be one of the conditions of his continued survival. Under such circumstances he might find shelter in the caves of the old cliffs, left high and dry (comparatively speaking) by the retreating waves, and food along the margin of his (maybe) island home.

Forced by whatever reason to seek for other food than the fruits which fed his monkey ancestors, man would be attracted to the coast, especially, in order to prey upon those animals which could be most easily captured in consequence of their sluggish or absolutely sedentary existence; and which, therefore, presented in this respect, to unskilled man, the advantages of a vegetable diet. The adoption of a fish diet may have had an influence in the evolution of the mental superiority which distinguishes man from the lower animals, that high degree of "organic phosphorescence of the nervous elements" of which M. J. Luys, the eminent physician of the hospital of La Salpêtrière, writes in his latest work on the brain. It is well known that the phosphorus of which fish are largely composed is an important element in nervous tissue, and Professor Agassiz has gone so far as to say that fish, as food, feeds the brain, strengthens the cerebral functions, and adds to the intellectual powers generally. On the sea-shore, and near the mouths of tidal rivers, man would be able to prey upon

shell-fish, and he would easily catch those little fish which every tide would leave imprisoned in the rocky pools and creeks. Occasionally a big fish left stranded would afford him an ampler repast, and would teach him to aspire to the capture of the larger denizens of the watery world. The remains of such repasts are found accumulated, with some of the earliest traces of man's handiwork, in the shell-mounds explored by Nilsson in Scandinavia, which constitute such important monuments of prehistoric man. Similar mounds have been found in Scotland, in Devonshire, in Japan, the Malay Peninsula, Australia, North and South America; and in Tierra del Fuego they are still in process of formation. Amongst the remains in the ancient Danish shell-mounds are those of the crab, the mussel, the cockle, and the periwinkle; and last, but not least, those of the oyster are extraordinarily plentiful.

To a rightly-constituted and well-balanced mind, there is something which invites to profound reflection in the discovery of such a quantity of oyster-shells amongst these remains of our remote ancestors. Many thousands of years ago, when the flora and fauna, or at least their distribution, and the physical configuration of the earth were probably far different from what they are now, man discovered and loved the luscious dainty which still delights his descendants. Even the Delaware Indians are fond of mussels and oysters, and those living near an oyster bed will subsist for weeks upon them. In a paper read three years ago before the British Association, Mr. V. Ball

records that oyster-shells are found plentifully in the shell-mounds in the Andaman Islands; yet the Islanders of to-day do not eat the oyster, though feeding upon other shell-fish. Possibly this abstention of the modern Andamans may be due to the prudence of some ancient king or chief, who, fearing from the popularity of the dish that the supply for the royal table might become scanty, decreed a kind of close time by endowing the creature with a sacred character.

But many other fish are found in the ancient shell-mounds, fresh-water as well as sea fish. In the mound at Havalse, common herring are plentiful, and fluke, cod, and eels. The presence of these fish suggests the use of the line and the net, and there is direct evidence of the use of the former, and indirect evidence of the use of the latter. Nilsson records that fish-hooks of flint of various sizes suitable for cod, perch, and eels, have been found in the mounds, and he points out that fish-hooks of other materials, such as wood and bone, materials used not very long ago by the Esquimaux and the Lapps, would decay. Similar hooks have been found in the vicinity of the Swiss lake-dwellings, and bone hooks suitable for pike have been obtained from the bottom of bogs. In Homer's time fish-hooks made of the horns of the ox were used. Again, in the ancient mounds, together with stone arrow and spear heads, stone plummets have been obtained, the use of which is indicated by an old Faröe song from which Nilsson quotes the line—

> He lost both hook and stone.

Harpoons of flint and bone similar to those still used by the Esquimaux have also been found in Scandinavia. Indeed, there is ample evidence that the stone-age people practised angling in both the sea and lakes, with implements similar to those now used by the Esquimaux, the people of Tierra del Fuego, and others.

There need be no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that the earliest weapon used would be the spear. Man's attention may have been drawn to the possibility of catching fish in the depths by observing the cormorant and other fish-eating birds. That very ancient and conservative people the Chinese actually employ the cormorant to-day to fish for them. Man may also have observed the heron spearing fish with his long bill. Where-ever we find prehistoric implements at all in any quantity, spear and lance heads are found, and even amongst people where other means of catching fish are wanting, spears are used for that purpose. Thus the natives of north-west Australia, when first visited, had spears, clubs, and shields, but neither hooks, nets, slings, bows, nor arrows.

The question naturally arises at this stage as to whether hunting or fishing was first practised. At a certain period in evolution these sports would doubtless develop contemporaneously, but I am strongly disposed to think that the practices in fishing would be the parents, so to speak, of the various improvements in hunting. Man's earliest state, as man, would surely be one of comparative weakness. How the struggle for existence ever evolved so defenceless a creature we must leave unexplained; in this inquiry we must start with naked and unarmed

man. I think that man's courage would only come with the development of his intellect. As, by the practice of the not dangerous art of fishing, he gradually came to perceive that, by the exercise of reason, he could supply himself with those weapons with which nature had endowed other animals, and that by skill he could obtain other advantages over the latter, he would increase in boldness, and eventually attack the monsters of the deep and even the lords of the forest. As his skill in the use of the spear in fishing increased he would first attack the weaker and more harmless of terrestrial animals. It is a noteworthy fact that amongst savage nations and tribes, even what may be regarded as the peculiar weapons and practices of the chase, are also associated with fishing ; and the same is true also of prehistoric remains as far back as the stone age. Lance heads and arrow heads are found in gravel beds, in marshes and bogs ; that is, in old river and lake beds and adjacent to old sea coasts. This is especially the case, for instance, in New Jersey, where enormous quantities of stone lance and arrow heads, good sturgeon spears, and similar stone weapons are found on the banks of the Delaware. "In New Jersey," says Dr. Abbott, "almost every brook that harbours a fish has now lying among the pebbles of its bed or the turf along its banks, flinty arrow points, and delicate fish spears." We have seen that the same phenomenon is observed in the ancient shell mounds all over the world. It is recorded that the Chonos Indians, when first visited, used dogs in killing fish, even though they had nets. The nets were

held by two Indians in the water, and the dogs would then take a large compass, dive into the water, and drive the fish into the nets. In South Australia, again, where hooks were unknown, nets were used in hunting and as bags. There can be no doubt at all that the net originated in fishing, so that here we have an illustration of the complete diversion of an appliance from its original purpose. The Fiji Islanders used bows and arrows for killing fish. The natives of New Zealand had no bows and arrows when first discovered, but were expert fishers with lines and hooks; their only missile weapon was the lance, thrown by hand, a method which obviously preceded the bow. Squier and Davis, in their *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi*, express the opinion that the bow and arrow came into use subsequently to the use of rude stone implements. Loskiel describes the Delaware and Iroquois Indians as using bows and arrows, hooks, and harpoons in fishing, but makes no mention of their having ever used nets. It may be argued that many of these facts indicate the diversion of the appliances of a hunting people to the catching of fish, and there is weight in the suggestion. It remains a noteworthy fact, however, when taken with other evidence, that hunting weapons are used in fishing. For the rest I would point out that there are supposed plummet-stones amongst the stone implements found in New Jersey and elsewhere, which may indicate the former use of the net, even by the hunting Indians. It must be remembered that the Indians may be described as a people highly educated in hunting. Assuming that

the early education and development of man took place in fishing settlements, and that his boldness grew with his intelligence, then migrations would occur at different periods; and according to the tastes of the emigrants and the character of the new lands in which they found themselves, would one or the other art be cultivated, and this or that appliance acquire special prominence, or be neglected and even forgotten. Finally, the very nature of stone implements seems to indicate their origination by a fishing people; for where would the pebbles and stones most fit for weapons, and most easily fashioned into such, nay sometimes almost ready-made and suggesting their subsequent use by their shapes, be so plentifully found as on shingly beaches and in the beds of streams? The need of clothing and shelter suggests an early practice of the slaying of wild beasts in order that their skins might be used for these purposes, and the suggestion might lead us to inquire how a savage creature in absolute want of clothing was evolved by the struggle for existence. But this must be avoided here. In a tropical clime our fisher folk would not feel the want of the skins of wild beasts much. In colder regions seal skins and otter skins are used for covering. The inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego, for instance, thus clothe themselves. But as fishing progressed man would learn to clothe himself in a better way even than with skins.

The line would be the first step in the evolution of textile appliances, and would probably immediately follow the use of the spear. It may have been suggested by the sight of pendulous fruit, and by the endeavour to

copy such natural ornamentation in the ornamentation of man's own person. The North American Indians drilled stones to suspend for ornaments, and stones which may have served this purpose are found in ancient deposits. Vanity seems to be an instinctive quality in humanity, and one which is only lessened, or perhaps, to speak more scientifically, rendered unnecessary, by the progress of intellect. The instinct of vanity serves many high uses in the economy of the species, and has often impelled the human race in the path of progress; and from this standpoint the proverbial love of adornment by the fair sex may be regarded as an important factor in the evolution of civilization. The women of our primitive fishing settlements may have originated the thread from which the line was evolved. A recent residence at Aberystwith with a party of ladies has led me to think that if the settlement was on a similar coast, pebble necklaces would not be long in making their appearance. The first textile material may have been the ladies' own hair, which even those missing links, the mermaids, are said to comb and deck with pearls. Meanwhile, man, pursuing fish with spears, would learn to boat. He would see logs of wood floating down the rivers; he might sometimes see an animal swimming down upon one, or himself be accidentally carried on such a bark. Given this much, it is easy to see how he would learn to hollow a canoe. But often when he had struck a fish with a spear he would lose both fish and spear; thus would arise the need of something by which he could still follow the spear and fish, and man

would originate the harpoon with the movable point and attached line and float. Such harpoons, made of flint and bone, are found in the ancient deposits and the bogs of Scandinavia; they are still used by the Esquimaux in the extreme north and the Fuegians in the south. They are found in the ancient Esquimaux settlements in Greenland, and in fact amongst savages in islands and on sea-coasts almost everywhere. From the notched harpoon and the line and movable point, to the hook, would be an easy transition, and the net would follow, or be evolved almost simultaneously. Man might often after storms see small streams blocked by the interlaced branches of trees and other vegetation swept down by the current; and he might behold fish struggling therein. He would also be familiar with the tangled sea-weed. Thus he would learn to make weirs. Our always-wonderful Shakspere has indicated this when he makes that remarkable missing link, Caliban, exclaim on Prospero's island—

> "No more dams I'll set for fish."

Already possessed of the line, in the construction of which he would learn to use an increasing variety of material, vegetable and animal; and with such natural and, eventually, artificial wicker-work as I have indicated before him, man would proceed to interlace his lines, and thus from the line and the dam evolve the net. And now, given favourable natural conditions, and that divine *afflatus* which makes some men aspire to the highest uses of the faculties with which they are endowed, while

others are content to sink and wallow with the brutes, we have man on the high road to the highest attainments of civilization. He would proceed to guard the entrance to his cave dwelling, to construct and thatch huts. He would learn to know that a moat would be a good protection from many dangers, and would construct on piles in the midst of lakes those wonderful lake dwellings which have been discovered in Switzerland, and which may be called prehistoric castles, and he would make baskets and weave rough textures for clothes.

It is interesting to observe the existence and various stages of these various arts in savage life.* Spindle whorls and rude fabrics made of flax fibres and straw, and finally of wool, with other evidences of the existence of all the acquirements I have referred to, are found in many of the deposits and monuments pertaining to the stone age, in almost all parts of the world where these relics have been explored. They are not all found equally developed and uniformly associated amongst existing savage tribes and nations. The wigwams of the Fuegians are not thatched, but covered with seal-skins. The women jerk out fish with baited hair lines. In some portions of Australia, the aborigines had nets and no fish-hooks, and in others hooks and no nets. The New Zealanders were very skilful in fishing and used excellent lines, hooks made of bone and shell, and large nets made

* I ought to mention that many of the statements of fact relating to savage life here made have been gleaned from Sir John Lubbock's well-known works. Sir John has taken much of his information from the accounts of Capt. Cook and others, and with such a careful writer before me I have not considered it necessary in these instances to go to the originals.

of the leaves of a kind of flax split into strips and tied together. Their clothes were made of the same material, though they had also fabrics made of bark woven into a rough kind of stuff, between netting and cloth. Dog's wool or hair was used for the same purpose. The sides of their houses were made of sticks closely thatched with grass and hay. Their dead also were wrapped in a kind of cloth. The inhabitants of Tahiti had fish-hooks made of mother-of-pearl which served the double purpose of hook and bait. They had ropes and lines of bark from a species of *Hibiscus* with which they made nets for fishing. They made a Seine net of a coarse, broad grass, with blades like flags, twisted together, sixty to eighty fathoms long. This they hauled in shoal water, its own weight keeping it down, and not a single fish could escape. They also inebriated the fish by throwing certain species of leaves and fruit into the water, so that the fish could be caught by hand. They had fishing-lines made of a kind of nettle which grows amongst the mountains. They used the fibres of the cocoa-nut for threads also, and were dexterous in basket and wicker-work; and they made mats of rushes, grass and bark, woven with great neatness and regularity. The Fiji Islanders had also mats and thatched dwellings. Canoes were used everywhere.

But I have not yet exhausted the probable influence of fishing on the development of civilization. The pastoral life may have preceded agriculture, or *vice-versa*; but it has always been a puzzle to know how one or the other could begin, for animals could not be

domesticated, or land be cultivated, without some settled dwelling and the existence of some form of society and social observance. Letourneau has pointed out that sociability, intelligence, and a patient disposition are necessary for the development of civilization, and, before him, Rousseau argued that they are obviously necessary for either stock-breeding or agriculture. All these conditions would be provided and these qualities encouraged in settlements on the shores of fisheries, and with the development of the appliances springing from the practice of fishing, which have been described. As man learned to spin and weave he would wish to retain wool-bearing animals near him for the sake of their perennial yield of fibre; and as he tasted and consumed the fruits and vegetables growing in the neighbourhood of his settlement, he would endeavour to avoid long excursions by transplanting the plants themselves to the immediate vicinity of his habitation. Another problem is the origin of fire and of cooking. The heat generated by friction in sharpening and polishing his implements may have taught man the primitive mode of producing fire; but what would be its first uses? In the morass he would see the *ignis fatuus*, and escaping in his canoe from some accidental conflagration due to natural causes, he may have seen the fish attracted in shoals by the flames on the banks. Having discovered how to produce fire artificially, he might use it for fishing by torch-light, a very early practice; and even invoke its aid in hollowing out his canoes. From its use for this and other purposes he would incidentally fuse the metalliferous

rocks in the vicinity of his dwelling, and thus become acquainted with the metals. Amongst the earliest known metallurgical manufactures are bronze fish-hooks. Man would have already learned to dry fish in order to preserve it. Loskiel found the North American Indians eating smoked eels and other dried fish, and the growth of prudence would teach the fishing aboriginal to utilise his new-found ally, fire, so that some of the proceeds of the good fishing days might be preserved to provide food for those when the fish were not in a biting humour. To this origin we may trace all the refinements of French cookery.

As I have sketched out this scheme of evolution, I have been aware that the varied stages of knowledge of some of these simple appliances, throughout the world, do not altogether seem in harmony with such regular progress, or migration from a common centre; but rather seem to suggest spontaneous evolution and independent origin in some cases. Possibly in certain cases such independent invention has occurred. I may, however, suggest that inequalities of knowledge and civilization would result from successive migrations and varying local conditions. The lasso and the domestication of the horse and dog would be evolved from the line. The bow might also be a result of the line, either in consequence of the accidental discovery of the elasticity of some yielding branch, or some accidental conjunction of the shaft of the harpoon and the attached line, or of the rod and the line. No angler who has seen a good rod bend to the weight and struggles of a big fish will have much difficulty in

conceding the possibility of such an origin for the bow. With these new appliances hunting would become a more successful and popular avocation, and with the increase of numbers and the growth of experience tastes would diverge, and a division of labour ensue. Hunting tribes and pastoral tribes would branch off, and eventually exchanges would be made between these and the still settled fishing and manufacturing communities; and the development of boating would allow of trade between more and more distant communities. Thus different habits, and successive, and ultimately conquering migrations of peoples with varying degrees of knowledge would induce different methods of life. Finally, in view of the marvellous indications of the former existence of higher civilizations in various parts of the earth now peopled by relatively ignorant savages, and the curious analogies in their myths and traditions, I do not think we ought to close our eyes to the influences of possible degradation.

There is good reason to hope that philological research will throw much light on many of the points touched upon in this very imperfect and, I fear, too daring discourse. A special study of what I may call fish philology might well engage the attention of more than one member of this Association. In going through Fick's *Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der Indo-Germanischen Sprachen*, and other vocabularies, I have been struck with the many instances in which words associated with the various arts to which I have alluded, are also apparently associated with the idea of some form of water, or are

akin to words in some way associated with water. The Indo-German words are possibly a long way removed from the words first uttered by intelligent man; and as the allied expressions may all be said to be based on general ideas, it does not necessarily follow that the aquatic object was the original type of any of these ideas. It may be contended, for instance, that the name of the ship was derived from that of the plough, and not the name of the plough from that of the ship. Many of the coincidences are nevertheless curious. There is the Indo-German *apa*, which Fick suggests may have originally meant "sap," as allied to it are many words meaning not only "water," but "strength" and "fulness." Thus we have the Sanscrit *ap*, and the Old Prussian *api* meaning "water"; the Sanscrit *ap*, "to obtain," and *apas*, "work, deed, action," and *apnas*, "yield, result;" with a string of German and Græco-Latin words, from which we apparently get our "sap" and "copious." There is also the Latin *aptus*, "tied, attached," and the Aryan *âptya*, a mythological name signifying "dweller in the water." Now in the vocabularies of the Javanese islands I find *appi* meaning "fish;" in the dialects of the Australian aborigines *kapi*, "water," and *wapi*, *wawpi*, "fish;" in the Tasmanian vocabularies *appi*, "fish;" and the Indians of the Hudson's Bay territory in North America have the word *keesapa*, "fish." I do not think I am wrong in associating these words with those of the Indo-Germanic group; and if I am right, they take us back to a time more remote than the Aryan period, and to an original aquatic term.

Again Fick gives *ak* as the Aryan for "to bend," and *anka* as the Aryan for "hook," or "hold-fast," and also for "bow," or "bend" (Latin *ancon*), to which also are related our "angle" and "anchor." With these he associates *akvâ* (Latin *aqua*, Gothic *ahva*) and the Sanscrit *ankupa*, *ankura*, and *ankanka*, "water." This association of bending and water calls to mind the curve of the waves. Was the term applied to the water on this account, or did the hook derive its name from the waves? In other words, was the fish-hook or the wave the original visible type of the idea? The word was also applied to the swollen or bowed clouds. I know that I run a serious risk in mentioning in this connection the words *thanga*, *hanga*, *nga*, "fish," which occur in the Burmese dialects, but I cannot resist the temptation to do so.

Professor Max Müller has referred to the frequent association of "ploughing" and "rowing" in the ancient languages. He identifies the English "oar," and the Anglo-Saxon *âr* with the Sanscrit *ar*, which occurs in *aratra*, "rudder." He also identifies the English "plough," the Slavonic *ploug*, with the Sanscrit *plava*, "a ship," and the Greek *ploion*, "a ship." Fick gives also the Sanscrit *arat*, "arrived from afar." The original general idea was that of dividing, but whoever gives his attention to the whole group of words will, I think, come to the conclusion that the idea was generalised from the action of a boat or oar cutting through the water. The root ultimately came to have the meaning "to unravel," as well as "to plough," and to express cutting through

the air as well as through the water; and, finally, it was applied to the things cut as well as the things cutting. In Fick's Slavo-German vocabulary, we have *ar* "to drive, to rise," and *ara*, "eagle;" *arva*, "arable land," and *arkva*, a "dart" or "arrow." Remembering the meaning "unravel," the root seems to be preserved in the Græco-Italian *arakno*, "spider," or spinning animal, and the Slavo-German *aria*, "lamb," or wool-bearing animal. I cannot, however, see how the Sanscrit *arat*, "arrived from a distance," could be derived from the same root as this name of the lamb, unless the original term was applied to navigation.

There is the group of words associated with the Indo-German roots *kard*, *skard*, *kart*, *ska*. These roots I have grouped together because there seems to be an association of ideas amongst them. There is for instance the Sanscrit *kard* and *kardama*, "morass," also expressing the ideas of oscillation, springing, limping; *kart*, "to roll, to spin or twist," and also "to interlace;" *kar*, "to carry" and "to cover;" *kara*, "dark;" *kar* "to burn, to inflame;" *kart*, "to cut, separate;" and *karta*, "loch;" *cha*, "to divide;" and *kha*, *ska*, "spring," or "stream." In his vocabulary of European words before the separation of the various nations, Fick gives *skard*, "to spring;" *skara*, "to dry;" *ska*, "to burn;" *skap*, "to cut," and "to comb or card wool;" *skapa*, "a small ship or boat;" *skap*, "to throw, to cover," and "dark." These words may be traced in almost identical forms through almost the whole of the Indo-European languages, and with similar meanings, down even to the language of to-day. It may appear bold to

suggest the rollers on which the ancient vessels were moved down to the water as the concrete type of the original idea. The rollers would carry the vessel, and thus we have the two ideas of winding and carrying. The matted vegetation of the swamp would bear or carry the traveller over the water of the swamp, as the rollers carried the boat and the boat carried the fisher; the wicker basket and netted bag would also carry their contents; the Will-o'-the-Wisp would flame over the morass, and the marsh plants might even eventually dry it up. The morass would oscillate too, and in proportion to the firmness of the peat would be characterised by a certain elasticity or "spring." The stream would spring up at its source, and as it flowed would divide or separate the land. The wool would be cut or separated from the sheep, and the woven fabric would cover the wearer as the matted bog plants covered the water of the swamp, and the ocean covered the earth. All this seems fanciful, but my purpose will be served if it merely illustrates the kind of coincidence to which I have referred.

There are many other words and groups of words in the Indo-Germanic family which are especially interesting in this connection. The Indo-German word *mara*, "sea, swamp, moor," said to have been derived from *mar*, "to die," and to have meant originally "dead" or "stagnant" water, is apparently preserved in the Samoyede *maria*, "lake." The Sanscrit *marmara*, "to murmur," is seemingly akin to it, and also our "marine," and "maritime." With the Indo-German *vara*, "water,

sea," are allied *var*, "to cover," *vara*, "wool," *varana*, "lamb," *var*, "to surround, roll," and *Varana*, the name of one of the gods dwelling in the heavens which cover the earth. With the idea of covering is associated that of guarding, and this meaning is preserved in the German *wahren*. Then, again, we find *vada*, "water," *vad*, "to bathe," *vadh*, "to bind, wind, clothe." In the Slavo-German group, *vadha* occurs as "a sound, firth or inlet of the sea;" that is, a winding ribbon of water wrapping round the projecting land. An ancient European word is *sala*, "island," or "water-land," and another is *sali*, "salt." In the German we have *sala*, "dwelling-house." From the same root come "saloon" and "salvation" (Latin *salvus*), derivatives which suggest the security which, in primitive times, an island home would often afford. In the early European vocabulary, again, Fick gives *pan*, *spa*, *span*, "to spin, to draw," and *pana*, "thread, tissue." In the Slavo-German list is *pan*, "to tie," *pana*, "a woven fabric," *pania* "a swamp." In the Letto-Slavonic list is *pana*, "a master," *painana* "a herdsman," and *pana*, "a woven fabric." In the Prusso-Lett list, *pania*, "swamp," occurs. This association of swamp, woven fabric, and flocks (i.e. wool) is curiously analogous to that which occurs under *kard*, already described. In the dialects of some of the tribes of Northern India, *pani* signifies "water;" in the Burmese dialects, *panna*, "fish," occurs.

Again, in the Sanscrit we have *piechâ*, "stream," and *piechia*, "slime" (possibly spawn, German *Pech*, "pitch"). Fick suggests "fish" also. In the ancient European we

have *piska*, "fish" (Latin *piscis*), and in the old German, *fiska*, "fish." In the Philippine, Pelew, Fiji, Marquesa, and Coco Islands, and in New Zealand and New Hebrides the fragments *ik* and *ika* occur with the signification "fish." The Negritos use *ican* and *isda* with the same meaning. In the Celtic the form is *pysg* (Welsh, Cornish, and Breton), *iasg* (Irish and Scotch), and *ceast* (Manx).* One is reminded of the German *Peitsche*, "a whip," which is at least suggestive of a fishing-rod and line, and of the Swedish and Norwegian *piska*, "a whip." Perhaps I ought to add to the list our word "pike," a spear, as well as a fish, and to remind a Lancashire audience of the "pecking-lever" which throws the shuttle.

Philology is dangerous ground, and this branch of the subject deserves a far closer study than I have been able, during the brief time allowed for the preparation of my paper, to give to it. In view of the enormous amount of work in this department of science which has been done in Germany and elsewhere, and the vast amount of erudition which has been brought to bear upon it, an amateur must needs speak with diffidence, and with a constant sense of the gaps in his own knowledge. I call attention to these analogies, therefore, not by any means as representing opinions formed after an inquiry which had been sufficiently careful or sustained to satisfy myself, but as illustrating a kind of instinctive notion which I have that philological research will tend to confirm at

* The Basque for "fish" is *arraya*, which seems to take us back to the group already dealt with, including our "oar," &c. See page 244.

least some of the conclusions in the earlier part of the paper. I have some confidence that the diligent inquirer in this direction will have brought to mind, as offering many of the earliest types of those general ideas from which we are led to believe that the most wonderful phenomenon of life, human language, with all its infinite variety and poetry, has been evolved, some such scene as that described by Theocritus :—

> Two ancient fishers once lay side by side
> On piled-up sea-wrack in their wattled hut,
> Its leafy wall their curtain. Near them lay
> The weapons of their trade, basket and rod,
> Hooks, weed-encumbered nets, and cords, and oars,
> And, propped on rollers, an infirm old boat.
> Their pillow was a scanty mat, eked out
> With caps and garments.*

Some London authorities have styled our Association the premier angling-society of England. We may well, with the proverbial modesty of anglers, hesitate to appropriate such a title. Yet, if it be true that the textile industries and maritime commerce have been evolved from prehistoric fishing, there would be a certain fitness in the chief angling society being located in the city which is the centre of the greatest textile industries of the world, and whence the gospel of free-trade and consequent peace and good-will amongst nations, on which international commerce must be based, was most actively promulgated. Only, however, when we have been influential, by devoting some of our surplus energy and possibly funds to restoring Lancashire rivers to

* Mr. C. S. Calverley's translation.

something like the condition in which the prehistoric angler found them, may we accept without a blush the title which, with self-forgetting courtesy, our London friends have bestowed upon us.

RAMBLING RECOLLECTIONS OF FISHING DAYS ON THE ABERDEENSHIRE DON.

BY HENRY VANNAN, M.A.

IT is my present intention to bring before you a few personal experiences of fishing days spent on the last few miles of the Don, by way of opening up what may be new and unexplored ground in one of the most beautiful counties of the north-east of Scotland.

At the time when I used regularly to visit this river, I was accompanied by a keen fisher-friend—a delightful companion—and our invariable custom was to go by sea to the "Granite City," taking our passage in one of the two steamers which carry H.M.'s mails to the Orkney and Shetland Islands. No doubt we could have gone more quickly by rail, but we chose to take things leisurely. Indeed, we could well afford to do so; for we generally set sail with the prospect of six or seven weeks' fishing, and in the supremely happy position of being able to leave all care behind us in the beautiful metropolis, which surely a cynic named "Auld Reekie."

Blessed is that man who, when he sets out upon his annual holiday, is able to exercise the full independence of his judgment as to the amount of goods and chattels necessary for his well-being during his absence from home. Such a man, like Longfellow's typical blacksmith, can "look the whole world in the face," and defy the whole race of railway porters.

Apropos of this, I have heard a friend relate that, on one occasion when he was travelling, an elderly and somewhat excited-looking woman entered the carriage, and after settling herself in the seat immediately opposite to him, began in a highly audible whisper to repeat to herself: "Big box, little box, band box, bundle; big box, little box, band box, bundle, and wee clockin' hen." At first, not quite catching the meaning of this string of alliterative jargon, he wondered if the lady were a little wrong in the head; but by and by, hearing the words more plainly, and taking in the whole scene, he produced one of his cards, and pencilling upon it, "Big box, little box, band box, bundle, and wee clockin' hen," handed it to her, saying that perhaps that would enable her to remember the names and number of her packages. She thanked him heartily, and said she had never thought of doing this for herself, adding that she was in a state of great anxiety, as, in making the same journey with her mistress some years before, part of their luggage had gone astray, and she had been threatened with dismissal if the same thing happened again. Like most people, I have been obliged occasionally to travel with a collection of goods corresponding somewhat to the old

lady's "big box, little box, band box, bundle, and wee clockin' hen," but for comfort give me a knapsack only.

The distance between Leith and Aberdeen by water is a hundred miles. The passage usually occupies about eight or nine hours, and on a fine day is most enjoyable. Out from the harbour we steam at six o'clock a.m., course N.E. by N., with the bright morning sunlight sparkling on the blue waters of the Firth of Forth, unveiling far to the east the Bass and the Berwick Law, and lighting up with new beauty the Fifeshire hills. The air is fresh and bracing withal, and the whole scene exhilarating and delightful—such a morning, and such a scene, as tend to drive away the cobwebs of selfishness and discontent from the soul, and to make a man take a broader and more cheerful view of life. Past Inchkeith with its lighthouse and fortifications; past Kinghorn, over whose "Black Rock," in the darkness of a night six hundred years ago, the horse of a king fell with him and changed the course of a nation's history; past Kirkaldy—the "Lang Toon"—where Carlyle and Edward Irving lived and laboured in their youth, and laid the foundation of their deep and lasting friendship, we find ourselves off Largo Bay, celebrated in song that all anglers should appreciate;—

> I cuist my line in Largo Bay,
>   And fishes I caught nine,
> There's three to boil, and three to fry,
>   And three to bait the line.
> The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
>   The boatie rows indeed;
> And happy he the lot of a'
>   That wish the boatie speed.

Next, the Isle of May appears on the starboard bow, then Fife Ness on our port, and we are out of the Firth and fairly in the German Ocean.

By this time the welcome tinkle of the breakfast bell is heard, and we go below with appetites which have not had such a sharpening for a twelvemonth.

"Make haste, steward," says my friend, who is fond of a joke, "I've had no food since late last night, and to-morrow will be the third day."

"Aye, aye, sir," comes the laughing reply, "Ye maun be gey an' sair faimished wi' a three days' fast."

It is not unlikely that while breakfast is in progress, there may just be a little *inclination* on the part of the seats and tables to interfere with the perpendicular position previously maintained by the passengers. The glasses, too, in the rack over our heads may possibly begin to make their presence known by a gentle jingling, not unmusical in its way, which seems to be the signal for some of our friends to disengage their legs from under the table, and rush precipitately on deck, for the purpose—as the captain suggests, with the faintest approximation to a wink twinkling in his left eye—of *not losing any of the scenery*. We are now crossing St. Andrew's Bay, and here there is generally more or less of a swell. I have passed through it when it has been calm as a mill pond, however, and again, when the steamer pitched so that one fancied the main mast or funnel was coming down on one's head, and holding on for dear life was the order of the day. Away to the eastward we get a view of the Bell Rock or Inch Cape

lighthouse, erected early in the present century on an ugly reef, which, as it lies right in the track of vessels, had been the cause and the scene of many a wreck. Southey's beautiful ballad "The Inchcape Bell, or Retribution," founded upon an incident connected with this rock, is of course familiar to every reader. About twelve miles away, and on a dangerous rocky coast, stands the town of Arbroath, with the ruins of a famous old Abbey, with which Dr. Johnson was so much pleased on his journey to the Western Islands that he remarks:—"I should scarcely have regretted my journey had it afforded nothing more than the sight of Aberbrothock" (the ancient name of the place).

Steaming on past the counties of Forfarshire and the Mearns, we are soon over the bar and in the harbour of Aberdeen. Taken as a whole, and given fine weather, this sail I consider to be one of the most enjoyable to be had in these parts. It is not too long to be tiring, and there is always plenty to amuse and interest, both on board the steamer and in the outlook from it. Having said "good bye" to our scratch acquaintances, and wished them *bon voyage,* we hurry on shore, and make the best of our way to our quarters in the extreme north end of the "Alton," as Old Aberdeen is popularly called.

These same quarters my friend and I occupied for part of five or six consecutive summer holidays, and it says a good deal for our worthy landlady and her household that we never had any desire or occasion to make a change. We met again, as we always parted, with mutual good wishes; and it seems to me now, on looking

back, as if her first concern was invariably the comfort of her visitors, her last and least thought the amount of profit to be made out of them. I fear the latter of these considerations too often goes prominently first, and that the former is not seldom overlooked altogether.

The two principal rivers of Aberdeen are the Dee and the Don. The Dee rises in the south-western extremity of the county, and has a course of seventy or eighty miles; the Don, coming from the mountains on the borders of Aberdeen and Banff, is over sixty miles in length, and it is somewhat remarkable that for a considerable part of their course they flow nearly parallel, and both fall into the German Ocean within about two miles of one another. The two rivers differ much in appearance and general characteristics. The Dee is a clear river, running much on gravel, rapid in its flow, and abounding in salmon, while the soil on its banks is rather light and beautifully wooded. The Don, on the other hand, is somewhat dark-coloured and sluggish, not so prolific in salmon, but flowing through rich valleys producing abundant crops. Hence the old rhyme has it that ;—

> Ae rood o' Don's worth twa o' Dee
> Except it be for fish and tree.

To this I would add, after ample experience of both rivers, in their lower reaches at least, that "Ae rood o' Don's worth twa o' Dee" for what are commonly known there as "Yallow fins," that is, the ordinary river trout. These differ vastly from salmon, which seem to eat very little in fresh water, in requiring a good supply of rough

and ready food of all kinds, as anglers know well. For this the rich muddy channel of the Don makes ample provision, and we soon ceased to wonder at the fatness and firmness of flesh shown by the trout of our fishing ground, when we saw the abundant stores which came into the river from the lades of the three or four grain mills in the neighbourhood. I think it is Stoddart who remarks, in connection with fish-ponds and the rearing of fish generally, "that little care need be taken to bring apparently fine breeds of any species of fish from a great distance, as what seem poor fish at the period of transfer, will greatly improve if care be taken in their feeding." For myself I believe that, in regard to trout, though there may be something in birth, their good quality depends upon the water they live in, and the kind of food accessible to them; and that if you transfer very inferior-looking kinds of fish, living under unfavourable conditions, to suitable water and good food, they will soon rival others by which you may previously have set great store. I am not now making a mere assumption. A friend of mine constructed a pond in his grounds in the West Highlands, for the purpose of rearing trout, and stocked it from a little insignificant rivulet near, in which none of the fish were bigger than a large minnow. The pond was well supplied with food, and in the course of a year or two was full of trout, some of large size, and all of excellent quality. On the other hand, were one to take some of the best breed procurable—say those of Loch Leven—and introduce them to a rapid, mossy, mountain stream, where food and shelter were scarce, I

feel sure they would soon come to partake so largely of the qualities of the natives, as by and by to be hardly distinguishable from them.

The yellow trout in the lower waters of the Don are, next to those of Loch Leven, the finest I have caught in Scotland or anywhere else. Perhaps those of Tweed in its wide and well-preserved reaches are nearly equal to them; but taken all in all, for average size, quality of flesh, and dogged sport-giving sturdiness, I consider the Don trout superior. They are most beautiful fish to look at, strongly, though elegantly built, broad in the shoulder, with small heads and great power of tail; as we often experienced to our dismay, when, as a last effort, they would rise to the surface and attempt to overleap the line with a sort of side stroke, which many a time proved fatal to our trembling hopes. The spots are generally all dark, and when I had brought a good one to bank I was always reminded of the appearance presented by the sides of a clear-speckled grey horse. This is the chief variety met with. I rarely caught fish with red spots, one noteable example excepted. I have described the others as beautiful, but this trout I allude to was the most beautiful I ever caught, or indeed ever saw. It had all the good features of the ordinary kind, and added to these such an array of large bright-red spots as made it positively glow. It pulled down the indicator of my little Salter's balance somewhere beyond the two pounds, and this I look upon as being just about the right weight for display of perfect symmetry in a trout. I laid it down on the trunk of a tree near by, to

admire its elegant proportions and blaze of colour—a very foolish proceeding, no doubt, as in that minute I might have caught its marrow, some one will say. Not impossible, my friend, but far from probable. It is more than eight years since that fish lay upon the fallen moss-grown trunk, and I have not up to this time looked upon its like again. Though I have killed larger fish, there has been never a one to compare with that. All true anglers are admirers of beauty, and I am sure they admire the fish they take. On the whole, however, perhaps the safest place in which to admire them is the basket. Not that anything happened to me; but I recollect once among the charming "Birks of Invermay," in Perthshire, sitting down on the trunk of a tree to lunch, along with a friend with whom I was fishing the May. Shortly before, he had caught rather a nice fish which he took out of his basket to show me, and finally laid it down on the trunk beside him to take its dimensions. For the space of perhaps five minutes—not more—the fish was forgotten, and on my friend turning round to replace it in his creel, it was gone, and not a trace was left behind it. The look of blank amazement on his face was worth seeing, though it had been at the cost of twenty such trout. Where, in the name of everything wonderful, had the fish disappeared to? I dared not laugh for good manners' sake, though I felt like to split. Knowing that we were in the neighbourhood of a farm, I got up and prospected. Thirty yards away, entirely hidden by the trees, was a low wall, and on the farther side, a part of the farm buildings. On the wall,

some sixty yards from us, her eyes eagerly turned in our direction, sat a cat licking her lips. I went gently towards her; but her guilty look and immediate flight proclaimed the depredator. There was nothing for it but a pipe. My friend wondered that the cat was not seen in the act of eating; but this was no cause for surprise. To say that cats are fond of fish expresses nothing: they seem sometimes simply mad after them; and as to quickness in devouring, it must be seen to be believed.

The Don, in the locality I used to fish, is rigidly preserved, at the instance of the proprietors of the salmon fisheries, that is to say the Crown, the Shipmasters' Society of Aberdeen, and the owners of the Parkhill, Grandholm, and Powis Estates. They are, however, all under the same management, and permission may be had from Mr. W. L. Reid, advocate, Aberdeen. The tenants of Gordon's Mills, Kettock's Mills, &c., and other proprietors on the river banks, may grant permits for trout fishing only. The concluding sentence of the document courteously furnished to us by the agent for the Company read thus:—"Mr. —— will give up all salmon, grilse, or sea-trout he may catch." This remained in force till the close of the net fishing, after which another permit had to be procured from the same source, and then the paragraph anent the giving up of salmon, &c., was scored out, and the holder might carry off all that he legally caught. The change made no difference to us, except perhaps, in regard to the sea-trout; for salmon and grilse were never very plentiful, and we had ample, and as I think, better sport with the river-trout; for at any

time I much prefer to catch, as we did there, a fair number of trout every day, and many a time some that were two or three pounds in weight, to lashing the water monotonously for days together, on the chance of getting an odd salmon or grilse; and this was all I ever saw taken by those who laid themselves out for such sport. There seemed to me to be a considerable amount of confusion and conflicting interest in the claims to grant permission to fish. The river watchers always spoke as if the permits issued by the proprietors of the fisheries gave the only legal right, as they were bound to uphold the authority of those who employed them. On the other hand, the tenants on the banks snapped their fingers both at the Company and watchers, and insisted on giving permission to their friends. We always managed to keep in the good graces of both parties, and were happy accordingly. Our range of fishing was, perhaps, not very extensive, but it contained some splendid water, and I know I may say for my friend as well as for myself that we never caught as many, or as fine trout, in any other Scottish river.

Between Balgounie Bridge and the sea there are some capital spots, particularly what we used to designate *the stream* by way of pre-eminence. My first acquaintance with Don was made when quite a boy, at this part of the river. I remember the circumstance well. I had wandered down, rod in hand, and stood by the stream for the first time. In three successive casts I hooked and landed three trout, each over a pound in weight. Again I had one on, bigger than the others;

but in stepping back my feet stumbled on the shingle, the tension of the line slackened, and I lost my fish just at the edge of the bank. I persevered, but did not get another chance, though at that time I knew not the reason. This part of the river is in tidal water, and we found that the only favourable opportunity was for a short time just about half-ebb. If we fished then, for half an hour or so we had good sport, but as soon as the tide was fairly out the game was up. I should certainly say the streams at Don mouth are well worthy the attention of the angler. This part of the river was at one period altogether unrestricted; but a good deal of litigation, I believe, has gone on of late years, with a view to stop the privilege, which had been enjoyed by the public so long that it was looked upon as a right. It is gratifying to know that this right has *not* been taken away, and that such a fine piece of water is still free.

The old Bridge, which meets us here, deserves just a word in passing. It is interesting from its associations with Lord Byron. In the 10th canto of Don Juan he thus refers to it;—

> As "Auld Lang Syne" brings Scotland, one and all,
> Scotch plaids, Scotch snoods, the blue hills, and clear streams,
> The Dee, the Don, Balgounie's Brig's *black wall*,
> All my boy feelings, all my gentler dreams
> Of what I then dreamt, clothed in their own pall,
> Like Banquo's offspring; floating past me seems
> My childhood in this childishness of mine;
> I care not—'tis a glimpse of "Auld Lang Syne."

"The brig of Don" (adds the poet in a note), "near the 'auld toun' of Aberdeen, with its one arch, and its black, deep salmon-stream below, is in my memory as

yesterday. I still remember, though perhaps I may misquote, the awful proverb which made me pause to cross it, and yet lean over it with a childish delight, being an only son, at least by the mother's side. The saying as recollected by me was this, but I have never heard or seen it since I was nine years of age ;—

> Brig o' Balgounie, *black's* your *wa'* ;
> Wi' a wife's *ae son*, on a mear's *ae foal*,
> Doon thou shalt fa' ! "

The bridge was built as far back as the time of King Robert the Bruce, and occupies a most picturesque situation. It is a single arch, 67ft. in span, and 34½ in height, and is alleged to be one of the most perfect Gothic specimens extant.

We next, on our upward journey, come to the streams passing the grounds of Seaton (Lord James Hay), on the right bank of the river; and on the left those beside Kettock's Mills. On the Seaton side the permit of the salmon fisheries did not avail, and permission had to be obtained from the proprietor or tenant of the estate; but on the other side our right was never questioned. The fishing on this part of the river is excellent, and in the months of August and September, with the water in flood, I have seen it literally swarming with sea-trout and salmon, fresh run, and eagerly taking advantage of the high tide to rush up to former haunts in the upper part of the river. I used to notice that the finnocks or sea-trout we caught, frequently had sea-lice still adhering to them : these always disappear after a short residence in the fresh water.

A little above Seaton and on the same side, the venerable pile of the Cathedral of St. Machar comes into view. It was reared during the successive incumbencies of some four or five bishops, and occupied more than a hundred and seventy years in building (about 1357-1532). Like most of the Scottish Cathedrals it suffered much at the Reformation, and afterwards the central spire, which had, years before, been undermined by Cromwell's soldiers, gave way, and crushed the transepts in its fall. At present the building consists of the nave and side aisles, which are nearly perfect, and form the large, and now as restored, handsome Parish Church of Old Machar.

Times and again has the sexton, ringing the Curfew from its gray old towers, "while the evening sun was low," and the long dark shadows were creeping silently over the landscape, warned us that it was high time to take down our rods and tackle, while yet we could do so without hopeless ravelling, and make for home up Tillydrone Brae—the *Mons Sancti Martyris* of the ancient bishops of Aberdeen—with baskets heavy and hearts light; just a little sore between the shoulders, possibly a little tired about the arms, but with no ailment that our good landlady's evening meal with the Aberdeenawa' "Cuppy o' gueed tea, wi' a suppy o' gueed-cream" would not soon entirely dissipate.

Something less than three centuries ago the worthy magistrates of Aberdeen had what we should now-a-days consider rather a strong way of putting things in regard to church attendance. "On 28th November, 1606, the Magistrates statuted and ordained that the hail in-

ıabitants should repair to St. Machar's Church, to the ›reaching, on Sundays and Wednesdays, under the pains 'ollowing :—viz., the Goodman and the Goodwife, 6s. 8d., ınd the servants, 2s., Scots." The same men, however, who shewed such zeal for the spiritual welfare of their ıeighbours, were not unmindful of their temporal comforts. While it was enacted that none should sell ale after ıine o'clock at night (anno 1604), "It was statuted and ›rdained, that four several persons go weekly through :he town and taste the drink, and when the same is 'ound insufficient, to make it known to the bailies, that :t may be confiscated to the poor folks." It is just possible that were we to return some degree nearer to these primitive manners and customs, both as regards hours of selling and quality of liquor sold, it might be a step towards the solution of that *quaestio vexata* which engrosses so much attention at the present day.

A great many obstructions to the passage of the salmon appear to have always existed on the Don; indeed, except in very high floods, few would be able to reach a point seven or eight miles from the sea. First of all there were the stake nets at the mouth of the river, then the weir at Kettock's mills, and next the "Cruives." Further on there was a succession of weirs at Grandholm, Persley, Mugiemoss and Stoneywood, so that I fear rod-fishing for salmon can never have been very productive, at least when the nets were on. Of all these the cruives undoubtedly formed the greatest impediment. They are a most ancient institution, and singularly enough, in this neighbourhood appear to have

been confined to the Don. I am not aware that this form of obstruction ever existed on the Dee. In connection with this subject it may be interesting to quote the following from Chambers' Encyclopœdia ;—

> Cruives and Zaires are contrivances erected on rivers in Scotland for the purpose of catching salmon. They are of great antiquity, and consisted of a 'kind of hedge formed by stakes driven into the ground, the interstices being filled with brush, and the mode of capturing salmon being similar to those employed by bag and stake nets'; the earliest statute now in force, the eleventh of the first Parliament of James I. (1424), being entitled, 'Of Cruives, Zaires, and Satterdaies Slop.' This Act is interpreted by that of 1477, c. 73, 'Anent Cruives,' and both Acts refer to an 'old statute made by King David.' requiring that 'ilk heck of the foresaidis Cruives be three inch wide.' The existing arrangement by which the stakes or hecks which prevent the passage of the large fish must be so far apart as to permit the young salmon or fry to pass through freely, is thus as old as the time of the great founder of our Scottish monasteries and cathedrals. The Saturday's slop or opening is effected by drawing up the hecks to the height of an ell from the bottom of the river, in which position they must remain from Saturday evening at sunset, till Monday morning at sunrise.

The cruives, as I saw them on the Don, consisted of a number of openings in the wall of a dam. Each of these was covered with a wooden lid which served the purpose of a bridge, so that in ordinary states of the water one could comfortably cross the river on the wall. In the openings a wooden grating was fixed, constructed in such a way that a salmon having passed through would find it difficult, if not impossible to return. It was natural that the proprietors of the upper waters of the Don should loudly complain against such barriers, which year by year, in conjunction with other causes, were lessening their chances of seeing salmon in their lengths of the river. Accordingly, an agitation for their removal was commenced and continued, and the result

was that they were, by Act of Parliament, declared illegal and abolished. I am not at all sure that they had not also some mysterious influence over the trout; at all events, we used to look upon Monday as a good fishing day, as the water had been running freely through the cruives since the previous Saturday evening.

When my friend and I left home for our annual fishing holiday, in the end of July; we were generally pretty well used up with the year's work; but it was amazing what a short period of Donside fresh air and exercise, combined with our magnificent fish-breakfasts, did for us. For the first few days we were easily knocked up, and felt lazy and sleepy. Twelve hours at a stretch, under the open canopy, in a district where the pure, keen, mountain air coming down with the current of the river is delightfully mingled with the bracing sea breezes of the German Ocean—this was enough to make any one hailing from a town, and accustomed to spend much time indoors, languid and feeble. After a week's stay the reaction set in; every muscle was hardened, and we felt able for any amount of physical exertion. Its proximity to the sea renders the climate of Aberdeen a most delightful one. My friend attributed all the marked changes in our looks and feelings to the fish we ate, which he described as an "alterative." No doubt he was right. Quite extensive *alterations* became visible in both of us, the most apparent perhaps being in our appetites. It has been said, I think by some person of experience, that *meat* is sent by One Agent and *cooks* by Another. Without discussing this proposition I may say

that we felt convinced that a most beneficent agent had sent us both our fish and our cook. Our excellent landlady cooked our trout to perfection.

Fishers must live, and that they may live they must eat; and that they may be in good trim, I advise that they should begin the day well, in other words, take a good breakfast. A man who has done that feels comfortable and independent. He is fortified against all the mischances of the day, and these, in the experience of a fisher, are rather numerous.

An artist friend of mine went, one Sunday, into a church in Scotland while the congregation were singing the first psalm. He slipped into the nearest pew, the only occupant of which was an old lady, who was joining lustily in the praise, and whom he perceived by her manner to be deaf. He looked at her interrogatively, desiring to know which psalm was being sung, when in a loud whisper she said, "I dive na ken what psaulm *they're* singin', but I'm singin' *this* ane"—pointing to it in her psalm-book—"an' it's a rale guid ane." The selection of a breakfast like the choice of a psalm may vary according to circumstances and taste; but I will give the composite elements of one in which we frequently indulged in Aberdeen, and for fishers at least, "going forth to their work, and to their labour until the evening" it is "a rale guid ane."

First there is fragrant coffee, made with new milk instead of water; and so thick and "mawmy," that with a trifling exaggeration—a thing not unknown to fishermen—the spoon might stand in it. Then come eggs,

new laid—with the white in that milky, curdy condition, which repudiates acquaintance with the crate—with good solid bread, a shade less white than one gets in the South, but none the worse for that, and delightful *fresh* butter. (N.B. The butter sold in Scotland for immediate use is made without a particle of salt, and requires to be tasted before a description of its qualities can be duly appreciated.) Next comes a dish of Don trout, smoking and savoury, cooked as only a cunning *artiste* knows how—"done to a bubble," as our landlady phrased it—and with that tempting flavour about them which makes one, especially if he has been carefully indoctrinated in the "shorter catechism with *proofs*," feel, as he operates upon the back of a pounder, just a momentary qualm lest it is possible that under all this sensuous enjoyment there may lurk the sin of pandering to the flesh. We finish off with a dash of "sweeten" made for us by loving hands, and feel grateful and invigorated, and at peace with all the world.

The water lying between Tillydrone and Grandholm bridge, which includes the "Cruive" streams, was our favourite resort. We fished it almost daily, and generally with good success. It possesses the advantage of being equally well adapted for worm or fly, and is a length rich in good feeding. There are grain mills near, and just where the mill lade sweeps rapidly into a deep and somewhat sluggish part of the river, large numbers of splendid fish were always on the look-out, with heads up stream, "waiting for something to turn up." What did turn up was often not exactly to the taste of one of the

parties interested, and many a struggle was the result; but the weaker, as often happens, went to the wall, or rather into the basket. Not always however, for on one ill-starred occasion the largest yellow trout I was ever "fastened in"— a fish of five or six pounds weight—after occupying some valuable time on a glorious fishing day when we could ill spare it, as there were many eager aspirants for our favours, gave us the slip in the end and declined to "land," though two able-bodied fishermen were on their knees to help him. My companion mourned for the fish all the rest of the season, and refused to be comforted. I know he blamed himself for the loss; for as a last resource, neither of us having a net, and the bank being somewhat steep, he attempted to seize the fish with his hand, and in doing so gave him his liberty. *On the following day I purchased a landing net.*

Our friends at home grew slightly dissatisfied with only *hearing* of our good takes, and began to hint that there were better ways of making the acquaintance of Don trout than through the post. We took the hint, and made a practice afterwards of sending them, two or three times during our annual stay, a day's catch, generally for the two rods, a box of fourteen or sixteen pounds of fish. To accomplish this was sometimes very easy; at other times a matter of considerable difficulty. We never fished with a *silver* hook—the best Kendal steel was our invariable material. I once made sixteen pounds with fourteen trout, in the course of a couple of hours at the mill lade stream below the cruives, and

without moving twenty yards from the spot where I began to fish. I had only reached Aberdeen that afternoon, and was anxious to have an hour on the river before dusk; the result, however, was altogether a surprise. I daresay it would be also a surprise to the recipients, a hundred and fifty miles south; for we had the fish packed up at once in cool grass and fragrant wild mint, and sent off the same night by the last mail from Aberdeen.

On the way up the following morning we met a market-gardener we knew, who was frequently to be seen fishing in times of heavy spate with an enormous rod and worms of about six to the ell.

"Fu are ye," said the gardener, "I was thinkin' it was juist aboot yer time. An' ye'll be gaein' up tae try the troots?"

"Yes," we answered, "how's the fishing?"

"No weel ava; they haena been gettin' onything a' simmer. It's been faer owre dry; she's awa to naething."

"But this rain we had lately must have stirred up the fish and improved matters," we said.

"Weel, I'll no say but what it has; man, they wur tellin' me" (here he became confidential) "there was a fallie up at the tail o' the mull lade, last nicht, got a great curn o' troots; he fulled his creel; great lumps o' fesh! I telled them," he continued, with a knowing smile, "it wad be the scented wurrums that did it (for, 'tell it not in Gath,' I caught my fish with worm), some o' they young loons, ye ken, get a kin' o' scent frae the 'pothecary an' rub it owre the wurrums, an' man, it

brings the troots a' roun' aboot, an' they can kill ony quantity."

"Indeed," we said, as we parted from him without enlightening him as to the "loon" who caught the "curn" of fish, "it would be worth something to know that secret."

The plan I usually followed in those days was to fish with worm in the morning and fly in the afternoon and evening. Now, I most commonly use fly; but I have a suspicion that my takes are not, on the average, so good as they were formerly. Sometimes I would fish with worm steadily for days together, and I generally had something respectable to show on many an occasion when the fly-fishers were returning "clean."

Like many more, I have often been disgusted with a river of which I could make nothing. I never experienced this sensation on Donside. Week in, week out, we continued to ply the rod, at Tillydrone, the "Cruives," or Grandholm, or at the "mou;" and perhaps the best tribute to the Don's seductive power lies in the fact that, although friends would many a time seek to induce us to go to the Dee or some of its tributaries, or North to the Udny or Ythan, we seldom cared to change because we were abundantly satisfied with the ground we had. No doubt there would occasionally come a time of dead-lock, as on any river one may fish, when nothing would *do*, and scarcely a fin would stir. At such a time I once heard a shrewd old keeper say, in reply to a question from a beginner as to what flies he should put on, "Ye micht pit on yer hat, an' ye wadna

catch ony thing." To another man, who was standing on the opposite bank holding out with both hands and by the extreme end of the butt a tremendous rod, and looking for all the world a perfect impersonation of the cynical Dr. Johnson's definition of a fisher, he shouted across, "Man, are ye no feerd that ye micht git a troot 'on?'" The ridiculous position of the man made the scene irresistibly comic.

When fish were more than usually shy in the river, in consequence generally of dry weather, my sport was not altogether marred, though the scene of it was slightly changed. I had made a discovery which I don't mind communicating to those who do not affect to despise the worm. For myself I may say that I recommend worm-fishing, *when scientifically followed.* I found accidentally that when fish would not take in the main river they could be caught in the mill lades, of which, as has been already mentioned, there were two or three near at hand. Accordingly, I prepared some special Stewart tackle, and some well-scoured, tough, red worms of a small size, and with these and a trace of the finest gut I worked up and down the lades. These were very rapid in their current, and for the most part overgrown with willows, with only an occasional opening through which the line might be shipped in and allowed to float down. The fishing was difficult and hard on the tackle; but it was almost invariably fairly productive. When fishing thus, it was necessary to "shot" the line, so as to regulate its speed, and I remarked that I rarely got a bite until I had paid out a considerable length. When ten or fifteen yards

had run out I knew that the bait would be floating on the surface, anchored by the pellets placed some two feet from it, and so unnaturally that no fish worth the catching would look at it. I then somewhat, as in minnow fishing, shortened the line a yard or two, and let the bait float down again as before. I seldom did this more than twice or thrice without arousing the energy of some lusty fellow, who gave chase and quickly seized the worm. Then two difficulties faced me which there was little time to think about. The first was the *striking* (which had to be done the wrong way), and the second the *landing*—both dead in favour of the fish. I necessarily failed to hook some, though not so many as I should have done had I not struck sideways rather than upwards. It was very exciting, however, when a lively specimen of thirty ounces or so began the inevitable struggle by trying to double the distance between his captor and himself. Then indeed the tackle was put to a severe test; for the swiftness of the current added immensely to the strain on it, and to play and land fish of large size under such conditions required great caution, some small degree of skill, and, believe, me a vast amount of patience.

What added greatly to our enjoyment of the Don fishing was the kindly manner in which we were always received and welcomed back by our brethren of the angle. Some of these were visitors like ourselves; others, and the greater number, were natives. I do not recollect that we learned anything from them that was new to us. On the whole I counted them rather rough

and ready in their style of fishing. The bulk of them used very large and unwieldy rods, and did not wade. There were, however, some capital anglers among them, who knew right well the art of hooking and basketing their fish. When somewhat new to the river, I asked one of them who was always very successful at the "mou," about his particular mode of casting the flies in the tidal stream below Balgounie bridge. Johnny did not think there was any way possible but one, and seemed incapable of nice distinctions on the matter. "Hoo dae I cast the flees?" he answered, "O, juist bung them in, an' lat them soom doon." But this man, rough and ready as he appeared, could "bung in" his flies to such good purpose, that many a time I have met him returning with his bag full; and I could not have declared with any certainty that there might not be a grilse or a salmon lying comfortably at the bottom.

The minnow appeared to be much in vogue as a lure, when the water was in condition. The kind chiefly used was Brown's phantom, and as far as I noticed, preference was given to the medium size, made in imitation of a parr or young trout, and not to the blue-barred variety. I had some from the inventor in Aberdeen, but never had much success with them on the Don; possibly I did not persevere enough. Since that time I have tried them frequently on other Scottish rivers, and have had abundant practical experience of their deadly efficacy.

It was a frequent occurrence with some of us who were all-day fishermen to meet at a certain point on the river about noon, just when there seems to be a lull in

the activity of the finny tribe; not that we did this by appointment, but there was a very fine garden near, and towards it we all seemed naturally to gravitate at lunch-time. Those who know Aberdeen know that it is famed for its strawberries. They are cultivated largely, and sold by the ton for preserving purposes. We bought them in smaller quantities, also for "preserving" purposes, and they answered exceedingly well. A huge cabbage blade filled with them,—large, rich in flavour, and so exquisitely soft and juicy as to melt in the mouth,—formed a charming dessert after our bread and cheese, and preserved our coolness, slaked our thirst, and kept us wonderfully fresh all the afternoon. It is possible that some angler who reads this paper may be induced to make a pilgrimage to the "banks and braes o bonny" Don; for bonny they certainly are, though never sung by Burns. It is not impossible that such angler may combine considerable skill in fishing with a large appetite for strawberries. If so, I hope his visit may be in strawberry time.

At these mid-day gatherings, when the more serious business had been transacted, and we were all luxuriously reclining on the velvet turf, literally *sub tegmine fagi*, pipes would be lighted and notes compared of the morning's sport and adventures. Then the conversation became general, and sometimes deviated into paths widely removed from the object that had brought us together on Donside. Jokes would be retailed and stories told, with one or two of which I am tempted to conclude this paper, putting them alongside one another

at random, just as I chance to remember them. They were all new to me at the time, and are not the least pleasant of my recollections of those delightful days.

"Did you ever hear of the old Provost of Aberdeen and the sugar-planter's son," said Johnny K. to my friend, who happened to be sitting beside him."

"No," said we all; "tell us the story."

"Oh! 'tisn't much. A ship belonging to the port had, in far back times, made a great voyage of discovery to foreign parts, and brought home a cargo of sugar. When she returned, and was safely moored in the harbour, the Provost and magistrates, in their robes and wigs, marched in procession to inspect her, as in duty bound. The captain showed them all his curiosities, and invited them to dine on board. At dinner, a monkey of somewhat large proportions began to amuse himself by pulling the Provost's wig.

'Fat are ye deein laddie? Lat alane, wull ye?' said he angrily, pushing it away. The monkey, however, repulsed from the one side, nimbly betook itself to the other, and continued its pranks.

'What's the matter, Provost?' said the captain, inwardly enjoying the fun.

'It's that laddie o' yours—that blear-een'd blackamoor laddie, that's aye pu',—puin' at my wig!'

'That's no a laddie,' said the captain, 'that's a monkey!

'Fat was I to ken ony better,' said the Provost, 'I thocht it was ane o' your sugar-grower's laddies come hame to the college for his eddikashin!'"

"Not at all bad for you, Johnny," said a brother, "and reminds me, talking of 'eddikashin,' of a bit of droll humour I met with the other day. An honest man in a country district, who had a host of children and little to feed and clothe them with, met a member of the school-board of the place, who began to expatiate on the blessings of the new system of education. Sandy replied that he didna' care a boddle for a' their new-fangled whigmaleeries; for his ain pairt, he thocht his bairns wad dae weel aneuch if they got as muckle eddikashin as their faither afore them.

'But you know,' said his friend, 'the law says now they *must* be educated.'

'An' am I no tae be alloo'd to dae as I like wi' ma ain bairns? My certy! Ye say they *maun* be eddicut; I say they *mauna'*, an' they sanna'; I'll droon them first.' "

"What of your precentor, Allan," said I to a tall, sturdy Scot, who hailed from the West.

"You mean the one who went wrong in the tune? Well, I don't vouch for the truth of the story, but it was laid to the credit of the leader of the singing in a methodist chapel in our district. He had commenced a long metre tune to short metre words, and found himself approaching the end of the first line of the hymn, of which the last word was 'Jacob,' without syllables enough for his music. To the astonishment of the minister and congregation, who expected him to stick, he got over his difficulty by singing 'Ja-fal-da-riddle-cob!' "

"Capital," I said, "but what of the next line?"

"On that point" said Allan, "the chronicler is silent."

"Did you ever hear anything of the doings of the students of King's College in the olden days?" asked a grave, middle-aged gentleman, who was usually very taciturn, though, judging by his success, a capital fisher.

"My landlady told me a good story the other day," I said, "I don't know if it is of ancient date; but at all events, a certain professor had in some way got at loggerheads with his pupils for an imagined piece of severity on his part, and they resolved to be even with him. Their plan was to take his carriage from the coach-house at midnight, and drag it to a distance of five or six miles, where it was to be left in a wood. A traitor in the camp, however, informed the sage of the design upon his property, and he determined, if possible, to outwit them. Accordingly, some time before the appointed hour, he wrapped himself up, and shutting up the windows, ensconced himself as comfortably as he could in a corner of the carriage. By and by it was quietly drawn out into the yard, thence into the street, and then, still in silence, it was headed for the open country. When a mile or two on the road, and fairly away from houses, the students rested and became uproariously hilarious, waking the midnight echoes with their shouts, and highly rejoicing at the success of their enterprise. Then they fell to again, and halted not till they had dragged the carriage to the wood they sought. There they renewed their shouts and groans; but just when the proceedings were about to close, the professor let down the sash, and coolly putting out his head said:—

'Gentlemen, having now gratified your humour, and the hour being somewhat late, since you have brought my carriage here to please *yourselves*, will you be kind enough to take it back to please *me?*' There was a moment of dismay, but the young men were equal to the occasion, for they gave three ringing cheers for their plucky professor, and dragged him back to Aberdeen in double-quick time."

"That" said our grave friend, "is a story of comparatively modern date, and does not go back to the times I allude to when the students lived in college."

"Indeed," said a brother, "I was not aware that they ever did live in college."

"Oh, yes;" he replied "at the north-east corner of the buildings there once stood an immense house of five or six storeys, erected about the year 1640, and for many a day occupied by men in residence. My tale is more or less traditionary, but I am convinced of its truth. About two hundred years ago, a janitor of the Old College had the misfortune to do something which greatly excited the animosity of the students against him. They resolved to give him such a lesson as would effectually prevent a repetition of his conduct, and they succeeded only too well. Having previously secured their victim, they ushered him at the dead of night into their commons-hall, which they had fitted up as a court-room. The door was locked, and guarded by an official with drawn sword. The court was then constituted, a jury impanelled, and the trial proceeded; the prisoner, meanwhile, becoming gradually convinced

at it was no mock ceremonial he was taking part in, st all his confidence. After the pleading on both sides is concluded, the judge summed up, and gave h's arge in the usual way. The jury retired, and returned ortly with a verdict of 'guilty.' Then the judge asmed the black cap and passed sentence of death, timating that it would be carried into effect by depitation, immediately. Thereupon two men appeared, aring a block and shining axe. The prisoner, having en blindfolded, was ordered to lay his head on the ock, and his neck was bared. The headsman stood otionless beside him with uplifted weapon, ready, at e appointed signal, to sever his head from his body. ie signal was given, the edge of a cold wet towel was awn across the poor fellow's neck, and the farce was ded. Some one slapped him on the back, when lo! rror of horrors! the man was gone. Terror had too ithfully done its work—he was stone dead. Fear and smay seized the assembly at the awful result of their lic—now, alas, bitterly, but all too late repented of. hat was to be done? They hastily determined to ry the man at once, and each of them took a sacred th never to divulge the secret. This I believe they l faithfully kept until the affair leaked out, long years ter, as the dying confession of the last of the number."

"I have heard that tradition," said a young medical ident from Marischal College, "but I never quite lieved it." "Possibly not;" replied the narrator, "but an point you out the man's grave for all that, not so far om this either," jerking his thumb in the direction of

a field beyond Tillydrone, "and I have known older men than you who believed it implicitly."

"If you will smoke another pipe," the student resumed, "I will relate rather an amusing occurrence for the truth of which my father will go bail, for it happened just about the time he commenced his medical practice in Aberdeen. You are aware that forty or fifty years ago it was no uncommon thing for the dead to be "lifted" from the kirkyards in Scotland by lawless scoundrels who sold the bodies for dissection. If a man died of any peculiar disease, his friends had no certainty that his grave would not be desecrated. An uncommon case had occurred in a rural, landward parish, twenty miles out of town, and two rascals, egged on by the hope of gain, set off one evening in a trap, for the purpose of exhuming the body and bringing it back with them. They accomplished their evil design, and the better to avoid detection, dressed the dead man roughly in some clothes they had brought, and placed him between them in the gig. They then drove rapidly homewards, congratulating each other on the success of their scheme. But the night was cold, and the near presence of the dead was by no means cheering. The light of a little wayside inn attracted them, and there they halted, throwing the reins round the dead man's arms. They went in, and like little Mr. Bouncer, 'to keep their spirits up,' began 'to pour the spirits down;' the landlord's wife waiting upon them. Boniface himself, having heard the sound of wheels, went to the door, and seeing the solitary man in the vehicle, called out 'There's a cauld nicht frien,'—

but there was no reply. 'Wull ye no stap in by, an' hae a toothfu' to warrum ye?' Still no reply. This seemed strange conduct, but when he approached the conveyance he discovered both the reason of the man's silence and of his being left alone in the cold. A thought occurred to him which he put into execution at once. Removing the body to an outhouse, he himself sat down in the vacant seat. Presently the resurrection men made their appearance. They jumped in, very unceremoniously jostling their new passenger, who maintained the most absolute stillness as they bowled swiftly along. When they reached a long, straight portion of the road, darker and drearier than any they had yet come to, the supposed dead man slowly lifted up his head, and fixing his eyes upon the driver, whispered hoarsely, 'Fatna uncanny deed is this ye're up till? fu can ye no lat me rest in my grave?' Instantly, and before the words were half uttered the wretches were in the road and flying as if Diabolus and all his train were at their heels. The innkeeper, now freed from restraint, put the horse to its speed and pursued, shouting anathemas after them at the pitch of his voice, to make amends for his self-imposed silence; but they were not heard of more, and though the horse and trap were consigned to the authorities they were never claimed."

"A rare good story for the yule fireside and the blazing log, brother Medicus; but, gentlemen, we have drifted sadly away from our fishing, and as story-telling never filled any man's creel save by force of imagination, I move that we adjourn this meeting *sine die*."

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