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ANGLER'S STRANGE EXPERIENCES



By
COTSWOLD ISYS. M.A.

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June 1917



Frontispiece.

AN
ANGLER'S STRANGE EXPERIENCES,
A WHIMSICAL MEDLEY,

AND AN
OF-FISH-ALL RECORD WITHOUT A-BRIDGE-MENT.

BY
COTSWOLD ISYS, M.A.
FELLOW OF ALL-SOLES; LATE SCHOLAR OF WINCH-ESTER.

PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED IN A STYLE NEVER BEFORE APP-ROACH-ED IN THESE DAYS AFTER
DRAWINGS IN WATER-COLOURS.

"*Piscator.* I will tell you some of the wonders that you may see, and not till then believe, unless
you think fit.

* * * * *

"*Venator.* Sir, take what liberty you think fit, for your discourse seems to be music, and charms
me to an attendance."—*The Complete Angler*, by IZAAK WALTON, Author of "*Life of Hook-er.*"

London:
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,
CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET.

1883.

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TO THE EIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY FAWCETT, D.C.L., M.P.,
POSTMASTER-GENERAL,

THIS VOLUME, RELATING TO AN ART IN WHICH HE IS SUCH A

PROFICIENT AND ENTHUSIAST,

IS, WITH HIS KIND PERMISSION,

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.



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POEM DEDICATORY,

WHICH READS LIKE A *POST*-SCRIPT.

~~~~~

A FISHER-POET, like a fisher cunning,  
I seek to pay expenses by my punning,  
(For, when you think what Art will yet take off it,  
How can a book like this yield much of profit?  
And *guilty* publishers take *gilt*, they say,  
Off author's gingerbread :—not mine, I pray !)  
And, wanting fishers all to buy my book,  
I sought a name wherewith to *bait my hook*,  
One that, alike for sport and persons' sake,  
Would with the *angling* tribe be sure to *take*,  
And therefore sought wherewith this hook to bait,  
Such patron in a Minister of State.

“ In *such*, an angler find ? ” said some ; “ go try  
To find in August, sir, a real *May fly* :  
Go, seek to rise a *grayling* with a *midge*  
Beneath the middle arch of London Bridge !  
A statesman, Cotswold, to endorse your puns !  
He'll send you back the bluest of *blue duns*.”  
“ Is not,” said I, “ the Master of *the Post*  
A master of *the Rod* ? ”

No time was lost ;  
I sought him. Though, alas ! he could not see,  
He felt, as I expected, sympathy :  
Rare sympathy with fishers and their art  
Was in his hand and in his kindly heart—

Heart ever kindly, but now kindlier made  
 By recent passage through the gloomy shade,  
 Where long above him poised that threatening dart  
 Propitious heaven averted from his heart—  
 And, for my theme, he to my prayer inclined,  
 And to my faults—and impudence—was blind.

Thus *stamp'd*, my book through *Angle-land* should *post*,  
 And should be *soon deliver'd* on each coast  
 Where'er the fisher plies his *gentle art*  
 In peaceful pastime that doth soothe the heart ;  
 Where'er the rod the luring fly doth fling,  
 And red trout rise, or silvern salmon spring ;  
 Where'er dace dance, or glinting grayling glide,<sup>1</sup>  
 Chub grub, carp creep, or slimy eel doth slide ;  
 Where'er the barbel burrows, or the bream  
 Bobs at the bait in lake or pond or stream ;  
 Where'er perch prowl, pike prey, or roach do roam<sup>2</sup>  
 The green-fringed waters of our island home ;  
 Where'er the *foreign mails* in Fawcett's name,  
 Bear England's *fisherman-Postmaster's* fame.

<sup>1</sup> "Salvian takes the grayling to be called *Umber*, from his swift swimming or gliding out of sight, more like a shadow or a ghost than a fish."—Walton's "Complete Angler," p. 116 (Pickering).

<sup>2</sup> I know what you are thinking about, my dear Critic, as to this being a complete, or incomplete, catalogue of the denizens of British waters. *Ye-s tench*. But who cares for tench? Their very name is five-sixths of an abomination. As you stickle for accuracy, you will also observe that I have omitted *sticklebacks*.

## P R E F A C E.



THE genesis of the following medley is as strange as any of the experiences recorded in it. It was born in a sick-room, and nurtured in darkness. It was composed to beguile the time and amuse the mind of the author himself, when suffering for some weeks from a form of ophthalmia, which necessarily precluded him from reading or writing, or engaging in any literary work of a more serious character.

The author cannot but feel a grateful affection for this composition, from the fact that his hours of gloom were brightened by it with many a sweet memory of happy hours spent by brook and river-side, and that it afforded amusement to his mind when there was little else to occasion it.

He will be very happy if it have the same effect, under similar circumstances, upon any of his readers.

While, however, innocent amusement has been a leading aim, it will be seen that the author has had a far higher one. The lyrics interspersed will, he hopes, gratify the taste of the most refined, and subserve a far higher purpose than the mere amusement of an idle hour. Long before the days of good old Izaak, even the poets of antiquity have discerned not only a poetical, but even an ethical element in the angler's art.

Almost every incident, even to details, is strictly and literally true, and this will render the record not the less, but

the more amusing. Many of these experiences—and some of the most ludicrous—were personal; while those that were not so were those of the author's own friends, or other members of the angling fraternity.

The author believes and hopes that his work will be relished by that large and interesting body, most of whom are genial souls—a common prejudice to the contrary notwithstanding—and have a love of humour which renders them more than commonly appreciative of a good joke in connexion with their favourite amusement. Should this veracious record amuse them, and add to their enjoyment in the pursuit of the gentle art, he will not regret the painful affliction, without which it would not have been written.



THE "COMPLETE" ANGLER.

A FRATERNAL INVITATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES EXHIBITION AT SOUTH KENSINGTON.

1.

SHINE kindly on the *Fair of Fish*,  
And be not *foul*, O skies !  
Ye anglers all from East and West  
And North and South arise !  
Come, join your brethren at the Fair,  
For there you're sure to meet 'em ;  
Nor ye alone who *capture* fish,  
But ye who love to *eat* 'em.

2.

Come from Norweyan glassy fjords,  
From Zembla's icy seas,  
From India's strand and Nilus' shore,  
And the stormy Hebrides ;  
" Advance Australia ! " come, Ceylon,  
Columbia, Carolina !  
Come *rods* Japanned ! and bring your *twist*  
And pigtail *lines*, O China !

3.

We'll gather from the watery world  
All vertebrates with scales—  
And some without—from *tittlebats*  
Up to the *Prince of Whales* !

Fishers, the fish of every stream  
Will show, and how they took 'em ;  
And how each angler for himself  
May breed, and catch, and cook 'em !

## 4.

You'll see the *ova-hatching box*  
That can all fish create,  
And furnish forth for every stream  
A private Billingsgate !  
All tackle known for taking fish —  
Harpoons and spears and prods, Sirs,  
From mighty trawls to minnow-nets ;  
All baits and flies and rods, Sirs.

## 5.

And wondrous reels that wind themselves,  
Whene'er they feel a *rise* ;  
And rods that swallow their own *joints*,  
And fly-clad hooks *with eyes* !  
The arts of famous anglers there,  
Your wondering eyes will *strike*, Sirs,  
You'll learn the road to fisher-fame,  
And have to pay no *pike*, Sirs !

## 6.

You'll see electric floats that dance  
Like fireflies on the streams ;  
And flies of fire that coax by night  
The trout from lazy dreams !  
Nor should I wonder if you see  
Baits that, as bottom-trotters,  
Will of themselves find out the fish,  
And hunt for them like otters !



7.

You'll see the magnates of "*The Field*,"  
F. F. and A. R. I.  
E. L.; and also R. B. M.,  
Who our "*Gazette*" doth ply,  
And many another famous man  
Renowned for pisci-slaughter;  
Nor finer fellows could you find,  
Tho' searching "*Land and Water*."

8.

Fish-doctors will be there to show  
To what fish-flesh is heir  
By fell disease from parasites;  
And all the wondrous care  
They take to find out remedies—  
I fear they won't ensure 'em!—  
And if your *taken* fish grow *ill*,  
They'll teach you how to *cure* 'em.

9.

Jurists will meet to thwart their plans  
Who show such love to *mar*  
Our sport:—the *Irish* foes to *Kelts*—  
The Scotch who'd kill our *parr*!  
The millers who on every stream  
Pour out their chemic poison,  
Steam-launchers, poachers, all, in fine,  
Who hinder river foison.<sup>3</sup>

10.

Lovers of man—who love their foes—  
Riparian owners e'en—

<sup>3</sup> An old Saxon word of common occurrence in English Law, signifying *plenty, abundance*.

Will prove that "Crowners" need not work  
 So hard to serve the Queen!  
 They'll show the perils undergone  
 By gallant salt-sea-rangers,  
 And how humanitarian Art  
 Can mitigate their dangers.

## 11.

You'll see the brave life-saving *men*,  
 Who'll show their floating *buoys*;  
 Lights that will burn in heavy seas,  
 Signals that shout "Ahoys!"  
 The porpoise-boat that won't capsize,  
 The net that will not break, *Sirs*,  
 The stove that water will not quench,  
 But cook in floods a steak, *Sirs*!

## 12.

And, for your sporting angler, all  
 He needs to make him bold;  
 From hat to boot, his precious form  
 To keep from *catching* cold;  
 And *this* the greatest fact of all,  
 In this important crisis—  
 You'll see "*The Strange Experiences*  
*Of angling Cotswold Isys!*"

# AN ANGLER'S STRANGE EXPERIENCES.

---

## PROEM.

BEING ALSO A METRICAL TREATISE ON MOST MORAL PHILOSOPHY  
AND VERY NATURAL HISTORY.

1.

A DISCIPLE of Izaak, in writing this poem,  
Would ask his good reader to list to a Proem ;  
The more sincé his theme seems unfit for the harp,  
And as cold as a *bleak*, and as dull as a *carp*.

2.

Who know not its pleasures, our pastime deride,  
And think it to all that is senseless allied,  
And define it, like Johnson— that terrible ghoul,—  
“ At the one end a worm, at the other a fool.”

3.

But what pastimes or sports, recreations or games,<sup>1</sup>  
Can vie with a day on the broad-bosom'd Thames ?

<sup>1</sup> “ Angling is the most difficult of all field sports. It requires all the manual dexterity that the others do, and brings more into play the qualities of the mind, observation, and the reasoning faculties. In shooting and hunting, the dogs do the observation and reasoning part of the business, and the sportsman the mechanical ; but the angler has not only to find out where his fish are, but to catch them, and that not by such a knock me-down method as is practised upon some unfortunate blackcock or unwary hare, but



A DAY ON THE THAMES.

As for hunting or shooting, or coursing the hare,  
With a day on *the Dove*<sup>2</sup> they can never compare.



"A PLEASANT EXCITEMENT IN RISES AND BITES."

by an art of deception. The angler's wits, in fact, are brought into direct competition with those of the fish, which very often, judging from the result, prove the better of the two."—"The Practical Angler." W. C. Stewart.

<sup>2</sup> The favourite stream of Walton and Cotton in Derbyshire.

## 4.

What are gambling or wrestling or boxing, at best,  
 But as absinthe to ale, to a day on *the Test*?<sup>3</sup>  
 And a day at the Derby to one on *the Lea*  
 Is a whisky debauch to a family glee.

## 5.

'Tis a sport that refreshes,—not over-excites :  
 There's a pleasant excitement in *rises* and *bites* ;  
 But 'tis not an excitement—or something far worse—  
 That injures the morals, the health, or the purse.

## 6.

Some think fishing cruel, like Byron,<sup>4</sup> who wish'd  
 A strong hook in the mouth of the monster who fish'd :  
 But I think in that notion the censor mistaken—  
 For what were fish made for, if not to be taken ?

## 7.

And while we fish for *them*, they are hunting for *others*,  
 The cannibals ! even their sisters and brothers !  
*This* fact, furthermore, to your reason depict, O,  
 They always are caught *in flagrante delicto* !

## 8.

“ But they never *deceive* ! ” Oh, no, never !—Walk-er !  
 “ And they never ply *lures* ! ”—Let your Bucklands aver !  
 No, of course, sly old Jack ne'er pretends he's *a stake*,  
 Nor feigns to be sleeping when quite wide-awake !

<sup>3</sup> A famous trout-stream in Hampshire.

<sup>4</sup> “ The quaint, old, cruel coxeomb, in his gullet  
 Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it.”

“ Don Juan.”



9.

But granted 'tis so, yet poor fish know no better,  
While *you* '— For the compliment, sir, I'm your debtor ;  
But, being *thus* the poor, witless brute <sup>s</sup>-dullards you call 'em,  
They can't suffer much when I tenderly haul 'em !

10.

“But have fish no feelings ?” Yes—so has a thistle ;  
And sensation is hardly acnte in cold gristle :  
And as to *the worm*, tho' he wriggle, he feels  
Little more than the hook that his body conceals.

<sup>s</sup> As it is expected that this book will be largely used for educational purposes in the higher schools in both England and America—especially in ladies' colleges, such as Girton—in connexion with their studies on the *genus Homo*, in especial relation to its sports and pastimes, it may be as well to explain that the term *brute* is not confined by scientists to *quadrupeds*. Indeed, I have read (not *heard*, you observe, although I *am* a married man) of the refined and discriminating tongues of women—even wives—applying

## 11.

If you *halve* him, you really but *add* to his wealth,  
 Each fraction enjoys the most excellent health ;<sup>6</sup>  
 And both crawl contentedly into a hole,  
 To enjoy *double* life,—to be each half a whole.

it to *bipeds*, even to their own *husbands*. It is also correctly applied to the *genus pisces*. Shakespeare asks concerning the *brute* Caliban, "Is it a man or a *fish*?" While scientific anglers, when a fish takes their line into the



"YOU BRUTE!"

weeds, will be heard to exclaim with natural and accustomed scientific propriety (not "Tu Brute," but) "You *brute*!"

<sup>6</sup> A friend questions the scientific truth of this statement. But I have heard on good authority that what I have stated is a fact; at any rate it is a common belief. And one of the many benefits to society which are expected to result from this poem will probably be this,—that all the naturalists of Europe will now devote themselves to the consideration of the truth of this stanza.



12.

What a proof in the common consent of mankind,  
That no animal duller of feeling you find,  
Than the proverb they use when they wrathfully burn,  
Namely, "Even a worm that is trod on will turn"!

13.

"But what of live bumble-bees?"—I never use them,  
And therefore can never be said to abuse them;  
Yet a jam-eating wasp, cut in twain in the middle,  
Keeps eating, apparently "fit as a fiddle."!

<sup>7</sup> The author not being a musician, is not able to say precisely wherein the perpetual congruity of this delightful instrument consists; but the simile, although a vulgarism, is often used in University circles, and he therefore supposes that there must be philosophy in it. As to its being a vulgarism, it seemed less objectionable than the cognate simile which suggested itself,— "As right as ninepence." Apart from his being unable to determine to his own satisfaction the ethical problem *how* right *9d.* is, and why it should be more right than  $8\frac{3}{4}d.$  or  $10\frac{1}{2}d.$ , the writer felt that, while there was a cacophony about the latter, there was an alliterative enphony about the former simile that made it far preferable for introduction into a classical poem. No doubt *9d.* is right enough when given in change out of *1s.* to a gentleman who has purchased an article worth *3d.*; but *9d.* in the elegant but deceiving form of three threepenny pieces is obviously *wrong*, when it is tendered by a cabman to an elderly lady as a correct return, when she hands him half-a-crown to pay her *1s.* fare. There is, however, another form of this saying, viz. "*bright* as ninepence." But, after mature consideration, this seems as hopelessly indefinite as the other. For, inasmuch as there is no silver coin equivalent to this sum in English currency, it can, of course, only refer to coppers. Now, it is in the highest degree improbable that nine bright new penny pieces should ever be found together, except at the Mint. No doubt nine such pieces, however old and dull, would look very bright to "Papaw, sir," if given to him by a benevolent old gentleman for an evening *Echo*. But we opine that the same amount would look uncommonly *dull* to an artisan's wife, if given to her by her husband on his return from the public-house on Saturday night, as all that was left of his week's wages for the necessities of housekeeping. No such objections as these, it will be admitted by the candid critic, lie against the simile adopted in the text. Moreover, not to lay stress on the interesting fact that a fiddle is very much of the same shape as a wasp, while *9d.* has no definite shape at all, the simile

## 14.

Poor old Johnson, we know, was of all fish most odd ;  
 And no wonder such savage did not " spare *the rod* :"  
 Nor in crossing *the line* was the sage overwise ;  
 He'd have seen more *acutely* with *hooks* in his *eyes*.

## 15.

Loving streets before streams, the old rickety " Rambler,"<sup>8</sup>  
 Cane in hand, hitting posts, the stern, cynical shambler<sup>9</sup>



adopted has a peculiar fitness for the theme of this poem, since the music of the violin is caused by "*drawn gut*."

<sup>8</sup> Our readers know that "The Rambler" was the title of Dr. Johnson's celebrated serial.

<sup>9</sup> Notwithstanding his peculiarities, let no one suppose that we think ill of the good old Doctor. We have a great reverence and even affection for the dear "old Bear." Under his rough exterior there was a good deal of bear's-grease in him, and under *that* what a true and tender soul.

Took to *Grub Street* his *lines*, and rejoiced that *the Fleet*  
No longer held fishes, and was but a *Street*.

16.

“What were fish-pools to *Fish Street?*” he ask'd of his cane ;  
“Or the haunt of the angler to *Fishmonger Lane?*  
What the buzzing of bees to the buzzing of *Bozzy?*”<sup>1</sup>  
Or the babble of brooks to the prate of *Piozzi?*”<sup>2</sup>

17.

Bozzy's hero—as happens in far higher spheres—  
Knew nought of the art that excited his sneers ;  
Had he been its adept, he would then have exclaim'd,  
“For pure pleasure, beside it no sport can be named.”

18.

It absorbs, like a novel, its skilled devotee,  
And cheers, not inebriates, soothing like tea ;  
Like tea, not as sipped at the fire by old maids,  
But as drunk at a picnic in green summer glades,—

19.

Not like tea that is swallow'd with plain bread and butter,  
Or biscuits of *Palmer*—“*and Co.*” I can't utter—  
But like tea with sweet cresses and cold capon roast,  
And the flavoury relish of anchovy toast.

<sup>1</sup> James Boswell, Johnson's biographer and satellite.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Piozzi, formerly Mrs. Thrale, one of the Doctor's most intimate friends. Macaulay describes her as “One of those clever, kind-hearted, engaging, vain, pert young women who are perpetually saying or doing something that is not exactly, right, but who, do or say what they may, are always agreeable.” The reader need not, in English verse, Italianize the pronunciation of her name.



ON THE FEED—EEL-PIE ISLAND.

20.

A taste of this toast you will get, I dare say,  
If you list while I sing to the end of my lay ;  
While, to give you amusement, I try to rehearse  
The facts of my fishing in varying verse.





"WHAT STRANGE SURPRISES!"

## AN ANGLER'S STRANGE EXPERIENCES.

"Mira sed acta loquor."—OVID.

### STAVE I.

#### I.

WHAT strange surprises and freaks of chance  
Around the angler's footsteps dance!  
And what infinite zest do these impart  
To the keen <sup>s</sup> pursuit of the gentle art!

#### II.

The *lustiest* trout that I ever took,  
I caught in a pool of a tiny *brook*;  
And the smallest my eyes have ever spied,  
I whipp'd from a *river* both deep and wide.

#### III.

The heaviest *creel* that I ever fill'd  
I bore on a day that the *East-wind* chill'd;  
While in vain I flogg'd through a summer's day  
A stream on which Zephyr himself did play.

#### IV.

I have sometimes tried at a rising fish,  
With a faith that has seen him served on my dish;  
In vain;—while I've aimlessly dangled the line,  
And hook'd with surprise a troutie fine.

<sup>3</sup> No reference whatever to the angling writer, J. Harrington Keene.

## V.

I have cast for *trout* in the likeliest place,  
And nothing would rise but impertinent *dace* ;  
While I've chosen my flies for *dace* with care,  
And the trout have fancied the *dace's* fare.

## VI.

I have chosen a *casting line* with skill,  
Which a young half-pounder has snapped at will ;  
While I've sometimes taken the first that came,  
Which has proved too strong for the fish most game.



MY LIVING CREEL!



VII.

I have sometimes chosen my largest *creel*,  
Which has held all day but my sandwich meal ;  
Then I've thought " with a *creel* I'll not bother my back,"  
And I've taken enough to fill a sack.

VIII.

Once having *no creel*, it came to pass  
That I threw three trout behind on the grass ;  
I heard a deep grunt, and look'd round in a jig,  
And lo ! my three trout were devour'd by a pig.



## IX.

I've been ask'd to spend a hopeful day  
 On a *water preserved*, and I've come away  
 Without a fin :—while I've stood in a press  
 On a *public bridge*, and had much success.

## X.

In hope of the monsters I should get  
 I've taken my largest *landing-net*,  
 And caught nothing but bleak :—I've gone out with none,  
 And then I have wanted my largest one.

## XI.

I have come to a stream when 'twas quite to my mind :—  
 Yes, really !—I'd left *my reel* behind ;  
 I've gone back, and returned, thus supplying my need—  
 Lo ! the river was cover'd with floating weed.

## XII.

I have often cast o'er a *splendid rise*  
 Both the eye of hope and tempting flies ;  
 When the puff of a breeze has fix'd my line  
 In a neighbouring bramble's thorny twine.

## XIII.

Anon I have cast an *aimless fly*  
 With no hope at all, and have let it lie,  
 When it seem'd in the open jaws to fall  
 Of a fish that cared not to rise at all.

## XIV.

I have fish'd all day, but I've fish'd in vain,  
 Till was almost due my latest train :  
 Then, hooking a fish, I've been hurried, and lost  
 Both my fish and my train to my terrible cost.



WILL HE CATCH IT?

XV.

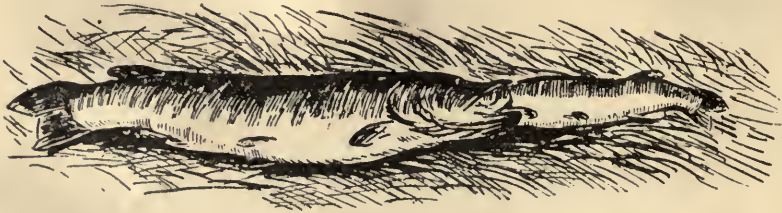
I've hook'd a dace which a jack did seize,  
And has carried it off till I cried, "Stop, please!"  
Both dace and jack, I do declare,  
I drew to land with a single hair!<sup>4</sup>

XVI.

While I on the jack one day did wait,  
From opposite quarters *two* rush'd at the bait:  
The smaller got fix'd in the greedy maw  
Of the larger, and both succumb'd to *lock-jaw*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Brunton exhibited at the Piscatorial Exhibition a jack so taken by himself, with a little dace-fly in his mouth.

<sup>5</sup> Two large pike thus locked together may be seen in the Piscatorial Department of the South Kensington Museum.



## XVII.

Once, spinning for pike, in an anchorless boat,  
A huge twenty-pounder arrested my flote,<sup>6</sup>  
And tow'd me down stream, to his infinite glee,  
As though he were a steam-tug, and I a bargee.

## XVIII.

One day, just after I'd taken a *perch*,  
My *stool* gave way with a sudden lurch,  
And myself and my *kit* fell over the ridge,  
Souse into the stream, near *Catford Bridge*.

<sup>6</sup> No; this is not a misprint for *float* (for we never use floats in *spinning*), but is the old English word from whence comes *flotsam*.



UNDEE WEIGH!



## INTERLUDE I.

---

### SONG.—THE ANGLER AND THE BROOK.

#### 1.

THE west wind wafts the scent of May  
    Adown the verdant valleys ;  
The friendly sun with temper'd ray  
    Peers forth from cloudy alleys,  
And, in his gleams, the duns and browns  
    In joy of life are winging,  
While I, afar from noisy towns,  
    Go forth to angle singing.

#### 2.

Anon the music of the brook  
    Sounds near in happy chorus ;  
Her beaming face with laughing look  
    Sings, O the joy before us !  
I greet her with a look as bright,  
    And wave my wand above her ;  
She glances coy, pretending fright,  
    Yet knows me for her lover.

#### 3

Through cowslip meadows, side by side,  
    We wander, fondly clinging  
Each unto each, like groom and bride,  
    No turns estrangement bringing ;

And many a gold and coral gem  
She takes from out her bosom,  
And, proud, at eve she gives me them,  
Beneath the hawthorn's blossom.

4.

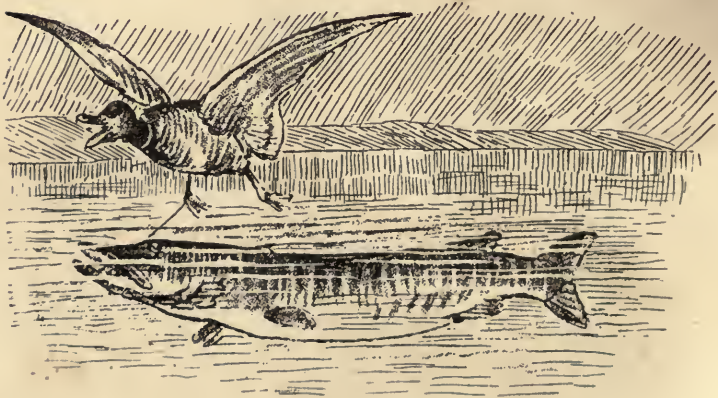
I stoop and kiss her pure, sweet lips,  
And mine she softly presses,  
Then turns aside, and shyly dips  
Beneath her drooping tresses ;  
Then babbling on in laughing glee,  
Assumed to hide her sorrow,  
She pauses 'neath a willow-tree,  
And sings, Return to-morrow !



## STAVE II.

### I.

A BRILLIANT idea my young fancy smote—  
I would use a *live duck* in the place of a *float* ;  
So I caught a strong quacker and baited his leg,  
Let him swim on the pond, and then fasten'd my peg.  
I sat down on the bank to enjoy the fine fun,  
And, ere long, at the bait a large jack made a run :  
The float began quacking, and flew round and round,  
But oh ! jack drew it under, and thus the float drown'd.<sup>7</sup>



MY FLOAT SINKS !

### II.

To hook fish is cruel,<sup>8</sup> say some—see my proëm—  
But it proves they who say it do not really know 'em ;

<sup>7</sup> And served me right and the poor duck wrong, for the act was that of a thoughtless, cruel young rascal.

<sup>8</sup> Matt. xvii. 27 has long ago settled the question to the contrary in my



For I once lost a jack who had swallow'd my tackle,  
While I, like a hen o'er her lost chick, did cackle.  
But I fish'd on down stream, and some two hours thereafter  
I landed another, when—judge of my laughter—  
As I sat to unhook him upon a green hummock,  
'Twas the very same jack with my gear in his stomach!<sup>9</sup>  
And a nice little job did I have, sir, when at home, I  
Strove to extract it from out his anatomy.  
Now, I fancy, if I at my breakfast had swallow'd  
My spoon and my fork, I should rather have holloa-ed,—  
“Go, fetch me a surgeon, for oh! I am sick,”  
Than “Cook, I am hungry; let dinner be quick!”



mind. *He* would never have ordered a *cruel* way of taking fish. The argument that in this case it was a *necessity* altogether fails as applied to Him.

<sup>9</sup> This strange fact was related in a recent number of the *Fishing Gazette*.

## III.

Once, fishing for eels in the moat around Fulham,<sup>1</sup>  
Which holds monsters so large that you hardly can pull 'em,  
My float sank; I then struck, and haul'd in, and—oh!  
mockery!—  
I had fish'd up a piece of the Bishop's old crockery!

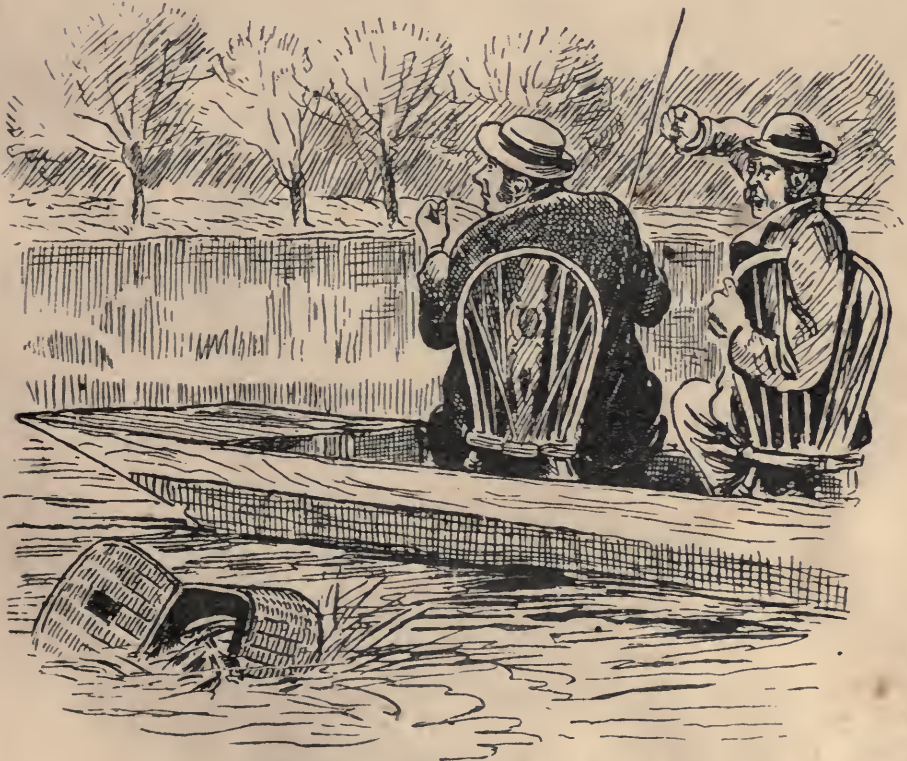


<sup>1</sup> This should *not* be pronounced in the way the Scotch anglers pronounce it,—*Fool-em*.

You laugh : but I add—as they say in the South—  
“ The laugh may be turn'd t'other side of the mouth,”  
When I tell you I caught one, as true as I sing,  
Which had in his stomach a lady's gold ring !

IV.

I was fishing for *dace* seven hours by the clock  
(It sounds like a paradox) : passing a lock,  
The pole caught my creel, as if it were thieving,  
And gone were my silvern dace, past all retrieving !



“ AH, FOR THE SILVERN DACE ! ”

They sank in the waters, all swirling and curling,  
 And I sang out, à la Madame Antoinette Sterling,  
 Or Patey, " Ah ! silvern dace, isn't it galling ?  
 A-ah for the silvern dace, gone past recalling ! " <sup>2</sup>

v.

At a pool of the river, while fishing for roach,  
 I beheld a fine pounder my white-bait approach ;



" HEE-Y'-HAW, SIR ! "

<sup>2</sup> To save ourselves from any charge of plagiarism of a very popular song, we quote the following refrains from it, from which it will be seen that it is as different from our own lines as gold is from silver :—

" Once in the days beyond recalling, Once in the golden days,—  
 Ah ! for the days beyond retrieving, Ah ! for the golden days."

I struck home—when an ass o'er my shoulder hee-haw'd,  
And off jerk'd my fish, and made straight for the broad.  
I was so overcome by that Vigour of *Bray*,  
That I have not recover'd the shock to this day :  
For, when roach fishing, still, my hand trembles afraid,  
And my float bibble-bobbles to “Should he up-bray'd !”

VI.

A musing milch-cow, switching flies from her back,  
Stood behind me, while, eager, I struck at a jack :  
I whirl'd my bait back, like a thresher his flail,  
And my many-hook'd roach caught the cow's curling tail.  
Off she gallop'd and bellow'd : and I, loth to yield,  
Was tugg'd, like a fish, the whole length of a field,  
Till she made for a shed, where one sat on a pail,  
And ran in to be milk'd with my fight in her tail !<sup>3</sup>

VII.

While fishing abroad, in a pond in a park,  
I threw in a roll, when the fishes said “Hark !”  
And three scaly monsters to seize it arose,  
Bibble-bobbling it each with his leathery nose.



<sup>3</sup> A fact related in the *Fishing Gazette*.

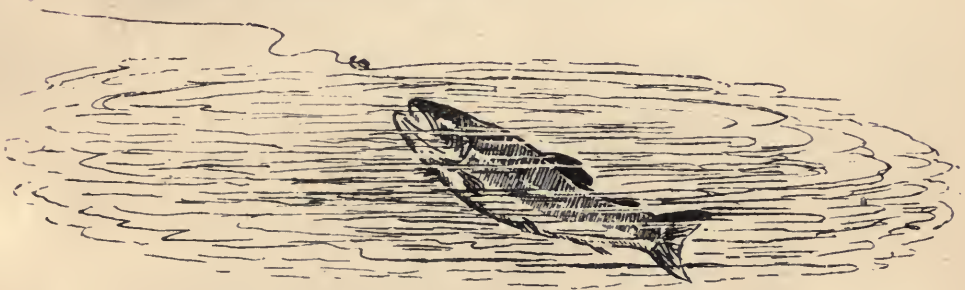


GOT A RUN

A large rat from the shore heard the splashing, and said,  
“*They* can’t swallow, but *I* can, that hard-baked bread;”  
And, swimming towards it, he coolly walk’d over  
Their noses, and with it swam back to his cover.<sup>4</sup>

VIII.

A trout rising shyly, I whipp’d out his eye,<sup>5</sup>  
And idly kept using it still as a fly :  
The very same trout with his other eye saw  
His lost optic, and rose, and got hook’d in his jaw.<sup>6</sup>



IX.

Once, after long watching my float in a lake,  
I thought a short turn up and down I would take ;  
“*But* when I came back”—to quote Mother Hubbard—  
Some fish with my bait had gone off to his cupboard.  
I lifted, I tugg’d, tugg’d both that way and this,  
And this way and that,—all in vain. “*Now, I wis,*”  
I exclaim’d, “*I have surely a carp like a hog,*  
Or a five-pounder tench—or it may be a log !”

<sup>4</sup> This amusing incident was witnessed in the park of the Prince of Hesse at Homburg, by the author and his brother, exactly as described.

<sup>5</sup> Even a boy will understand that this was not intentional, but a pure accident.

<sup>6</sup> This strange incident is also literally true, and is mentioned as his own experience by (if I remember rightly) Mr. J. Harrington Keene.

I fear'd for my rod, and I fear'd for my line,  
 But by patience and skill that were all but divine,  
 The monster gave way—yes, gave way to my reel,  
 And judge, brother anglers, judge *how* I did feel,  
 When, through three feet of mud, came—a *quarter-pound eel!*



x.

One sweet summer eve—I remember it now—  
 My hook, flying back, seized a little bow-wow,  
     Who, round and round howling,  
     Glared up at me growling,  
 And twisted my line round his legs till he dropp'd.





"Come here, little doggie,  
 I don't mean to flog 'e,"  
 I said. He replied, "I don't mean to be whopp'd!"  
 So I motion'd to pat him,  
 —He thought I was at him  
 Again, and began with new vigour to strike for his  
 Freedom and growl'd, and show'd all his white ivories.  
 Then I tugg'd at my line, and with that he arose  
 And sprang out of captivity straight at my nose!

## XI.

A fisher-bard, I—like the sweet "swan of Avon,"  
 Of whom I'm so fond that my friends say I rave on  
 The poet—am apt to get quite *lost in thought*  
 When I'm fishing; although, as an angler, I ought  
 To be thinking alone of the sport I'm about—  
 An axiom that's certainly true without doubt.—  
 This incident proves it indeed. Upon Avon  
 The ropes of the barges annoyingly shave on  
 And over the green sedgy banks, you're aware,  
 If yourself, my dear reader, have ever fish'd there.  
 Well, one morning I sat in a very "brown study,"  
 With my eyes on my float, o'er that river so muddy,  
 And suddenly heard a shrill cry in my ear  
 From a *horse* as it seemed, "Hallo,—hallo-a there!"  
 Up I started, bewilder'd, and saw a long cable  
 Come slithing along:—to escape it unable  
 I lifted one leg to stride over it, when the rope  
 Tighten'd and lifted me skyward! and then the hope  
 Vanish'd of ever beholding my little ones  
 Or wife again! But—O mercy that brittle ones  
 Ropes often are—or the harness hitch'd on to them;  
 Hooks often are, or the thread that's stitch'd on to them;



But—*something* was rotten, and so the rope parted,<sup>7</sup>  
And let me down bruised, but, believe me, glad-hearted !

## XII.

The most curious fish that ever I hook'd  
Was—a *man!* and, oh ! how aghast I look'd  
When I felt the hook behind me flip,  
Right up to the shank in his lower lip !  
As I tried to unhook him, but quite in vain,  
Oh, how like a fish did he wriggle in pain !  
Then I led my fish to a neighbouring town,  
And got him unhook'd by Surgeon Brown.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> If the reader will turn to my portrait on page 17, he will perhaps be able to account for this strange, but to me happy, catastrophe. He will there see that I am both “a man of *wecht*,” and also a man of *agility*. The latter fact accounts for my keeping on the tight rope ; and the former—partly—for its giving way under me.

<sup>8</sup> Every point in this incident is, like almost every other in the poem, literally true ; and, what is still more curious, the young man so hooked by the author went by the sobriquet of “ Fish ” for years *before* this happened.



## INTERLUDE II.

## THE MUSIC OF THE REEL.

*Song for the opening of the Trout Season.*

## 1.

HAIL! soft and genial vernal morn!  
 Hail! brooklet flowing clear!  
 O joy, with rod in hand again  
 To greet our opening year!  
 While Hope's bright pleasures cheer my heart  
 And o'er my fancy steal,  
 As on my ear so sweetly rings  
 The music of the reel!

## 2.

It sings of winter past and gone,  
 Of daily lengthening hours,  
 When sunny spring shall gaily bring  
 The cuckoo and the flowers;  
 When oft amid the meads my rod  
 Shall lightly wave, and feel  
 The leaping trout arise and ring  
 The music of the reel!

## 3.

Nor Hope alone is in the tone  
 This sweetest music gives;  
 But many a happy memory wakes,  
 Thus started, and re-lives,—

Of morn and eve by river-side,  
And easeful, noon-day meal,  
While slept upon the resting rod  
The music of the reel!

4.

But Hope o'er Memory now prevails,  
And fans her forward wing ;  
And as I lift anew the rod  
I hear her cheerly sing,—  
May coming days be best of all,  
And fuller fill the creel,  
And richer spoil reward thy toil  
With music from the reel!



## STAVE III.

## I.

I HAD caught a fine roach<sup>o</sup> with a worm, when a jack,  
 Swimming by, on the roach made fe-roach-ious attack.  
 I drew him along to the top of the water,  
 And my landing-net seized to accomplish his slaughter,  
 When he suck'd off my roach, and was off like a shot,  
 Leaving me, like a fool, with no roach for my pot !



DESERVES TO LOSE HIM.

<sup>o</sup> This happened at Newington, Middlesex.



II.

My belovèd friend Jones, with ineffable cheer,  
Struck a twenty-pound pike on a broad Norfolk mere,  
When in crisis of battle—O woe worth the day!—  
With the half of his line giant Jack went away.  
Ten days after this terrible, tragic event,  
To the very same mere I a-jack-fishing went,  
When a tug and a run brought my heart to my eyes,  
For I felt, here is one matching Jones's in size!  
But what if he too should from *me* break away?  
So I cried, "Steady, Johnny!" and brought him to bay;  
When lo! you may judge what amazement was mine,  
When I saw my bait caught in a fragment of line  
That hung from Jack's mouth!—'twas the jack of my friend,  
Who had come through his line to this singular end.

III.

At a spot near a bridge,<sup>1</sup> where the Wandle is free  
For a few tiny feet, there appear'd fishers three  
On each opposite bank, who perforce threw their flies  
In the face of each other, each seeking a rise.  
Being one of them, I, by superior good luck,  
Got a beautiful rise, and immediately struck.  
My opposite neighbour struck too, for he thought  
The rise was *to him*; and in striking he caught  
Not the fish but my line, and his hook running down,  
Caught the fish in the lip, when I yell'd with a frown,  
"Hold, 'tis mine!" "No, 'tis *mine*!" and, as neither would  
yield,  
Each bent to his rod, and his line tightly reel'd.  
The taut lines spann'd the stream, and the trout, though a  
staggerer,  
Look'd very like Blondin when crossing Niagara;

<sup>1</sup> Hackbridge, Surrey.

Till each over-wound gut, with a twang and a shiver,  
Snapp'd asunder, and troutie plopp'd into the river!

## IV.

His hope the old fisher doth often sustain  
By the knowledge that, though he may fish all in vain  
Through a whole luckless day, yet at length he may win  
By the very last throw, or the very last spin.<sup>2</sup>  
Thus, when spinning for jack, I could not get a run,  
And said, "This for a *last* throw, and then I have done;"  
So I threw,—and I drew, and I drew, and I drew;  
But each draw was in vain, and my bait came in view.  
When lo! close behind, to my utter surprise,  
A jack follow'd fast with inquisitive eyes;  
When, just as my bait left the water, he thought,  
"Now or never," and, leaping, the sweet morsel caught,  
Then fell plop at my feet, 'mid the weeds and the rubble,  
And most kindly of landing him spared me the trouble.

## V.

My favourite place on the Thames is near Datchet,  
No spot on the river, I fancy, can match it.  
You can run down from town by the coach that leaves Hatchett  
And Co. from the Cellar;<sup>3</sup> or, if you can catch it,  
And take the 8.20 from Waterloo; all the day  
Long you can fish, and return at the fall of day,  
Back up to town quite in time for a heavy tea,  
Play, dance, or what not, if given to levity.  
One day you'll have luck, another day, none there,—  
But always you're sure of abundance of fun there;  
Especially if you're a man of inquiring  
Proclivities—well up in boring and wiring

<sup>2</sup> The angler's art in this, as in many other respects, teaches a philosophy that is capable of many higher and nobler applications. The discerning reader will perceive this in many other portions of this book.

<sup>3</sup> The White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly.

Yourself by your blandness into the secrecies  
Men of the rod, o'er their luncheon or tea cresses,  
May, by a brother, be led to impart  
To glorify—never *themselves*, but—their art!

“ Well, sir, what sport ? ” I ask, first say of Mr. A.  
“ Just hook'd a *twenty-pound trout*—but I miss'd her, eh ! ”  
“ Her, ” you see, so that it was not a *he* male ;  
So clearly he saw her, he knew 'twas a *female* !  
“ Dear, dear, 'twas annoying ; but just as I tilted the  
Net to her nose, she provokingly jilted me ! ”



“ Better luck soon ! ” I say : then go to  
Mr. B.,  
Asking to learn of *his* luck all the mystery.  
“ Ah, luck's against me, for nothing I've done, sir ;  
But fifty at least I've lost, if I've lost one, sir ! ”  
“ Vexing, indeed ! ” I say, showing my sympathy.

Then on to Mr. C., asking of *him* hath he  
Had better luck than his neighbours ?

“ No, not to-day ;  
But, sir, *last Friday* I took quite a lot away ! ”

Then Mr. D. I o'ertake, and accost him :

"Ha! he has hook'd a *five-pounder*, and lost him!"

Mr. E. I approach. "Well, and how goes the pace, sir?"

"O fairly!" "Much luck?" "Well, about twenty brace, sir."

"And good ones, I hope?" "Yes I think each a pound, about."

—A very convenient and nice little roundabout

Way that's adopted by some of our bounces, sir,

Of describing a fish that is barely two ounces, sir ;

And a *safe*, for they know you can ne'er be so rude, you see,

As into their creels sceptic eyes to intrude to see!

Then F. I interrogate. He is loquacious,

And tells me he's found the fish quite voracious!

Had never such sport; and has taken a sack, sir!

"May I look at them?" Can't, for *he's put 'em all back*, sir.

He cares not for *fish*, but he dearly loves *fishing*!

Thinks only of sport, but despises the dishing!

And so on, and so on!

Such the tidings that greet you  
From nine out of ten of Thames' anglers that meet you;  
Till you say to yourself, as the banks you along go,  
How fearfully some of our friends draw the long-bow!

## VI.

### 1.

You know the Ramsgate sands,<sup>4</sup>  
And the crowd that on them stands,  
And the minstrelly hub-a-bub, jingle and rub-a-tub  
Made by the noisy bands.

<sup>4</sup> Musical anglers, if so disposed, can sing this song to Mr. Arthur Sullivan's music. The air may be found in "Patience," in the duet "A most intense young man."

2.

“ Only a penny a shoot ! ”  
“ Donkey, Miss ? Give us your foot.”  
“ Oranges,” “ Brandy-balls,” “ Comfit and candy ” calls.  
“ Root-at-tee, toot-a-toot ! ”

3.

“ Over the garden wall : ”  
“ Machine, sir, did you call ? ”  
“ Paid for your seat, sir ? ” “ O give 'em a treat, sir ! ”  
“ Phrenology here for all ! ”

4.

“ *Telegraph—Daily News !* ”  
“ Who'll bid for these ormolus ? ”  
“ My sweet, pretty Jenny : ” “ Six shies for a penny : ”  
“ Your photograph ? Don't refuse ! ”

5.

And you know that very near  
Is the famous Ramsgate Pier,  
Where “ gents ” for a jolly day, out on their holiday,  
Smoking their pipes, appear :

6.

And how they rudely quiz  
What they vulgarly call “ the phiz ”  
Of every young maiden, with blushes o'erladen  
At such indignities.

7.

They swagger and swear and stare,  
And criticize all the fair :—  
But this, to the story that now is before ye,  
Is neither here nor there.

8.

But nay, it is so far "*here*"  
That two in my story appear,  
Who—thus they are relevant—down from "The Elephant,"  
Stood upon Ramsgate Pier.

9.

While myself and Tom Galashiels  
Were busy with rods and reels—  
When the tide came in flowingly, breezily, blowingly—  
Fishing for conger eels.

10.

A crowd was standing there,  
And behind me a lady fair ;  
My bait I was swinging high, when the wind flingingly  
Stuck it in her back-hair !

11.

As I gave the forward strain,  
She raised such a yell of pain !  
And I heard such a clatter ! "Whatever's the matter ?  
What *has* he done, Mary Jane ?"

12.

Laughter arose in peals,  
With shouts and feminine squeals,  
All mingled together, I didn't know whether  
I stood on my head or heels !

13.

"*What* are you up to ?" cried  
Her young man by her side ;  
And, not waiting a minute, he tumbled me in it,  
He did !—in the briny tide !

14.

I floated like a buoy,<sup>5</sup>  
While the gazers shout "Ahoy!"  
And a boat with true bravery dash'd out to save, or I  
Shouldn't be here, my boy.



15.

Dripping, upon the pier,  
I sought *him* far and near,  
My courage up plucking, to give him a ducking ;  
But he didn't or wouldn't appear !

<sup>5</sup> The discerning reader will see by a reference to my portrait again on page 17 how *buoy-like* I am in appearance, and how *buoyant* in every respect.

## INTERLUDE III.

A MODERN ST. ANTHONY'S SERMON TO FISHES.<sup>6</sup>

ON "THE LUST OF THE FLESH, THE LUST OF THE EYES, AND THE  
PRIDE OF LIFE."

## 1.

YE who casting downward vision,  
Grove and grovel in the mud,  
Water-swine of oozes Stygian,  
Dull of brain and black of blood,  
Hating, fearing light of heaven,  
Finding bliss in foulest deeps,  
Gross with flesh desire doth leaven,  
Brothers of the worm that creeps ;  
Beware desire, beware desire !  
That winsome morsel ye admire  
Is devil-sunk before your eyes,  
To charm you into Death's surprise !

## 2.

YE who roam the reedy sedges,  
Or in dozing, dreamful ease,  
Bask beneath the lily ledges,  
Shaded by the summer trees,

<sup>6</sup> Our predecessor in this style of preaching was St. Anthony of Vieyra, in Spain, whose celebrated "Sermon to Fishes" is well known. It need hardly be added that that was in prose. St. Anthony was one of the keenest wits and satirists of his age, and his great gift of humour was used to the noblest ends.



---

Greedy, grasping, never sharing,  
Preying on your weaker kin,  
Wrapt in self, nor ever caring  
Who may lose, so you may win ;  
Beware desire, beware desire !  
Or, though ye rise above the mire,  
Some barbèd gaud may tempt your eye  
On Death suspicionless to fly.

3.

Ye whom nobler aspiration  
Saves from grossness, mud, and slime,  
Scorning deeps of degradation,  
Skyward lifting eyes sublime,  
Ranging clearer, purer waters,  
O'er whose bosom fancy-flies,  
Summer's fairy-footed daughters  
Robed in beauty, fall and rise ;  
Beware desire, beware desire !  
Beware her soul-propelling fire !  
Under Beauty's gauzy wing,  
Death conceals his barbèd sting.

## STAVE IV.

## I.

I HAVE seen a young woman take a young *chub*  
With her hand in the midst of a washing-tub ;  
In a coalpit I've seen a fisherman *strike*,  
And a mail coach, with luggage, pass right thro' a *pike* !



II.

On a village pond, by strange good luck,  
With a bright *green drake* I have caught a *brown duck* ;  
And I once saw a debtor at sport undone  
By the sudden sight of a *yellow dun*.<sup>7</sup>

III.

I have often hook'd a fish in *the Ayr*,  
While a swallow has swallow'd my fly, I declare ;<sup>8</sup>  
I've caught in Ould Ireland, a fish of the *say*  
In pure fresh water, and salmon in *Tay*.



IV.

In fishing for salmon I'm never at *parr*,  
And find luck no go on *Loch-na-Garr* ;  
While fishing *up* stream I have taken " *nune*,"  
But many fine fishes in fishing *Doon*.

V.

I have fish'd in *Aar*,<sup>9</sup> and in *Ewe* and *Wye*,  
And what is still more *Ewe-Taw-Awe-Dee(N)-Ayr-y*,<sup>1</sup>

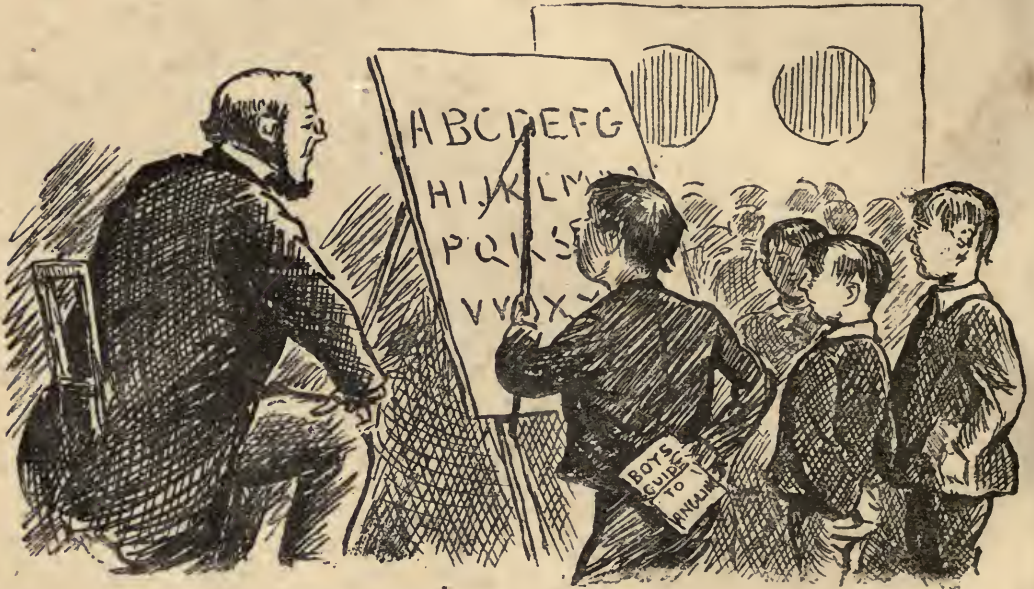
<sup>7</sup> It may be as well to inform the uninitiated that the italicized words refer to the names of *favourite flies*, well known to anglers.

<sup>8</sup> The author actually caught a swallow while fly-fishing, which dropped in the water and was safely drawn in, landed, and released.

<sup>9</sup> The river Aar is in Switzerland.

<sup>1</sup> "From the occult references in the second line of this verse to the rivers and lakes named, it is clear that the author means to suggest that the River Dee in the last line must be beyond them all, even farther north than Loch *Awe*. He farther intimates that it was beyond Dee, N., that is the Northern Dee, which is in Aberdeenshire. The Dee, S., is in Cheshire, but we know of no Dee beyond Dee, N. In face of the other marvels of this wonder-full

I have caught a *bee* and pass'd over the *sea*,  
And dibb'd with the point of a rod in the *Dee*.



## VI.

My master being Irish would seize my pate,  
And take his rod and begin to *bate* ;  
But " He never will *rise*," he forebodingly said,  
" I am wasting upon him my *ex-wise* head." <sup>2</sup>

poem, we are not prepared to deny that there is such a *Dee*, but it is very extraordinary. Moreover, as he says he 'passed over the sea' to get to it, we wonder where the author could have been? Altogether, it is not only 'more extraordinary,' but *most* extraordinary."—A CRITIC.

Our enlightened critic forgets that the *Dee* flows into the *Irish Sea*—a fact of much importance in this mystery. We admit that this is rather a reversal of ordinary laws (as is seen in other matters connected with *that sea*), for usually *C* flows into *D*.

<sup>2</sup> The master evidently meant this as a contraction for *extra-wise*, and not in the other sense of "ex"—that he himself was now *out* of his senses.



"YE SCHOOLMASTER TAKES HIS ROD AND BEGINS TO BATE!"

VII.

Yet I rose notwithstanding and lived to be  
An angler unmatched in the whole countree,  
And in my sport, as you shall see,  
I show'd most remarkable energy :



"I ROSE TO BE AN ANGLER UNMATCHED IN THE WHOLE COUNTRY."

Thus,—I once struck a chub with such vigour of glee,  
That I jerk'd master leather-mouth into a tree ;  
    And, aloft in the branches, the chub I heard  
    Flutt'ring about like a netted bird.  
I stood looking up with a grin and a frown,  
And I whipp'd like a coachman to get him down ;  
    But, woe worth the day !  
    The best line will *fray* ;—  
And thus all my vigour was thrown away.

VIII.

And, though lessons, I fear, were not in my *line*,  
In my other *walks* I was apt to shine ;  
Nor do I think I was quite the “dull brute”  
My master call'd me, but rather 'cute !  
    To justify this my vain remark,  
    Listen to this, but pray keep dark !—  
    Keep dark, I mean, to *Anglers' Clubs*,  
    To which most readers no doubt are subs.  
Well, down at our Club I once did win  
A prize for “the biggest take weighed in”  
    Of eels—eels, the most wonderful eels !  
    Enough to supply the Lord Mayor's meals  
    For a week, and daintiful they would be.  
How did I *catch* them ? Listen to me  
But a moment more and you shall see !  
—I was walking home one night from *the Lea*  
Across the marshes, and heard such a rustle  
    And fussle and hustle and fearful bustle  
    Below in the grass  
    That I wonder'd whatever had come to pass.  
    Then I struck a fusee,  
    And what did I see  
But the meadow alive with eels—with eels  
Cutting capers, and dancing reels !

No ; not *snakes*, though I thought they were  
Myself ; but, sir, I do declare,

They were eels—eels !

Slipping right under my toes and my heels ;  
Shiny, slimy, slithy, and writhy,  
Wriggling along to a water hard by,  
Because their own was nearly dry !<sup>2</sup>

What did I do ?

Sir, what would *you*

Have done yourself, if you, like me,

Belong'd to an angling club, you see ?

Why, I fill'd my creel, and my pockets, too,

With eels no less than sixty-two ;

Till my body with all this live stock on,

Appear'd like that of Laocoön.<sup>4</sup>

But, stored with my burden, I got to town,

And the very next night at the *Rose and Crown*,

I weigh'd them *in* that had weigh'd me *down* !

IX.

But does my reader doubtfully shake

His head about a "proper take,"

And question the strict morality

About the words "from the river Lea" ?

—Pray tell me, what *am* I to understand

By "*a take*," if it is not by the *hand* ?

And sure 'tis as plain as plain can be,

That the eels came "from the river Lea,"

And equally plain they were "*caught*" by *me* !

And more,—'tis as pointed and plain as a pin,

That, if not a take *out*, it was a take *in* !<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> That eels do so migrate under such circumstances is a well-authenticated fact of natural history.

<sup>4</sup> Some of our readers will pardon us if, for the sake of others, who will thank us, we observe that this name is pronounced La-ok-o-on.

<sup>5</sup> How far the "weighing-in" customs of some angling clubs encourage such casuistry, &c., is a question worth a little consideration.



## INTERLUDE IV.

## SONG.—THE OLD BROOK REVISITED.

## 1.

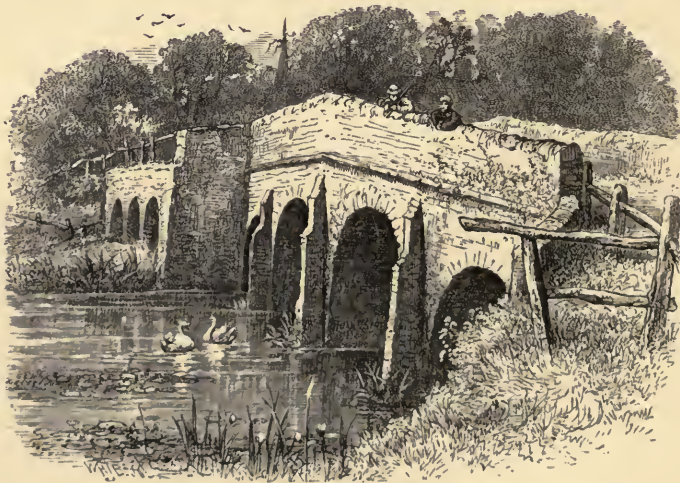
How changed, how changed, how little changed !  
 Myself and these dear haunts of eld ;  
 These fields, where I a schoolboy ranged :  
 Not one familiar tree is fell'd ;  
 'Tis all the same—the garden wall  
 Blooms with the selfsame blossoms still ;  
 The old brook murmuring round the Hall,  
 Seeks still the same old water-mill.  
 Oh, changed ! oh, changed ! yet little changed !  
 O earth ! O sky, how little changed !

## 2.

How changed ! how changed ! Years twice a score  
 Have left their various mark on me ;  
 The playmates of those days of yore—  
 How many dead, or o'er the sea !  
 And some that live now pass me by,  
 Not knowing, or with hearts estranged ;  
 Ah ! 'mid this unchanged scene I sigh,—  
 How much is changed ! how much is changed !  
 How changed, where all seems little changed !  
 O days ! O years, how much is changed !

## 3.

Ay, though this old grey pile doth know  
No more its ancient lord or ways,  
'Tis so the same in outward show,  
That forty years seem yesterdays ;  
The same—yet not the same : 'tis so  
With me ; this strange self's outer part  
How changed ! yet these old loves that glow  
As memory wakens, prove the heart  
But little changed, but little changed  
—By changing years, how little changed !



## STAVE V.

## I.

A POET once sang, " Absence makes the heart fonder,"  
 And the tender, sweet sentiment often I ponder ;  
 But absence *of mind*, saith your truest well-wisher, man,  
 Makes often a precious great fool of a fisherman.  
 Thusly : Once while my rod I was fitting a water at,  
 My attention was drawn to a whisker'd old water-rat  
 Preening his cheek on a stone green and mossy-like  
 Till he made it like silk, soft and sheeny and glossy-like.  
 I had just got my cast through the loop of my line,  
 What time the old rat had attracted my eyne,  
 Then, forgetting 'twas *loose*, grasp'd my rod, and so flinging  
 forth,  
 Flung off cast and flies,—O exactly a shilling's worth !

## II.

Once again, when distracted in similar manner,—I  
 Remember the spot near a Worcestershire tannery,—  
 Having long fish'd for perch in a hole that was full of them,  
 I went to my bottles <sup>6</sup> and took a good pull at them ;  
 And fatigued with the number and weight I had caught there  
 Abandon'd myself to vagaries of thought there.  
 Then took from my pocket my *pencil-case golden*,  
 Laid my line on the bank, and in dreams was enfolden,  
 And being struck with a fancy, forthwith I there wrote of it,  
 Or, like Captain Cuttle, at once made a note of it :  
 Which done, with my pencil-case play'd I while musing,  
 And took up my line to prepare for its using ;

<sup>6</sup> The one contained milk and the other water.

Still dreaming, I put the hook right through the ring of it  
 (Ah, 'twas no laughing matter, although I thus sing of it);  
 And from my hand dangled it, till in my dream  
 I lifted my rod and line over the stream,  
 And wrapt in "Reflections" as sober as "Sturm,"<sup>7</sup>  
 Dropp'd it into the river instead of a worm!

## III.

If trout be your fancy go, fish you at Mitcham,  
 And, if you're a bungler—I wish you may kitch 'em;  
 And this furthermore I would earnestly say  
 In broad Gaelic,—Rise early, and then "mak' y'rr hay."<sup>8</sup>  
 Not "while the sun *shines*," but is hid behind cumuli,  
 Or just as well, snug at home in your bed, you may lie!  
 For so *still* is the stream that the trout of the Wandle  
 Can hear you as plainly as Richard heard Blondel:  
 So *clear*, they can see you, as though on their wet eyes  
 They wore the best spectacles made at Negretti's.  
 You, too, can see them by the dozen together,  
 Provided, of course, it be fair summer weather.  
 For three hours on this stream over one did I whip, sir,  
 And oft did my dainty fly tickle his lip, sir;  
 For oft would he rise and provokingly smell it,  
 Then dart to a neighbour trout, and the joke tell it;  
 —"Drop *into* your mouth," said I, "*won't* you, fish, *let* it?"  
 He replied with a wink, "Don't you wish you may *get* it?"

<sup>7</sup> Sturm's "Reflections" is a standard religious book, and was a great favourite with a former generation.

<sup>8</sup> It is one of the—shall I say unfortunate?—peculiarities of this poem, that it affords my friends all sorts of conjectures as to hidden meanings and references. Thus, some have actually thought that in this Gaelic, and especially in this particular phrase, there is a mysterious allusion to a very celebrated brother of the angle, well known on the Wandle. It is, I confess, rather singular that that gentleman's name should happen to be James McRae, and that there is no man that the trout of the Wandle fear more, or his many friends like better.

IV.

In the *use of your flies* don't be too economical,  
Or your fate may be rather more serious than comical,  
And, *saving* a loss, you may actually *cause* it,  
"What you gain at the spigot, may lose at the faucet."<sup>9</sup>  
Thus: once a whole day did I fish with but one fly,  
I remember it well, 'twas a bright *yellow dun* fly;  
And three brace of fine fish did he bring to my larder,  
And never did fly work or better or harder;  
When, at eve, a big trout rose with such a rapidity  
As quite irresistibly moved my cupidity;  
So I look'd once again at my bright yellow dunny,  
And said, "You'll do yet, and I'll save so much money."  
So I threw to my friend this my tired little yellow,  
And Sir Trout said, "I fancy that bright little fellow!"  
And he rose; and I, greatly admiring his *pluck*,  
Admired, even more, my own skill and good luck.  
But, alas! I then learnt, sir, how many a slip  
There may be 'tween the creel and the firmly hook'd lip!  
For the fly, overworn, shook the gut by the hand  
And said, "I perish here; go you back to the land!"  
And it *came*, with this message, "O fool for your pains,  
He hath who well spendeth; who loseth he gains!"

V.

Take care of each *knot*, or, believe me, you'll *not*  
At the end of your day have a trout for your pot:  
Or, the big ones you'll lose through your bungling and patching,  
And never take one that is really worth catching.  
Even now I can hear that most musical *chug*,  
And e'en now my wrist feels that strong, muscular tug  
Of a trout that, I think, by that pull and that sound,  
Must have weigh'd something *under*, say, ten or twelve pound!

<sup>9</sup> No, I protest there is *no* occult reference here to the Right Hon. gentleman who has allowed me to dedicate this book to him. How could any one lose by *him*?

I struck; and I never more firmly struck in,  
 And I felt that I had him in each struggling fin,  
 And I play'd him securely down, up, and cross stream,  
 Awhile of his beauty and weight I did dream;  
 Till, at last, I reel'd in, and he answer'd, though toughly,  
 And obediently follow'd, though now and then roughly,  
 Then, from my left hand, my net forward and slow went,  
 While my right held him firm for the critical moment;  
 When, just as I drew him towards his "home circle,"  
 I felt some sensation—some whirl or some jerkle,  
 And—thunder and murder and all that is horrible!  
 Fate and misfortune! and all that is worryble!—  
 My bent rod flew back, and I saw all my cast  
 Part where the line *joined* it—not where 'twas *made fast*:  
 Reft of sense, stood I still, as the wretch away flew with it,  
 And I mused half an hour upon "What will he *do* with it?"

## VI.

Beware how you *kill* your fish—strong and hard-headed ones,  
 Pike, carp, or perch, big and tough and long-wedded ones—  
 Or, although you may land them, ay, hand them, you see,  
 It may happen to you as once happen'd to me.  
 I secured such a perch as I never set eyes upon,  
 And his size aldermanic I gazed with surprise upon;  
 Then bore him away in both hands from the water  
 To accomplish more safely his difficult slaughter.  
 So I darted away up a zigzaggy narrowlet,  
 And struck his hard head on a bridge's stone parapet,  
 When he raised his back fin and struck into my finger, sir,  
 Saying, "Why, in your hands, should I longer thus linger,  
 sir?"  
 And, curling his tail with a muscular movement, he  
 Thought, "Water, to this, would a little improvement be!"  
 And leapt from my hands with a spring and a wriggle, sir,  
 And screw'd up the stream with perceptible goggle, sir;

While I stood "as dumb as a drum with a hole in it,"  
And as white and as stiff as a shirt with a pole in it!

VII.

"Who then would an angler be?" dost thou say,  
In face of the dolours revealed in my lay?  
And dost thou expect of me doubtful reply?  
I answer, "In spite of them, I would—I!"

VIII.

To this sport I attribute my mark'd affability,  
My patience domestic and sweet amiability;  
And if one had a daughter, one hardly could wish her,  
A fortune more blest than to marry a fisher!



## A LITTLE FLIGHT OF FLIES.

## 1.

SOME trout fancy *names*, and will never be gammon'd  
Till you meet their nice taste with a "Francis" or "Hammond;"  
So fanciful others, I never could trick 'em,  
Till, suiting their *fancy*, I put on a "Wickham."<sup>10</sup>

## 2.

If a basket of fish you wish for your dinner,  
I have read in *Espin*,<sup>1</sup> you should take a *Red Spinner* ;  
(Of course, if 'tis coarse, make your line somewhat taperer)  
This failing, try then a good turn with a *caperer*.



<sup>10</sup> "The Francis," "Hammond's Adopted," and "The Wickham Fancy," the uninitiated may be again informed are the names of well-known artificial flies.

<sup>1</sup> "Unpublished Letters to a Friend on Fly-Fishing and Spinning," by *Crespigny Espin, Esq.*



3.

I always fare well when I artfully ply  
A coachman—"at evening a capital fly:"  
As a cockney on Wandle, of sport I ne'er fail,  
But a good story tell with "Carshalton cock-tail."

4.

The great month of the year, for the bungler, is *May*,  
And his fly *the green drake*—if 'tis out, that's to say—  
Then the trout catch themselves—so insatiate their lust—  
And success is no question of *may* but of *must*.



TWO BUNGLERS.

## THE SONG OF THE RED SPINNERS.

## 1.

Up and down ; in and out ;  
Now within ; now without ;  
Falling in ; falling out ;  
    Buzzing our glee ;  
Winging and singing,  
And singing and winging,  
And winging and singing,  
    How happy are we !

## 2.

Sing away ; wing away !  
Live to-day ; love to-day !  
Dance in the dancing ray ;  
    Sing, never sigh !  
Life—O the bliss of it !  
Love—O the kiss of it !  
Death—we know this of it,  
    Dancing we die !

## TO THE QUILL GNAT.

1.

SUNSHINE'S blissful, beautiful daughter,  
 Sailing over the sheeny water,  
 Gliding so gleefully gay ;  
 Tremulous, tiny, gauzy, airy,  
 Dreamy, downy, delicate fairy,  
 Whither, O whither away ?

2.

Wait but awhile on the way that thou wingest ;  
 Sing me one strain of the song that thou singest !  
 Pause on this pendulous spray !  
 Pause and some pleasure impart  
 To the sight of my eyes and the love of my heart,  
 Then wing, if thou wilt, on thy way !



COTTON AND WALTON'S FISHING-HOUSE ON THE DOVE.

## TO THE DRAGON FLY.

## 1.

FLASHING gem on silver-netted,  
 Fan-like, dryly-rustling wings,  
 Chased with wondrous art, and fretted  
 With that curious maze of rings ;  
 On this leaf thy form doth quiver  
 Like an arrow in a targe,  
 Shot by elfin of the river,  
 Sporting viewless on its marge.

## 2.

Like some glistening, gleaming jewel  
 On some beauty's restful hand,  
 Art thou, yet I feel thee cruel,  
 As I o'er thee raptly stand :  
 Flash !—thou'rt gone ! not wont to linger ;  
 'Tis as tho' from out her ring  
 Sprang the gem, and from the finger  
 Suddenly took wing.

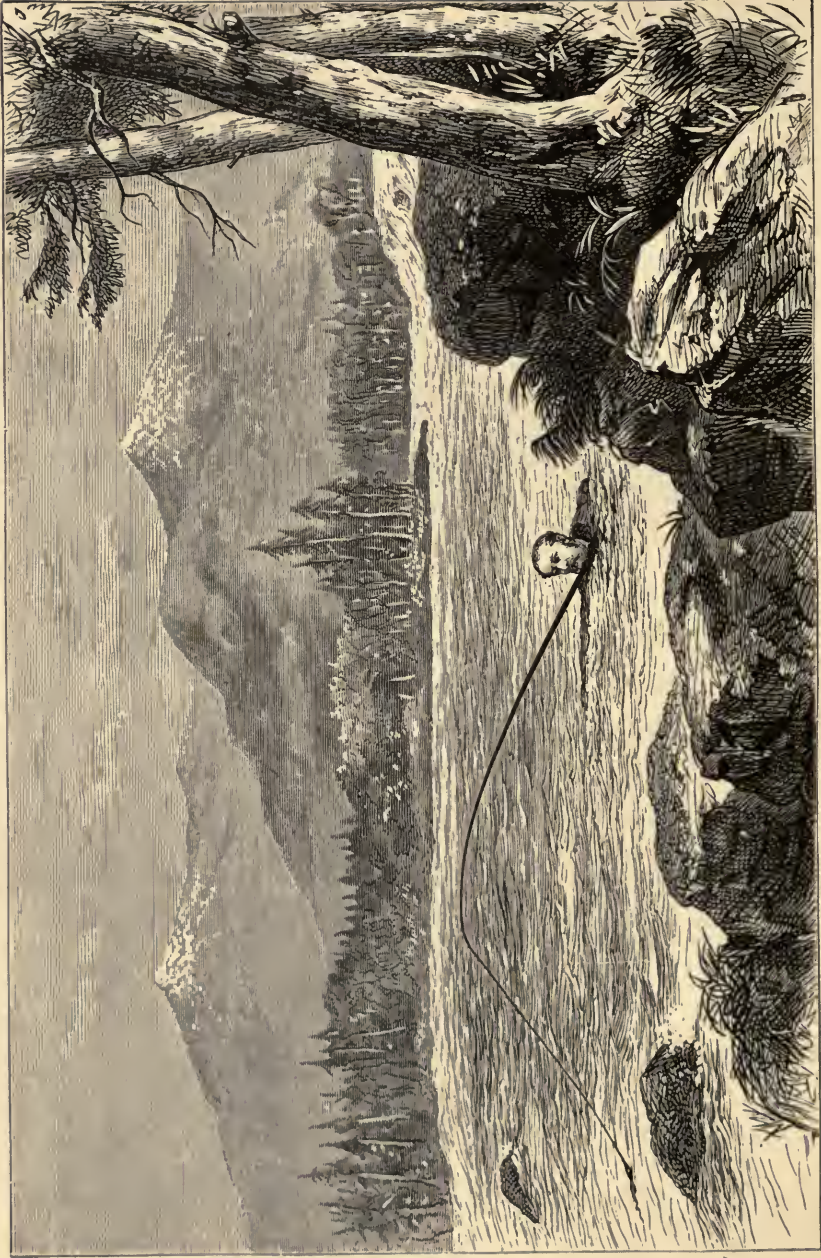
## THE SALMON FLY.

## 1.

" Nor an insect that flies in our northern sky,  
 Nor a worm that doth crawl on our British soil,  
 Resembles this thing you denominate "fly,"  
 With its wools and its feathers and golden foil;  
 And yet it is plain that the salmon will take  
 This utter monstrosity fishermen ply:  
 For *what* do the salmon the wonder mistake?  
 For to me 'tis inscrutable mystery."

## 2.

" A riddle no longer, I think, it will be,  
 If you only remember what well you know,  
 That the salmon I take inhabit the sea,  
 Though they come to these rivers to spawn their roe;  
 And deep in the caves of the warm southern seas  
 Are sweet, dainty zoöphytes fairily hued,  
 To salmon the richest of delicacies,  
 And *this* they mistake for that exquisite food."



A SALMON-FISHING ADVENTURE.

## HAMPSHIRE FLY-FISHING.

## 1.

ONE, two, three! and the wavy line  
 Backward and forward flies,  
 Four!—and there falls, as a gossamer light,  
 On the further ring of the rise,  
 My gay quill-fly, with her wings so dry,  
 And she sails on the flowing stream  
 As a nautilus sails on a summer sea,  
 Or a fairy floats in a dream!

## 2.

True in the cast, and she wings her way  
 In a line as straight and true,  
 Thro' the widening rings, as the famous "Line"  
 Cuts the sphere of the world in two!  
 But oh! she has reach'd the nearer ring,  
 And is unmolested still!  
 And she sails along with the doleful song,  
 "Ah me, I have fail'd to kill!"

## 3.

One, two, three! and she falls again,  
 And she says to Sir Trout, "O pray  
 Don't let me escape as my sister did,  
 Who pass'd just now this way!"  
 But ah! that she thus comes sailing on,  
 Proves that the prayer was vain!  
 Sir Trout is, at least, of doubtful mind;  
 Well, well, let us try him again!

## 4.

One, two, three!—not a shade of doubt  
That the fly is right to a shade!  
Nor more like that he is rising at  
Could any quill-gnat be made!  
So now, my friend, like an auctioneer,  
I'll wait for your little bid!  
'Tis going, going, going—*gone!*  
Ha, ha!—'twas well I did!

## 5.

So ho! So ho! Don't hurry away  
With my goods to your weedy home  
Like a common thief!—there's the bill to pay!  
So come, my beauty, come!  
So ho! hysterics are out of place!  
Let me lead you gently, so!  
Ha! would you escape? turn back, my friend,  
That isn't the way to go!

## 6.

So ho! So ho! You're faint, I see,  
And needing a little rest!  
Here's a nice little room will fit you well,  
In which you may make your nest!  
Don't make such a fuss! lie down, lie down!  
That's better! come here to me  
On this grassy bank, and hear from my lips  
How proud I am of thee!



## NORTH COUNTRY FLY-FISHING.

## 1.

LET your Southron stand with rod in hand,  
 Fishing as in a dream,  
 In his one green meadow, the morning long,  
 By his clear, still, chalky stream;  
 But ever let me, in the North countree,  
 Wander my burn beside,  
 Where it winds through the mead and the rocky gorge,  
 And the moorland wild and wide!

## 2.

No thresher am I of the vexèd air,  
 Or your quiet, mantling pools,  
 Who stands for an hour on the same green sod,  
 'Mid a crowd of gaping fools;  
 Changing each little failing fly,  
 Till all in his book are tried;  
 My one good cast for a day will last;  
 And on with my wand I stride!

## 3.

Stretcher and dropper, one, two, three, four,  
 With flies of various hue—  
 Meeting the taste of the connoisseur  
 With yellow, green, brown, or blue—  
 I fling, with a shorten'd line, across  
 The swirling, eddying burn,  
 Drawing them tenderly toward my bank,  
 With a delicate-handed turn.

## 4.

They sink, and they swirl, and I cannot see  
My flies ; but my hand can feel :  
My hands are the eyes that see the rise,  
My vision is in my reel !  
Let the Southron look, like a boy on his book,  
For his still-stream, dimpled ring ;  
'Tis the hand that can *see* in the North countree,  
And *hear* when the reel doth sing !

## 5.

I feel the pulse of the burn's bent arm,  
Where it lies on the gravelly strand ;  
And under the shade of the beechen boughs,  
I deftly ply my wand ;  
But most I love the eddying pools  
At the foot of the rock-toss'd foam,  
For the fat and the fair of the stream are there  
For morning calls, " at home ! "

## 6.

Thus on I go, from shallow to pool,  
And from pool to shallow again ;  
And all is change, and all is life,  
Moor, meadow, and gorge, and glen !  
Thus, keeping step with my flowing burn,  
My happy moments steal,  
And ne'er do I pause, save when I've cause  
To add to my filling creel !

## WEEDS.

1.

If there be above another  
 One annoyance that doth smother  
 All my patience, angling brother,  
 And make me savage with my mother,  
       'Tis the weeds.

2.

Down they come in swirls and rushes,  
 Grass and thistles, thorns and bushes!  
 All at once the rising hushes!  
 And my naughty anger flushes—  
       Hang the weeds!

3.

O that unseen wretch above there!  
 He hath little of my love there,  
 With his busy hand in glove there!  
 Will no friend give him a shove there  
       In the weeds?

4.

Well he seems to know 'tis *my* day,  
 Well, how he can spoil my high day,  
 For he always chooses Friday,  
 Bank and bush to render tidy,  
       Cutting weeds!

5.

They unman me, they unmake me;  
 Now doth Fortitude forsake me!  
 Fell despair doth grimly shake me—  
 Shall I cause my wife to take the  
       Widow's weeds?



Keeper: "HAVE YOU GOT PERMISSION TO FISH HERE, SIR?" (Another kind of annoyance.)

6.

Passion cannot be defended,  
Nor bad luck by wrath be mended,  
So I'll not wish him extended,  
All his hateful toiling ended,  
'Neath the weeds.

7.

What shall soothe my soul's vexation ?  
What shall calm my indignation ?  
Ha ! I'll seek some consolation —  
O what fitting compensation !—  
In the weed !



MORE PAINFUL ANNOYANCE THAN EVEN WEEDS.

## RIVERWARDS: MORNING.

L'ESPOIR EST MA FORCE.

## 1.

HOPE in my heart; health in the air,  
 The freshness of morning everywhere,  
 Pleasure before, and care behind,  
 I tramp to the river with gleesome mind,  
 And with brotherly love to all mankind!  
 And the tramp of my eager feet doth say,  
 I wonder, I wonder what luck to-day!



## 2.

Fear begone! and away with Doubt!  
 The river, I know, is full of trout;  
 Do ye say, "Yon cloud may blacken the sky,  
 Or weeds may come down, or—pigs may fly" ?  
 I'm ready for all, and what care I?  
 And the tramp of my eager feet doth say,  
 I wonder, I wonder, what luck to-day!

3.

“ Good morning,” says one. “ I wish you sport ! ”  
And he brings of the river a good report :  
“ They were rising like fun when I came by.”  
And I tramp on my way more cheerfully :  
Such power in a hopeful word doth lie !  
And the tramp of my feet doth plainly say,  
I hope for good luck indeed to-day !

4.

Off the road, and on to the grass ;  
Two sweet meadows to overpass ;  
Beautiful sound, that buzzing of flies,  
Bringing my heart up into my eyes !  
Ha ! what was *that* ?—a magnificent rise !  
Oh, I hope to-night to my friends to say,  
What splendid luck I have had to-day !



## NOON: DINNER AL FRESCO.

## 1.

SUB tegmine fagi, me, O Tityre,<sup>2</sup>  
 Behold, now enjoying my dinner,  
 Two chops fried in eggs, and some cool bitter B  
 —A repast fit for Alderman Skinner!  
 While my creel and my rod and my line on the grass  
 Lie at rest with my little red-spinner.

## 2.

O Tityre! I believe that this tree  
 Is the son of a seedling that Maro  
 Pick'd up in Italia, and sent o'er the sea  
 To some consul in Britain afar, O!  
 And this bitter's Falernian, or else I do dream,  
 It never came forth from a bar, O!

## 3.

Blest beech! O how sweet to my eye is thy shade!  
 And how restful thy bark to my back, O!  
 And no carpet that ever in Persia was made,  
 Or wove in the looms of Astrakko,  
 Was so soft as this grass! Oh, I feel like a Shah,  
 Smoking on it my pipe of tobacco!

<sup>2</sup> A few brother anglers may be glad to have a free translation of this free Latin:—"Behold me, O Tityrus! under this spreading beech-tree!"



4.

O surely this day's an Arabian Night,  
Or my fancy now taking a tour is ;  
Those seeming tall poplars are platans moon-bright ;  
And yon turkey apparent, I'm sure, is  
A peacock ; while those that seem'd haymaking jades,  
Are gauzy-veil'd, exquisite houris !

5.

And what this white incense that silvers the green,  
As tho' from spice-gardens it clomb ? ah !  
The artist that could but depicture this scene,  
Would be worthy a royal diploma,  
And Phemè should write of his work to the Queen  
On a page that should breathe this aroma !

## HOMEWARDS: EVENING.

## 1.

THE crimson-tinted gloaming fades,  
 The sheeted silver of the stream  
 Is darkening into sombre shades,  
 And day dies like a happy dream ;  
 And now, my rod, the time is come  
 For home—sweet home !

## 2.

The distant sheep-bell faintly rings  
 Above the young lamb's plaintive bleat ;  
 The drowsy bat on shadowy wings  
 Sails round the homestead's snug retreat ;  
 Mute is the wheel of yonder mill :—  
 How calm ! how still !

## 3.

The meadow path is damp with dew,  
 The rocks flap toward their woodland nest ;  
 The gazing kine the sweet cud chew ;  
 All Nature soothes itself to rest ;  
 What peace, what joy to all is given !  
 How kind is Heaven !



THE LEA IN WALTON'S TIME.

## 4.

Afar I hear the minster bells  
Swing faintly out their evening chime,  
In soothing falls, and cheering swells,  
That with my homeward feet keep time,  
And gratitude my heart o'erwells :—  
Dear, holy bells !



## BROKEN LINES AND DOUBLES ENTENDRES.

## A RIVERSIDE REVERIE.

## 1.

I NEVER can that hour forget,  
 And dear to me the very place is,  
 When first at Vivian Place we met, —  
 What memories that sweet name embraces! —  
 She sweetly sang; I praised the song;  
 Her pleasèd smile went thro' and thro' me,  
 Nor could I sleep the whole night long—  
*That rise was to me!*

## 2.

I went to Vivian Place next day,  
 On some pretence that love invented,  
 And chanced to meet her on the way,  
 And spoke, confused and half demented;  
 Recall'd the song with praise, and she  
 Fearing my praise would come too thickly,  
 Was rather stiff—becomingly—  
*I struck too quickly!*

## 3.

I took the hint; it did me good;  
 I stay'd away a month lamenting;  
 I let her see I understood  
 My fault, and sadly was repenting;

And she, I found, grew guarded too,  
 Nor walk'd but with her sister Connie,  
 Lest meeting me, I might renew—  
                                   'Ware! "Steady, Johnny!"

## 4.

I too assumed a proud reserve,  
 Concealing love 'neath outward coldness,  
 And seem'd unworthy to deserve  
 Her notice since my former boldness ;  
 I carried roses in my hand  
 To make her fear my heart was ranging,  
 Yet tried to make her understand—  
                                   *That fly wants changing!*

## 5.

I then sincerer tactics tried,  
 And went to pay a call, and surely  
 I met her—Connie by her side—  
 They bow'd and pass'd, and look'd demurely ;  
 She said, "He shall not think me flirt,  
 So with reserve let us accost him :"—  
 My love was pain'd ; my pride was hurt—  
                                   *O, almost lost him!*

## 6.

But still, methought, that tender flush  
 That mantled on her cheek had meaning ;  
 Mere scorn could ne'er so sweetly blush ;  
 Scorn never had such gentle screening :  
 It gave me hope ; it gave me cheer ;  
 'Twas plainly writ down in my duty,  
 With caution still to persevere—  
                                   *You're mine, my beauty!*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See page 90.

7.

I now grew bolder, she less shy,  
Some little coyness notwithstanding,  
And soon—dear Connie *not* being by—  
We came unto an understanding,  
And seal'd it with a kiss and vow,  
That evermore by Hymen banded,  
Our hearts should be—as they are now—  
*Ha! safely landed!*



“HA! SAFELY LANDED!”

THE WARY, OLD TROUT CAUGHT WITH A  
SALMON FLY.

[Suggested by the following passage from "My First Salmon Run," by Mr. Francis Francis:—

"I fished on down to the end of the cast, and got a dashing rise, but I found it was only a big yellow trout, of three pounds, which I very soon disposed of with a certain amount of contempt; and yet when trout-fishing I had tried that trout most carefully with a variety of lures over and over again, for I knew him well, and many a time my heart had been in my mouth as he came up cautiously, and critically inspected my fly or minnow, and then with a wave of his tail, expressive of his contempt for it, retreated to his watery fastness; and yet to-day, because I chanced to be after salmon, I looked on him as inferior ware, while he, who had so cautiously looked into moderate offers, and reasonable four or five per cent. bargains, where he had a fair chance of getting off with bait and all for a scrape, like a rash speculator, thinking he could realize ten or fifteen per cent., with limited liability, risked his all in one mad rush and lost it. Verily the world of fishes may be likened unto that of humanity in many respects."]

## 1.

I oft had seen in Whammle-foot  
A large and shapely trout,  
And, with adapted lure, had tried  
In vain to coax him out;  
I match'd the flies I knew he loved,  
I plied my utmost skill:  
I rose him oft, but all in vain—  
That trout I could not kill!

## 2.

But once I went to Whammle-foot  
Not seeking trout, nor wishing  
To see my friend; far lordlier game  
Was sought in that day's fishing;



My cast a many-colour'd fly,  
And large, had on, to gammon,  
By all the skill that art could ply,  
Some splendid silver salmon.

3.

Nor less than three that glorious day  
My 'prentice hand had caught ;  
And now I reach'd my trout's old home,  
Yet gave him not a thought,  
Nor wish ; when whistle went my reel,—  
Said I, " What luck's about ?  
Another salmon ? " Ah ! I'd got  
At last, and thus, my trout !

4.

As thus with fish, so oft with men :—  
Temptations plied with skill  
To meet their taste, will often fail  
Their eye with lust to fill :  
While baits, that seem for them too gross,  
Prove oft the fatal spell  
That takes their eyes with quick surprise,  
And lures them into hell !

## CAPTAIN TROUT AND THE MAY-FLY.

## 1.

MAY is come, to trout so dear,  
 Month of months of all the year !  
 Warm the water, soft and clear,  
 Soon the May-fly will be here !  
     Ope your eyes and shake your fins !  
     Now the feast of feasts begins !  
     For the revels all prepare !  
     O the dainties rich and rare !

## 2.

Ha ! up yonder what is *that*,  
 Wing'd with beauty, long and fat ?  
 Let me now arise, and see  
 If indeed 'tis really he !  
     Ope your eyes and shake your fins !  
     Now the feast of feasts begins !  
     For the revels all prepare !  
     O the dainties rich and rare !

## 3.

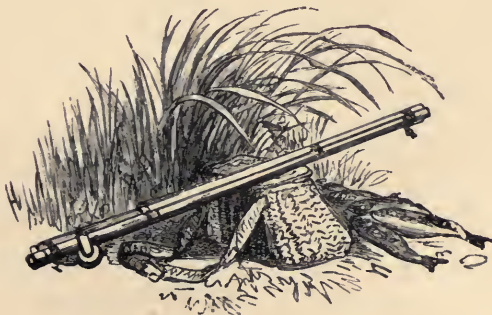
No mistake about it, boys !  
 O that antepast of joys !  
 'Twas indeed the pioneer !  
 Swarms for all will now appear !  
     Ope your eyes and shake your fins !  
     Now the feast of feasts begins !  
     For the revels all prepare !  
     O the dainties rich and rare !

4.

“Now's the day, and now's the hour!”  
See the cloudy swarm doth lour!  
Now, ye trout, arise and kill,  
And of plenty take your fill!  
    Ope your eyes and shake your fins!  
    Now the feast of feasts begins!  
    For the revels all prepare!  
    O the dainties rich and rare!

5.

Are ye ready? upward flash!  
Downward, upward, slap and dash!  
Thro' the bubbling waters crash,  
Splash and dash and flash and clash!  
    Ope your eyes and shake your fins!  
    Now the feast of feasts begins!  
    For the revels all prepare!  
    O the dainties rich and rare!



“MY BEAUTY.”<sup>4</sup>

SONG.—THE OLD ANGLER TO HIS WIFE.

1.

I CALL'D thee “my beauty” when first in our youth  
 We pledged to each other our love and our truth,  
 And I felt there were none in the ranks of the fair  
 'That could with “my beauty” one moment compare;  
 But how small was the part of the beauty reveal'd,  
 'To the beauty within that thy beauty conceal'd.

2.

And O with what joy, what elation and pride,  
 I call'd thee “my beauty,” array'd as my bride,  
 When I felt that thy beauty would gladden my life  
 In the form of my good and my beautiful wife;  
 And the years as they roll'd with their good and their ill,  
 Reveal'd some new beauty more beautiful still!

3.

O those years, ah, how many, “my beauty” have flown!  
 They are counted by birthdays of children upgrown;  
 They have left the sad traces of trial and care,  
 And many a sorrow hath silver'd thy hair;  
 But, although the fresh bloom of thy youth is no more,  
 Thou art *now* more “my beauty” than ever before!

<sup>4</sup> See last line of stanza 6, page 84.

## ODE

FOR THE ROYAL INAUGURATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES  
EXHIBITION.

## 1.

QUEEN of the Island-Realm,  
 Vein'd with the silver streams  
 That flow thro' England's verdant meads,  
 Like songs thro' poet's dreams ;  
 And circled by the seas  
 Where Britain's navies ride—  
 Those that thy Throne and People guard ;  
 These that their wealth provide !

## 2.

Not *those* engage to-day  
 Thy Royal heart and mind,  
 But *these* that brave the stormy wave  
 The finny food to find ;  
 Not those that flash in fire,  
 To make thy foemen flee,  
 But these that thro' the fields of blue  
 Sail out to reap the sea !

## 3.

These that encounter Death  
 To reap a living store ;  
 Nor thro' the wrack do all come back  
 To harvest-home ashore !

Their sorrows on the sea  
They know thy heart doth share,  
For Science, Art, and Law thou bidst  
For their protection care.

## 4.

No booming guns of War  
Shake in thy praise the skies,  
But manly cheers from lowly ships  
Of Peace and Plenty rise !  
Britannia's Fisher-Fleet,  
Prow-pointed toward this scene,  
Their gracious Queen salutes to-day,  
And these salute their Queen !

## 5.

But since thy Flag doth float  
Supreme on every sea,  
Thy heart includes the total main  
In blest Philanthropy !  
The Fisher-world is one,  
Whate'er its various name,  
And here to-day with heart and voice  
Unites in one acclaim !

## EPILOGUE.

1.

THIS moral, O angler, my poem will bear—  
However things look, you need never despair :  
Be never surprised when the hopeful day fails,  
Nor hopeless when all that is adverse assails.



FLY-FISHING FOR TROUT AND GRAYLING IN AUGUST.

## 2.

If the morning be such as to damp all your pluck,  
At eve you may get quite a run of good luck ;  
If this pool, or that, yield you nought but despair,  
The next may give treasure both ample and rare.

## 3.

If your tackle give way, be your *heart* true and firm ;  
Let your spirit ne'er break like a poor, brittle worm ;  
Scour it well by true patience and render it tough ;  
Take the rough with the smooth, and 'twill hardly be rough.

## 4.

If the wind's in the east, still of that make the best,  
'Tis so fickle, it soon may chop round to the west ;  
Nay, *fish* are so fickle, they sometimes will feast  
When your hope is blown chill from the nor'ard of east.

## 5.

If we find disappointment, yet spirits like ours  
So tutor'd to patience, may laugh as it lours ;  
We have always this solace to comfort our pain,  
That in seeking we find, and in losing we gain.

## 6.

If the fish do not *rise*, still our sky doth not *fall* ;  
We find " books in the running brooks," goodness in all ;  
If we lose our hook'd fish, we find pastime and health,  
And, though empty our creel be, in these we find wealth.

## 7.

Though all be not *fish* that comes into our net,  
If we often are *dry*, and we sometimes get *wet*,  
Though we're hinder'd by *ducks*, yet our hearts never *quail*,  
We've a store of good *spirits*, and always are *hale*.





"IF WE FIND DISAPPOINTMENT!" (He has come three miles to fish the best bit, and lo!)



“IF WE OFTEN ARE DRY.”

8.

And whatever the trials with which we may cope,  
We may always enjoy the sweet “pleasures of hope;”  
And good health and fresh air, and the music of streams,  
Fill our days with pure pleasure, our nights with pure dreams.

## POSTSCRIPT.

BEING A POEM ON *PROS*—AND *CONS*, AND AT THE SAME TIME A ROD IN  
TEN PIECES.

## 1.

SOME affirm, For lively sport  
You may go to *sea*, sir ;  
I would say—I mean no ill—  
Rather go to *Dee*, sir ;  
Taste is all ; let all who will  
Sojourn at the seaside,  
I—excuse my *want* of taste—  
By far prefer the *Deeside*.

## 2.

Some affirm, No fishing can  
Be e'er compared to bottom ;  
Others, and among them, I,  
The top's the place to pot 'em ;  
Yet when all is said and done,  
Your success the test is ;  
Whichever *you* can do the best,  
*That* for you the best is.

## 3.

Some affirm, If goodly trout  
You at eve would dish up,  
Never fish adown the stream,  
Rather always fish up :  
I would say, Or up or down,  
As you freely wish, sir,  
Guided by this rule alone,  
How can *you* catch fish, sir ?



BOTTOM-FISHING.

## 4.

Some affirm, Of wood for rods  
Best that stylèd lance is ;  
One man fancies hickory ;  
Bamboo, saith Francis Francis :  
For myself, I little care  
What the kind of wood is ;  
If it suit my muscle well,  
Then I think it good is.

5.

Some affirm, The rod for trout  
Should be one of ten feet ;<sup>5</sup>  
Do they not in this forget  
That in fisher-men, feet  
Differ as their muscles do,  
And as their length of bones, sir ?  
And, therefore, what is long for Smith,  
Is far too short for Jones, sir.

6.

Some advise, Play long your fish ;  
And others, Kill him quick, man !  
As though all fish were game or tame,  
And all so long, so thick, man ;  
I—Judge by your fish : one fish  
Is no more like another  
Than good and gentle Abel was  
Like Cain his wrathful brother.

7.

Some affirm, Our English trout  
Have lately grown æsthetic ;  
And that a green sou'-west of green,  
On Itchen is emetic :  
Doubtless Angling School-Boards may  
Fishes' wits have whetted,  
Yet I think, with shades of shades  
Trout need not be petted.

8.

And when I read of salmon-fies  
In books of learnèd anglers,  
And hear the jargon that is talk'd  
By colour-crazèd wranglers,

<sup>5</sup> Notably W. C. Stewart in his " Practical Angler."

I often think, it is indeed  
 Enough to make a pussy  
 Laugh in her sleep to dream that fish  
 Can be one half so fussy.

## 9.

I now dismiss you to your rod  
 With my fraternal benison,  
 By borrowing this sage remark  
 From laurell'd Alfred Tennyson,—  
 "Others follies teach us not,  
 Nor much their wisdom teaches,  
 But most of sterling worth is what  
 Our own experience preaches."<sup>6</sup>

## 10.

And now my last advice is this—  
 Dear friend, put in your pocket,  
 Whene'er you fishing go, *this book*,  
 And don't at home uplock it;  
 'Twill brighten up your hour of rest,  
 And make you feel how wise is  
 The counsel underneath the fun  
 Of genial *Cotswold Isys*.

<sup>6</sup> Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue.

*FIN-IS.*







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