



THE

PRACTICAL ANGLER.

BY PISCATOR, *pseud.*

Wm. Hughes
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THE
PRACTICAL ANGLER.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

It may appear something like presumption in any one at the present day to pretend to write on the art of Angling, a subject that has been so ably discussed from the time of Dame Juliana Berners even until now; yet it must be apparent to every experienced fisherman, that angling is a science in which some portion of fresh knowledge may ever be acquired, and that there are few who have practised the art, who cannot afford some information to their fellow fishermen, however skilful or scientific the latter may be. As for myself, I have been a devoted lover of the angle for somewhat more than a quarter of a century, and with no mean success; yet the additional science every successive season has made me master of, but convinces me the more of how much I have still to learn before I can claim a right to style myself a complete angler; nor did I ever meet with any persons, however they may have excelled me in piscatorial skill, and who form a very legion in multitude, that in some branch or other of the art I did not find wanting. Now the object of my present work is to convey to my readers all I know, and have been enabled to glean from others, on this truly interesting subject; but as I shall speak principally from my own experience, I trust my doing so in the first person may not be attributed to egotism, when my only object is to treat of matters strictly according to the fact, and as they really occurred.

As to the commencement of the pursuit, it may be proper to state that with me it began at a very early age, being, like many others, fascinated with the pages of honest Izaak Walton, when little more than nine years old; as were also my two brothers, one older and the other younger than myself, and a cousin who resided with us, all of whom, as Washington Irving so wittily remarks in his inimitable Sketch Book, were "bitten with the angling mania," much about the same time; but as this commenced during the Christmas holidays, we were obliged, in spite of our ardent wishes to the contrary, to defer our attempts for several tedious weeks, and never did the time creep on so slowly as then. Yet all this while we were by no means idle in the cause, for my younger brother and myself busied ourselves in twisting links of horse-hair for our fishing lines; whilst Tom, my elder brother, who, in consequence of his birthright, was always the most blessed in the way of sixpences, purchased a line with a float all complete to the amount of one of those convenient coins, whilst five more of them were very profitably expended in a hazle rod of three joints, then styled a half a crown rod; the attempt to fix rings to which afforded something in the shape of amusement to his leisure hours, whilst cousin Dick, with a degree of patience, perseverance, and assiduity that has distinguished him in after life, set to work to spin a line for himself by the tedious process of three plugged quills; a species of machinery with which all school boys who are brothers of the angle are well acquainted, and which he executed with so masterly a hand as completely to put me out of countenance with my own clumsy manufacture, so that at length I prevailed upon him, in consideration of the sum of three-pence of good and lawful money current in Great Britain, to fabricate one for myself also, which, for the consideration aforesaid to him in hand well and truly paid, he accordingly did. As for my younger brother, he never was very particular about the neatness of his tackle; no, not even in after years, when he became somewhat of an exquisite in his own proper person, neatness in the turn out of fishing tackle never in fact forming a portion of his worldly ambition; he, therefore was satisfied with the clumsy tackle his own skill, such as it was, enabled him to put together. Thus it was that all the half-pence which had been previously spent at the pastrycook's, or devoted to the more plebeian purchases of Gibraltar rock, bull's-eyes, or lollipops, were now wholly appropriated

to the purchase of some kind of fishing tackle or other, whilst I fear the unusual decorum which about this time so much marked my own conduct, was more owing to the mercenary hope of obtaining a fishing rod from one of my parents, a purchase far beyond the means of my limited exchequer, than a sincere desire of doing what was right, though I remember well it cost me a mighty deal of self denial to accomplish it.

Another of our tasks was the preparation of ingredients for rendering the baits more enticing to the fish, though I believe, after reading several receipts, and trying to prepare some of the prescriptions, a small piece of camphor put into the moss with the worms was all that was ever actually carried into effect. Then we were to have a small box with gimblet holes bored in it, in which a quantity of worms were to be placed, and when this box was sunk (a stone being put in it for the purpose) the worms, as a forlorn hope to escape drowning, it was supposed would crawl out through the holes, and so entice all the fish in the neighbourhood to the spot; to our certain benefit, as to their just as certain destruction. The worms also had to be dug (for we did not then even presume to think of fly fishing) and kept in moss, which was to be managed to the very letter according to the directions laid down in Walton.

At length the time arrived when we thought we might venture to make our first attempt, which, to the best of my recollection, was about the middle of February, previous to which I was entitled to style myself the lawful owner of a two-jointed rod, the lower part of hollow cane, with a tin ferrule and a hazle top, having a piece of whale-bone at the end. Cousin Dick and brother Tom both possessed a three-jointed half crown rod each, whilst my younger brother was contented with two pieces of hazle spliced together, which cousin Dick, *for a consideration*, had fitted up for him. Thus equipped, fully bent on destruction, and equally sanguine of success, we all four now set forth, though in the event our plans, like those of many men of mightier minds, turned out an almost utter failure. The locality we had selected, which was a large mill pond with a clay bottom, was by no means a likely place to expect success at that early period of the season, by the mode of fishing we then adopted, added to which we were utterly ignorant of the best spots for throwing in our baits, or in fact how to cast in our lines at all. As for myself, I soon found I was

quite at a loss how to proceed, finding to my no small discomfiture that my line, which I had tied to the extremity of my rod, was as much too long as the latter was too short, so that it was with the greatest difficulty I could succeed in getting my hook and float into the water, and then not half far enough from the shore for me to stand a chance of getting a bite, an inconvenience all my companions experienced to a greater or a lesser degree; yet there we continued to fish away hour after hour without obtaining a single fish to reward our labours, or even a nibble to encourage our hopes; till at length our better fortune led us to a small brook that ran into the pond, where our lines had not been long in the water when, to our great joy and delight, Dick's float, after one or two jerks and bobs, disappeared entirely under water, and out Dick whacked a little unwary trout of about two ounces weight; but this being the first real trout we had ever seen, never I believe was any strange monster of the deep inspected with greater curiosity. And here ended our sport for that day, and heartily tired were we with our exertions long ere we reached home; yet nothing daunted with our ill success, we again sallied forth on our next half holiday, when we were even more unsuccessful than before, as the day turned out a total blank, notwithstanding the box full of holes was this time put in requisition, and which had been forgotten in the hurry of the previous start. Now this really *blank* day, and a bitter cold one into the bargain, so disconcerted my two brothers that they signified their intentions of relinquishing the pursuit, till the season should be sufficiently advanced to afford them a more favorable chance of success. Dick and I however still persevered in our labours, and every half holiday, and which occurred on Wednesdays and Saturdays, let the weather be what it might, did we trudge off to tempt our fortune, who to me was for a long time most unpropitious, for Dick sometimes did catch a small perch or two, and occasionally some little heedless trout, whilst I was doomed still in vain to hope even for a nibble. Thus matters proceeded till Easter Monday, (an eventful day in my fishing career,) which being a whole holiday, and mild weather having at last set in, my two brothers again united themselves to our party, and on that memorable day it was that my anxious hopes, which had been so long delayed, were at last to be rewarded with success. I had taken the advantage of a breeze off shore to get my line three or four yards out into the pond, my bait a piece of dough,

and was attentively watching my float which stood pertly erect in the water, when—could it be real? yes it was!—bob went my cork, and then disappeared under water, when I whacked rod, line, fish, and all right over my head, and to my inexpressible delight on turning round beheld my scaly captive kicking about on the grass, still firmly fastened to the hook. Thus the height of my then ambition, and the accomplishment of my most anxious wishes, were both attained at the same moment. Yes, I had actually caught a fish! the bare anticipation of which had so long kept my hopes alive, and induced me to persevere in a pursuit in which I had hitherto met with so little to encourage me; and yet the fish that afforded me all this delight was but a little roach of six or seven inches long, and one of the most worthless species of the finny tribe.

The delight this insignificant capture afforded me may appear both childish and absurd, nor can I hope to place it in any other point of view before the eyes of any one unpossessed of a sportsman-like spirit: the latter however will I trust make every charitable allowance for my tender age at the time, for I was not then ten years old, whilst it must be remembered that the real value of many things so highly prized in this world, rests in a great measure in the mere imagination, and that these things owe much more to their great scarcity, and the difficulty of procuring them, than to any actual utility they possess. Thus, for example, the brightest jewel, which in my humble opinion has in itself far less real beauty than the flower of the field, which to-day blooms, and on the morrow fades, and dies, and is forgotten, would be scarcely more looked upon or prized, were it not for the value that others set upon it, or the money it would fetch in the market; and even money itself, which the miser so anxiously gathers up, denying himself not only all the comforts, but even most of the common necessaries of the present life, to say nothing of the awful doom he thus hoards up for himself throughout eternity, is of no more real utility to him than the meekest rubbish he could pick up by the wayside, could he but bring his soul to love it as well.

But to return to my subject. I need hardly say that having now broken the ice I wanted no further encouragement to proceed; and before many more weeks had passed away I began to catch a few perch, and to think far less highly of roach fishing than formerly. But my grand triumph was yet to come, and which was at length

accomplished in the capture of a trout of nearly three quarters of a pound weight ; an event I remember almost as well as if it occurred but yesterday. The spot in which it took place, which I now clearly carry in my mind's eye, was in the very brook in which cousin Dick caught his first trout, and but a few yards further up, where, in a narrow part of the sluggish stream, some sticks and floating weeds had stretched across from bank to bank, so as for a short distance to cover the surface of the water ; just above this I cast in my line, when instantly away went the float, and I almost as instantaneously pulled away in a contrary direction, and having fortunately for myself pretty strong tackle, I succeeded before long in dragging my prize to land ; but so anxious was I to make sure of it, that I believe I must have carried it at least a hundred yards from the water-side before I ventured to unhook it. This was indisputably the largest trout that any one of us had yet taken, and I feel compelled to confess I was considerably puffed up with my unexpected success, attributing the lucky chance fortune had favored me with to my own superior skill in the art of angling, which induced me to crow rather louder than was pleasant to the ears of either brother Tom or cousin Dick, the former of whom was wont in all brotherly affection to soften down my conceit with sundry cuffs and boxes in the ear, which he bestowed upon me with a very liberal hand ; but cousin Dick, who was of a much milder disposition, only used to cough when I made any allusion to this trout, as if something disagreeable had stuck in his throat, which he was extremely desirous of getting rid of ; for though of a quiet and sober turn of mind, he possessed a considerable portion of ambition, and by no means liked to be outdone in any thing or by any one. But to conclude my own eventful history. The season I have before alluded to passed off highly to my satisfaction, and others equally satisfactory succeeded. From that time to this I have devoted as much time as I could honestly spare to the pursuit, which I believe I have practised in all its branches, from trolling for pike to snigging for eels, and each successive year's experience has afforded me some accession of useful knowledge on the subject, all of which I freely offer to such of my readers as will undertake the task of perusing the following pages.

CHAPTER II.

SALMONIDÆ.

SECTION I.

THE TROUT AND HOW TO CATCH HIM.

1. *Observations on the nature and habits of the trout.*
 2. *Fly fishing, both with the natural and artificial fly.*
 3. *Minnow trolling.*
 4. *Bait fishing.*
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1. *Observations on the nature and habits of the trout.*

THE Salmonidæ being fairly entitled to the highest rank among fresh water fishes, will form the first subject of our discussion; and as the trout is the fish of the whole tribe the greater portion of my readers will probably take the greatest interest in, I purpose treating of him first, by setting forth his nature and habits, and then attempting to point out the best means of catching him.

The trout, as honest Izaak so quaintly remarks, is "a fish highly valued both in this and foreign countries; he may justly be observed as the old poet said of wine, and we English say of venison, to be a generous fish;" but like the buck he has his stated seasons at which he is in perfection, and *vice versa*; and as a trout in high season is a most superior fish, so one out of condition is an equally bad one. The time of their coming in season seems to depend in a great measure upon the nature of the soil that the

waters they inhabit flows over, and the food upon which they subsist. In the smaller rivulets, particularly those which possess a clean gravelly bottom, and a clear sharp run, the trout are generally found to come in season earlier than in the larger streams in the same neighbourhood, or into which they empty themselves. This I have found particularly the case in the river Tamar; in every one of whose tributaries the fish come into season much earlier than in the main river, and in some of these much earlier than in others. The smaller fish also begin to improve much sooner than the larger ones, and the bigger they are the longer they are getting into season, whilst some of the former may be found in tolerable condition at all seasons of the year. On one occasion, shortly before Christmas, being desirous of trying the effect of some preserved salmon spawn I had prepared, I went to a small clear brook, and soon succeeded in catching several small trout, some half a dozen, of which averaging about a quarter of a pound each, to my surprise both in colour and form appeared in admirable order, and so they proved to be, for I had them dressed on the following day, and I never tasted fish of their size of better flavour. These were all barren fish that had evidently left the main stream and followed the more fruitful up this little rill for the purpose of feeding on their spawn; and to their obtaining a plentiful supply of this kind of food I attributed their unusual high condition. All the unseasonable fish I took at that time I again recommitted to the stream. Every one of the latter, from their appearance, had it seems already shed their spawn, but yet from the avidity with which they seized upon that of the salmon, however they might have respected their own individual deposits, I have great doubt if they would have shown as much respect to those of their neighbours, and doubtless much trout spawn perishes by this means. In fact trout spawn, when preserved in the same manner, seems to be taken quite as freely as that of the salmon, though it is almost needless to say that this is a process no sportsman could ever wish the spawn of the trout to be submitted to. As a general rule it may be laid down, that trout are in the best season from May to September, though the precise time that each individual fish may chance to come in season must depend upon a great variety of causes, and scarcely two out of a dozen are usually met with that are in equal condition with each other. The usual time of spawning is from the latter end of October to the beginning of

December, though some are not unfrequently found in spawn as late as February. Previously to spawning a great number of trout, particularly the smaller ones, leave the main stream and ascend the tributary rills, where they are less disturbed by violent floods, though many still remain and deposit their spawn in the main stream. The earliest time of the year I remember to have seen a trout with the rudiments of a hard roe, was one I caught in the Tamar on the 2nd of February, 1837. The eggs then were about the size of mustard seed.

There are many criterions by which it is said the season or condition of this fish may be determined; and on this their appears to be just as many opinions. The best, however, seems to be a small head, thick shoulders, hog back, and well rounded at the dorsal fins, deep body, tight vent, and bright scales. But the spots of the skin, though generally so considered, I have found by no means a satisfactory proof of the condition of the fish; and the beautiful marigold yellow, which Walton refers to in such glowing colours when describing the magnificent trout he had just before taken, and which he judged sufficient to fill six reasonable bellies, is not at all times to be relied on, as many an ill-seasoned fish may be found with sides as yellow as may be, and yet a very ill-conditioned fish notwithstanding, whilst many of the highest seasoned may be met with, whose sides are of a dull greyish cast, which I have particularly remarked in trout that inhabit large standing waters.

After spawning trout lose their beautiful colour and form, the former not being in the surface but immediately beneath the skin, like the colour in the human race, is easily affected by the bodily health of the fish, which when in ill health instead of turning paler, on the contrary changes to a dusky hue, whilst the head increases in size, and the body becomes lanky and thin, at which times they are also infested with a kind of vermin in form like a clove that stick to them like leaches, and sucking out their moisture prove highly injurious to their health. The females, as may naturally be expected, are much more reduced after spawning than the males. As the season advances so the condition of the trout improves, though the degree of improvement depends in a great measure in the nature of the food, as does also the colour of the flesh, which in trouts taken out of some of the best of our rivers and lakes is of a fine pink colour, though this colour is by no means universal, as in some

localities these fish, however fat and well fed they may be, never acquire this tint, which all those who are best acquainted with these matters consider they acquire, by feeding on a variety of shell fish, a kind of diet that is said to produce this effect upon them. This is said to have been particularly the case with the trout in Lochleven; a place rendered memorable in the annals of our country from the fortified island in its centre, for some time the prison of the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, and which that country's brightest genius has immortalized in the truly interesting pages of the "Abbot;" the fishes of which were so thoroughly satisfied with the food Providence had so peculiarly favoured them with, as to be insensible of the angler's lures, so that a successful day's angling in Lochleven seems to have been beyond even the most talented angler's hopes. The learned professor, however, who has treated so admirably on the fishing in the northern parts of our isle, in his elaborate treatise on the Rod, informs us that the condition and flavour of these most envied fishes has been latterly considerably deteriorated by a partial drainage of the loch, which by laying open the beds of these shell-fish has placed the finny inhabitants on short commons; but whether this dearth in choice provisions has rendered them more omniverous, he does not proceed to inform us. That "hunger will tame a lion" is a well-known proverb; possibly it may make the Lochleven trout rise at a fly?

But the redness of the flesh is by no means a certain criterion of the best flavour in the trout; I have taken many that in deepness of colour have even outvied the salmon, but which have had a strong rank taste from a weed something like fennel, which often in the hot months is found to abound in some of our rivers, whilst I have eaten others of the finest flavour without the slightest tinge of pink in their whole composition. In the Tamar, for instance, and its tributaries, where in my time I have slain my thousands, I never but once met with a trout that cut red, and that in flavour was not superior to his colourless brethren who shared the same dish with him; nor did I ever meet with a red trout in any of the Cornish rivers, though I have angled—and very successfully too—in the greater part of them. On one occasion I remember catching a remarkably fine trout in the latter county: *i. e.* that is for the locality, for the Cornish trout are universally small; a half a pound trout being there accounted a fine fish, whilst mine was little short

of two pounds. The stream I caught it in was called the Gannell; a mere rill scarcely sufficient to supply a small mill leat in the summer season; and in this leat it was that I captured the fish. It was indeed a beautiful specimen; fat as a Neapolitan prize pig; and though somewhat dark in colour, its scales were exceedingly brilliant. I had the fortune to partake of it afterwards, and never did I meet with a trout that equalled it in flavour, yet the flesh had not the slightest pink cast, but was of an opaque cream colour generally, with a deep brown cast under the skin. In fact the flesh in appearance very much resembled that of the grey mullet when in highest season, and never since have I met with a trout of so exquisite a taste. But in those rivers that breed red trouts, I do not think those that are not of that colour in those localities have arrived at perfection; and generally speaking red trouts are better fish than those that never acquire that tint. Still where the fish acquire the highest perfection they are liable to fall back in the same ratio; and I have found the Hampshire trout, which perhaps in this kingdom are not to be surpassed, even if equalled, far inferior to those in Devon and Cornwall in the early part of the season, though the fish in the latter counties have no pretensions to vie with those of the first-rate Hampshire streams, as the Avon, Test, and Itchen, during the time those rivers are in their highest perfection. Still to the angler the abundance of fish he may depend upon catching almost every month throughout the year, and the extent of ground he may fish over without let or denial throughout the greater part of Devon and Cornwall, affords a strong set off against the superior fish he may chance to catch in Hampshire's choicest streams, even if he can obtain the liberty to fish there; a boon only to be obtained by a happy few, and that at an expense of a ponderous load of obligation, which must always press heavily on the shoulders of the party obliged, to say nothing of the almost disabling log of a keeper at his heels, he is so frequently hampered with.

Now before dismissing the subject as to how the colour of the flesh of the trout bears upon the condition of the fish, I cannot forbear remarking how much I was surprised to find in that part of "Cuvier's Animal Kingdom," which treats of fishes, it should be stated generally that the flesh of trout is white, and what is not much less wonderful, a similar error should also occur in the British Naturalist. As I before stated, the colour of the flesh is guided chiefly by the food and perhaps some other causes incidental

to the locality the fish inhabits, and not to any particular property distinguishing the fish as a distinct class, or even as varieties of each other. If any one, not deeply versed in the mysteries of natural history, were to take a trout from the Test in Hampshire in the month of June, and compare it with one of the same size caught at the same time in one of the streams on the Dartmoor forest, he would without hesitation pronounce them to be fishes of a different kind ; but let him examine two fishes taken from the same places in the month of December, he would scarcely detect a difference between them, or if he did so the appearance would in all probability be in favor of the trout of Dartmoor.

There is also almost invariably a marked difference in the appearance of trout that have been taken in lakes from those caught in the streams running into or out of them ; in the latter part of which by far the greater portion of them are bred. This is strongly exhibited in the Loo Pool, near Helstone, in Cornwall ; as also in Lochleven before alluded to ; in the latter of which places it has been before remarked, the trout seem to set the angler's skill at defiance, though in the adjoining streams he may usually meet with the greatest success. But even in the same rivers trout exhibit a totally different aspect in some parts with those taken in others. Thus in honest Izaak's own words, " I am certain if I catch a trout in one meadow, he shall be white and faint, and very like to be lousy ; and as certainly if I catch a trout in the next meadow, he shall be strong and red and lusty, and much better meat : " and he adds, that he has " caught many a trout in a particular meadow, that the very shape and enamelled colour of him hath been such as hath joyed me to look on him, and I have with much pleasure concluded with Solomon, ' every thing is beautiful in his season. ' "

One great peculiarity in the trout species is the great disproportion which fishes of this kind of the same age bear to each other. This plainly appears by experiments that have been made of putting fry of the same size into a pond to watch the progress of their growth. One instance, however, which is mentioned by Daniel in his *Rural Sports*, is as much as our present limits will permit. He states that a number of small trout, six or seven inches long, were put into ponds fed by river water, which being drained off about ten months after, some of the trout were found to have attained fifteen or sixteen inches ; others not more than

eleven or twelve. The same trouts were again turned into the same ponds, which were again let dry about eight months afterwards, when some were found to have attained twenty-two inches, and to have weighed upwards of three pounds: others were sixteen inches, and some not more than twelve. This was certainly a prodigious increase in size, considering the shortness of time allowed, and shews the manifest advantage of good food and water; for in most waters the growth is far slower, though the precise time at which these fish arrive at maturity has not yet been ascertained, but which very few have the fortune to reach; their days, of by far the greater number, being not only cut short by the wiles of the angler, or even the poacher, (the latter term I apply indiscriminately to all gentle or simple who employ a net for the capture of trout,) but also by otters, pike, perch, eels, and not unfrequently by the larger of their own kind; to say nothing of water fowl, water rats, and many other enemies almost too numerous to mention, so that among so many foes, but few can possibly escape till by the course of time they would have acquired their full size.

With respect to eels being destructive to trout an intimate friend of mine, and on whose veracity I can place the firmest reliance, informed me that he was an eye witness to a singular mode of attack an eel made upon a small trout, which it attacked by darting towards it, as it lay quietly in the water, striking it forcibly with its lower jaw, which in the eel projects somewhat beyond the upper, near the eye, and with such a stunning effect that the trout immediately turned upon its back and drifted on insensibly down the stream, when my friend by means of his fishing rod hooked it ashore as a lawful waif; the eel having darted off on his approach, of course not choosing to dispute the possession of the spoil with so formidable an antagonist.

That the size and condition of trout depends in a great measure on the kind of food with which they are supplied, appears from an experiment made by Mr. Stoddart, and which he mentions in his *Art of Angling*; where trout were placed in three separate tanks, one being supplied with worms, another with minnows, and the third with flies. Those fed with worms thrived badly both in growth and condition; those with minnows grew much larger, but did not attain a high condition; whilst those that were supplied with flies increased so much both in size and condition as to weigh

twice as much as both the others put together, though the bulk of food actually swallowed by them was by no means so great.

The largest trout I have ever heard or read of is mentioned by Mr. Yarrell, in his truly interesting work on British Fishes, a work every angler should possess though he lived on bread and water for a month to save the means of purchasing it. This monster of the trout race, Mr. Yarrell mentions, was caught on the 11th of January, 1822, in a little stream not more than ten feet wide, branching from the Avon, at the back of Castle-street, Salisbury, whose weight, on being taken out of the water, amounted to 25 pounds. He also states that in March, 1835, a male trout of 15 pounds was caught in a net; and that on the 14th of April following another of 11 pounds weight was also captured in the same manner; of which latter fish, there is a well executed engraving in the second volume of Mr. Yarrell's work. The same writer also mentions that he had on record then before him of six trout taken by minnow spawning which weighed together 54 pounds, the largest of them 13 pounds. Stephen Oliver, the younger, in his *Recollections of Fly Fishing*, mentions a great trout taken in the neighbourhood of Great Driffield, in September, 1832, that measured 21 inches in length, 21 inches in girth, and weighed 17 pounds. And it also appears from the *Worcester Journal* for June, 1838, that a gentleman from Hereford, had just then killed a trout weighing 11 pounds 13 ounces, in the stomach of which were found 53 full sized minnows. This was a Triton among the minnows with a vengeance!

The way in which the great disproportion of the size of trout, in proportion to their age in the same waters, seems to be best accounted for, is the circumstance of their frequently spawning before they reach the weight of three ounces; for it can hardly be expected that the offspring of so puny a parent should, let them live as long as they may, attain any thing like the same dimensions as the progeny of such giant trouts as those we have just before alluded to; and notwithstanding the progeny of very small trout may like many of the human race far outstrip their parents in magnitude, yet it might almost as naturally be expected that a frog was capable of blowing himself out to the size of an ox, as that the offspring of a trout of two or three ounces weight should attain any thing like corresponding dimensions to those of one weighing upwards of six or seven pounds, to say

nothing of those of twelve, seventeen, and twenty five pounds ; and which would bear about the same proportion to a trout of two or three ounces as the Lilliputians did to Gulliver, or he himself to the natives of Brobdignag. In very young trout, and also in salmon fry, the tail is deeply forked, and they have nine or ten dusky marks across the sides. This has caused many inexperienced fishermen to confound salmon fry, parrs and young trouts in indiscriminate confusion, though to a practised eye they are easily distinguishable. As the trout increases in size these dusky bands disappear, and they are rarely to be met with in a trout exceeding two ounces weight ; as the fish also advances in age the central rays of the tail fin grow up, so that it by degrees not only loses its forked appearance, but at length assumes a convex form at its posterior edge, which affords one of the best criterions of the age of the fish. In some of the old males the jaws acquire the hooked appearance, like those of the male salmon. Both these peculiarities in the tail and jaws of an old trout are beautifully exhibited in an engraving of a trout in Yarrell's British Fishes.

And here it may not be improper to point out the distinguishing features between the trout and the parr, which consists in the latter having a more delicate and rounded form, a blunter nose, a smaller mouth, and the caudal fin more forked : whilst the larger size and great muscular power of the pectoral fin forms a complete distinguishing feature. The slate coloured bands are also narrower than in the young trout ; the general spotting rarely extends beneath the lateral line, and two dark spots on the gill covers are an inseparable mark by which alone it may be distinguished. There are also many other distinguishing features which might be pointed out, but those already mentioned seem quite sufficient for the present purpose.

Though the parr is so small a fish, being rarely found to exceed seven or eight inches, few have formed a topic of more puzzling speculation, till at length it has been resolved by Mr. Shaw, after making numerous experiments on the subject, that there is in reality no such fish. It being in fact nothing more or less than the young of the salmon ; the growth of which, by repeated observations he had the opportunity of making upon the subject, he found grew very slowly, and that the greater of them did not descend to the sea till the second year, but remained in the fresh water in the garb of parrs, which they changed to the

silvery attire of the salmon a short time before their final descent to the ocean.

Not intending to dispute one word of what Mr. Shaw has stated as to the salmon fry of the Scottish rivers, I cannot altogether pass over the subject without stating that in several of the rivers of the southern parts of our Island, it can be most satisfactorily proved not only that the growth of the salmon fry is remarkably rapid, but also that by far the greater part of them, descend to the sea the same season in which they are hatched, as the few straggling parrs that are found in the fresh water of those rivers during the summer months, even supposing them to be actually the young of the salmon, form a very small portion as compared with the myriads that proceed to the sea; added to which the parrs are generally found of at least twice the size the salmon fry are when the great bulk of them take their departure. In the Camel in Cornwall, for instance, the river for several miles between Dunmeer and Wadebridge, during the month of April, is literally swarming with salmon fry; in the early part of the month their bulk does not exceed that of a good sized minnow, but which is nearly quadrupled by the first week in May. They seem always to keep in shoals, each individual fish bearing the same proportion in size to the other. During this period all the boys in the neighbourhood, and some who are old enough to know better, surround the banks: a few with proper rods and tackle, but the majority with basket rods or hazle sticks, and some even with coarse thread and crooked pins: and by this means several hundreds are daily taken; though the numbers are not apparently diminished by this continued warfare, till almost simultaneously the whole district is depopulated, the entire mass having moved off to the sea. This grand migration generally takes place in the first or second week in May, being governed in a great degree by the weather, according to a well-known saying in that neighbourhood:

“The first hard rain in the month of May,
Washes all the fry away to sea.”

The word “sea,” pronounced “say” in the provincial accent of the county, making the verses rhyme together, though nothing can add to their reason, as they are true to the very letter; for after the first thorough May shower, which in this part of the world is

pretty certain to happen early in the month, not the slightest vestige of a salmon fry is to be met with, if we except a few solitary parrs that may be found scattered about here and there in the upper parts of the river, in which however they are far from numerous; for in a river so clear, and in most parts shallow, they could not remain there even if their size was less than that of a minnow, without their presence being discovered.

I have also had opportunities of seeing the rapid growth of the salmon fry in the Test in Hampshire, particularly in the large gutters in the water meadows between Nursling Mill and Moor Court. Many of these contain wide channels, into which the water is occasionally turned for the purpose of irrigating the meadows, and which are let dry again when that end is accomplished; though at the hatch hole, where the waters are admitted a deep pool usually remains. On passing one of these when trout fishing in the river hard by, I discovered a shoal of a hundred or more of these salmon fry, apparently about three or four inches long, swimming about the pool, and rising eagerly at the gnats that were playing about on the surface of the water. Passing the same spot about a fortnight after, I again looked into the pool, and saw their number had very considerably decreased, as I could not then count above a dozen, but that they had visibly increased in bulk, being more than twice as large as when I saw them last, much larger indeed than salmon fry are usually found when they first descend to the sea, and to which doubtless they would have taken their departure ere then, but for the impassable barrier that kept them back; by which means doubtless many annually perished, being exposed to herons and cormorants, the latter of whom often come up from the sea for the purpose of foraging for food in the fresh water. I afterwards mentioned this circumstance to the proprietor of the salmon fishery at Testwood, and the following season, as soon as the waters were turned out of the meadows, he went there with a net, and, to use his own expressions, caught them "almost by bushel fulls, and bundled them forth neck and crop into the river, to find their way to sea as best they might:" but for this timely aid every one of those fry must have perished. But numerous as the fry are in this river, and in the Itchen also, both of which rivers discharge themselves into the same estuary, yet few parrs are found in either of them; and all that I have seen caught there, have been at least twice as large as the usual size of salmon fry when they take their final leave for the salt water.

At the same time, without attempting to dispute the fact that the fish we call the parr is the legitimate offspring of the salmon, still it is certain that even in their parr-like form, they are distinguished into two sexes, and as such capable of propagating a species like themselves. Dr. Heysham, of Carlisle, whose authority there seems no reason to doubt, who at different times opened and examined three hundred and ninety-five of them, found one hundred and ninety-nine males, and one hundred and ninety-six females. Mr. Yarrell also mentions that in a specimen of one that was sent to him about the middle of February, the lobes of the roe were in a forward state, but he does not state the size of the eggs; and in one very large fish of the kind caught by myself with a worm in the Walden, in Devonshire on the 8th of March, 1838, and in which I chanced to discover a hard roe, the eggs were about the size of No. 2 shot, so that it is probable this fish was on the eve of spawning; which agrees with Mr. Yarrell's account of the state of the specimen examined by him, and shews that these fish shed their spawn some considerable time after both the trout and the salmon. And so now for a season I take my leave of the parr, observing by the way that he is the best eating fish the fresh water contains, and until the veil of mystery that hangs over his birth be more fully withdrawn, I shall not fail to make a meal of him whenever I can catch him.

And now having returned to our primary subject the trout, it must be observed that the age at which he lives does not appear to be satisfactorily determined, though doubtless, unless their days were prematurely cut short, they would attain a great age. Mr. Oliver mentions one that lived for upwards of twenty years in a well in Dunbarton Castle, though it never increased in size, which was about a pound, after it was first put in, owing probably to its confined dwelling; as it is a remarkable fact, that few fish when restrained to very narrow limits, increase very considerably in bulk.

Mr. Yarrell also states that in August, 1826, the Westmoreland Advertiser contained a paragraph stating, that a trout had lived fifty-three years in a well in the orchard of Mr. William Mossop, of Board Hall, near Broughton, in Furness.

As my fishing excursions have not as yet extended to the Sister kingdom, I am reluctantly compelled to pass by the famed gillaroo trout; but which Mr. Yarrell seems to think, from a specimen he

examined, differed so little from the common trout, as to induce a belief that the gillaroo was only a variety of it, as stated by Pennant.

In some of the lakes in Wales, and also in Loch Dow, in Inverness-shire, a species of deformed trout is to be met with, having a short head, and upper jaw, formed like that of a bull dog, whilst the lower jaw is considerably elongated, making an ill looking a countenance for a trout as a human face would be minus a nose, and to which it bears some remote resemblance, as may be perceived from an engraving of one of these fishes taken from Loch Dow, and which appears in the second volume of Yarrell's British Fishes.

There is also the great lake trout, which inhabits some of the larger lakes in the Northern Counties of England, as also some of the lochs in Scotland and Ireland, that is sometimes of so immense a size as to weigh upwards of fifty pounds. It is a distinct species from the common trout, and confines itself to the lakes, rarely ascending or descending into any of the streams communicating with them. It usually spawns about the month of September. Some further observations will be made upon this fish when we come to treat of lake fishing.

It appears, also, that a lake in South Wales, called Lyndive, is remarkable for a species of trout with red and black spots about the size of fourpenny pieces, and others wholly unmarked, and of a reddish colour. These fish sometimes grow to as large a size as ten pounds, but are said not to be so well tasted as the common trout. A trout was also taken in Lynallet, in Derbyshire, the sides of which were tinged with a purplish bloom, both above and below the lateral line, which was straight and marked with deep purplish spots; in other respects it seems to have resembled the common trout.

The trout has a remarkably quick sight, even for objects out of the water; and therefore the advice of honest Izaak to fish fine and far off, should always be attended to. Many a good fish having been lost by peeping over the banks, instead of adhering to his instructions, by which means you not only mar your own sport, but that of your companions also; and it is not one of the least among the annoyances you may encounter in your angling pursuits to fish in company with some clumsy bungler, who scares away a very multitude of fishes, not one of whom he has the

ability to catch, and a moderate proportion of which you had no doubt calculated on transferring to your own pannier. It also sometimes occurs, that when by the water side some underbred fellow accosts you in a manner half surly and half civil, attempting to pump out of you whether or not you have permission to fish, (which by the bye is no business of his,) and trying to hoax you out of as many flies, or any thing else you may be induced to part with, appears, quite unconscious of mischief to pace along close by the water side, looking after the fish as they scud off to a place of concealment the instant they catch a view of his person. Now when this occurs, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it is done purposely, I would recommend you at once to lay aside all ceremony, and in the plainest manner possible, desire him to keep farther off, as by approaching so near the edge, he is spoiling your sport. But here my advice ends, for should the miscreant persevere in his mischievous doings, the ulterior proceedings to be adopted must be entirely guided by circumstances, though I know nothing more likely to tempt an angler to the commission of a breach of the peace, than the mean artifice above alluded to, which is frequently practised by a class of persons, who not having the power to forbid the angler from pursuing his recreation, attempt to mar it by scaring away the fish. Some years since I was informed, and upon pretty sound authority, that a prying young knave—the son of a miller who dwelt somewhere on the banks of the Avon—got a good sound ducking in that river for gazing too intently over the sides of the stream at the trout and grayling, to the great annoyance of a person fishing there with the permission of the lawful owner of the land.

I would not, however, recommend this remedy to be always resorted to, particularly where the waters are deep, and you are uncertain whether or no the offending party can swim; though I am willing to make every allowance for the grossness of the provocation, as also to admit that anglers are no longer the quiet and patient men they were in Walton's time, but have their failings of temper in common with the rest of mankind. Professor Wilson, in the part of his most talented work on the Rod which treats on the organs of sight in fishes, observes, that fishes are endowed with no such discrimination of persons as that possessed by birds and beasts, and facetiously remarks, that they "do not know a boy from a bishop, for that he had seen the experiment tried." It would undoubtedly be

expecting too much to suppose them capable of distinguishing man from man, yet it is quite certain they know a man from a beast, and have, doubtless, the discrimination to descry their enemies, even among the brute creation; for though unapprehensive of danger from an ox, they most assuredly fly off in terror on catching but a glimpse of an otter. That they are not scared by cattle, either on the banks or in the water I have had abundant proof, as have doubtless many of my readers, by catching trout quite close to them when standing in the river, though a human being making his appearance there would have driven off every fish to his hover. But though fishes can discern objects clearly through the water, yet they see very imperfectly when out of that element, and for this reason, when you wish to land a bulky fish, you should always endeavour to keep his eyes well above water when you approach him with a landing net, which he will then allow you to place passively under his body being, in fact, blind to the whole proceeding; but if you let his eyes remain under water, as he will then catch a view of what is going on, it is very likely he will make a fresh struggle, and perhaps, just at that critical moment effect his escape.

But if trouts have a quick sight, they are equally defective in hearing; which appears from repeated experiments made by Mr. Ronalds, as by firing off a gun, or shouting within a distance of six feet off from them, and which never produced the slightest effect: from which he concludes them to be totally insensible to sounds. If this be so, the trout is defective in a sense most other fishes are well known to possess. Thus from Sir Francis Bacon's experiments, even Izaak Walton himself by his own confession, was made to crave pardon of one that he laughed at for affirming that he knew carps come to a certain place in a pond to be fed at the ringing of a bell, or the beating of a drum. Pliny even goes so far as to report that one of the emperors had particular fish ponds, and in them several fish that appeared and came when called by their particular names; and also that Antonia, the wife of Drusus, possessed a lamprey at whose gills she hung jewels or ear-rings; and that others have been so tender hearted as to have shed tears at the death of fishes they had kept and loved. And these observations seem to have a further confirmation from Martial, lib. 4, epigr. 30, who writes thus:

which has been thus rendered into English :

“ Angler, would'st thou be guiltless ? then forbear,
 For these are sacred fishes that swim here ;
 Who know their sovereign, and will lick his hand,
 Than which none's greater in the world's command ;
 Nay more, they've names, and when they called are,
 Do to their several owners' call repair.”*

Carew, also, in his survey of Cornwall, states that he brought his grey mullet together (which he kept enclosed in a pond) to be fed by making a noise with two sticks ; and it is a well-known fact that Sir Joseph Banks used to collect his fish together by ringing a bell, whilst it is the constant practice amongst the Chinese to call their gold and silver fish together, of which they breed great quantities, by means of a whistle ; and I well remember some minnows that in my boyish days I kept in a tub of water, would show evident symptoms of alarm and endeavour to find a place of concealment from any noise being made near them, though they could not possibly see the cause of it.

With respect to their sense of smelling, it seems that most fishes possess this sense very acutely : a pike, as Mr. Yarrell observes, will turn back from a stale bait when at some distance from his nose ; a fact I have often, to my no small vexation, had frequently opportunities of corroborating, and I am inclined to think that some fishes are almost as much guided by scent as by sight in pursuit of their food. I have often dropped in a baited hook behind an eel, and where it was impossible he could see it, which he has almost instantly turned round and laid hold of. I also consider the sense of taste is much more acute than is generally supposed, particularly in the trout, which is remarkably shown in worm fishing, when, if the baits are not in good order, though they may be frequently seized, yet the trout will refuse to swallow them, and yet they will bolt a well-conditioned worm most ravenously. But the sense of touch in fish is not very acute, owing, in a great measure to the thick external covering of scales, with which the greater part of them are coated, and this accounts for their allowing themselves to be taken

* Walton's Angler, page 129,

by tickling or groping under the banks : a practice carried on by idle and disorderly persons, who in a few days destroy more fish, when the waters are low, than many an angler has the fortune to take throughout the whole season. And here I cannot but express my regret, that many owners of lands either refuse to permit the sportsman to angle altogether, or otherwise care so little about preserving the fish from utter destruction, as to allow every escaped goal bird in their neighbourhood to poach with engines of every description, when all is fish that comes to net, and both great and small are thus doomed to indiscriminate slaughter ; and if country gentlemen were to take the greatest pains to find a nursery for thieving, they could have devised few more effectual plans, than permitting this system to be carried on ; for when the fish are nearly extirpated, then the game preserve—or the hen roost—makes up the deficiency. In some parts, indeed, even nets are insufficient to satisfy these destructives, who even go so far as to cast in quick lime, and other deleterious articles into the pools when the waters are in a low state, and thus poison every fish they contain. Now it most assuredly is the bounden duty of every one who has the slightest interest in angling, to use every endeavour to put a stop to such villanous practices ; and there can be little doubt that a few months exercise at the tread mill, varied by a little solitary confinement, by way of reward for these gallows worthies, who, from an utter reckless selfishness pay so little value to the property of their betters, would be attended with the most beneficial results.

It is by no means an easy task to attempt to point out the proper haunts of the trout, or the localities in which he is most likely to be caught ; yet a thorough knowledge in these matters is essential to produce a successful reward of the angler's labours ; as it will be necessary for him to resort to such parts of the stream as are best suited to the particular mode of angling then in hand ; otherwise much time and labour, and much more patience will be needlessly thrown away. Many spots admirably adapted for a fly, it would be useless to try in with a worm, or even a minnow, or any other bait whatever ; whilst many spots that are well adapted to the latter purposes, are equally unsuited to fly fishing. These matters, however, I must defer treating more fully on, till I come to discuss the different modes of angling, by which the various tribes of the finny inhabitants of the fresh water, are to be lured to destruction.

It is, indeed, from possessing a thorough knowledge of the haunts of the trout, that many a skilful angler has managed to take fish under the most unpropitious circumstances, and in those very places the less experienced would pass unnoticed by. One or two of these spots I chanced to discover in my early fishing career, and in a neighbourhood where trout were remarkably scarce, and these I contrived to turn to great advantage. One particular spot I well remember, in which I seldom failed of catching a trout of at least a pound weight; and yet I have seen many an angler, of far greater science than I had any right to boast of, pass carelessly by without attempting to try his fortune there. It was a small spot in a rippling shallow, of which there were but few in the brook, which in fact was but a small sluggish stream, running from the village of Ower, in Hampshire, through Moor Court, and merging itself in the Test somewhere about Testwood, and which contained just a sufficient quantity of pike to make the trout scarce, without being sufficiently abundant in their own proper persons to make up for the deficiency they thus occasioned. In the run just before alluded to, the course of the stream was arrested by the stump of a decayed tree that projected from the opposite bank, and formed a quick turn, in which was a small open space about a foot or two wide, all the rest being choked up with thick weeds; and into this aperture I scarcely ever cast my bait without success; it being so eligible a situation in the estimation of the trout of that neighbourhood, that the occupation was no sooner vacated by one tenant, either by capture or resignation, than another stepped into the vacant possession.—At any rate I rarely found the place untenanted.

Very frequently also, particularly in the summer months, I have taken some lusty trouts in such small streams and gutters communicating with rivers from whence they came up in pursuit of minnows, or whatever food they might chance to find there. On one occasion during the time the May fly was up strong on the river Itchen in Hampshire, I remember fishing in this river just above Bambridge, in company with a friend who was by no means a bad May fly fisher; but the trout on this occasion were remarkably sulky, not one could I succeed in raising, nor was my companion much more fortunate, as he only caught one fish, somewhat less than a pound weight, which I believe was the only rise he obtained, after toiling away for several hours. Hoping to obtain a more favor-

ing breeze for blowing out my flies on the opposite bank, I forded the river and tempted my fortune there accordingly, but with no greater success, till on stepping over a gutter that flowed from a leat of backwater into the main stream, I espied a fine trout cutting his capers amongst the minnows, who not liking my appearance forthwith made his exit to the main river, kicking up no small splutter in his progress, as there was scarcely water enough to cover his back fin. At the next gutter I crossed I saw just such another, when profiting by the hint, my empty basket probably assisting in sharpening my wits, I set to work to see whether I might not devise some plan of entrapping one or two of these freebooters so as not to have an entire blank day of it. After a little consideration I thought a worm carefully swam down the gutters might do the business. Some of these I turned up from under some clods in the meadow, and keeping my rod well up, and myself well out of sight, I swam my bait carefully down the next gutter I came to, but which it had not gone down far when my line stopped, and on raising my rod gently to tighten the line, I felt a gentle bow, as much as to say, "There I am making bold with your worm Master fisherman, and no mistake;" so not wishing to hurry him, or deprive him of a morsel he had so certainly set his mind on, I allowed him to swallow it without interruption; then, with a quick turn of the wrist I fixed the treacherous hook firmly in his throat, which I had no sooner done than tug, tug, splash, splash, accompanied by the whizzing of my reel, as the trout in alarm dashed off to the river, informed me that so far I had been successful, though the ultimate result was by no means so certain, as the fish was a powerful one, and the side of the main river I was on was somewhat incumbered with willows. At length, however, I succeeded in thoroughly tiring him out, and ultimately made him my own even without the aid of a landing net, though, if I remember right, he was a fish of at least two pounds weight. The next gutter I tried was rather wider than any I had previously met with, but still this one I could easily jump across, and in that I caught three others, none less than a pound and a half, and the largest more than two pounds weight, beginning first near the river, and leading the fish as I hooked them into it; and in the other gutters, I caught two more, besides losing one or two that broke their hold after I had struck them; all in little more than the space of an hour. Delightful work indeed during the time it lasted! How much longer this

extraordinary sport might have continued I cannot pretend to say, for it was doomed to be now interrupted by the approach of a personage whose soiled cotton velvet jacket, double damnable smalls, leathern continuations and quarter boots, added to his important air and gait, bespoke beyond doubt the poacher of former days metamorphosed into the game keeper for the time being, who informed me I was on the wrong side of the water, and that "not nobody without my lady's leave was let to fish in that ere meddey," whose title having no right to dispute, I was compelled rather unwillingly to retrace my steps and again recross the river, where I found my comrade, who though he had been fishing as assiduously as ever, since I had parted with him, had not had a single rise; nor did either of us—though we toiled away for some considerable time still in the hope the fish would feed some time of the day or other—obtain a single rise, and but for the lucky chance I accidentally stumbled upon I should have caught nothing, whereas in reality I had taken a very pretty dish of trout. I remarked when they were taken out and displayed how beautiful they appeared, and also that my companion was seized with that peculiar kind of cough I mentioned cousin Dick was subject to when the trout I first captured was mentioned. It was in fact cousin Dick himself, then grown up into manhood and the father of a family; but cousin Dick still for all that.

I mention the above anecdote, also, for the purpose of shewing what chances an angler may cast aside by adhering to obstinate prejudices. But for the chance that then threw itself in my way, I should never have dreamt of trying a worm when the May fly was up, but which, from seeing the fish in the places I did when that fly was so strong upon the water on the main river, at once shewed me the May fly was not the kind of food they were then in search of, and therefore such a bait would be very unlikely to attract them, and that to stand any chance I must use the same kind of food they had ventured so far in search of, and which I presumed to be worms as well as minnows.

And now I begin to fear my readers may have become somewhat impatient that I have so long delayed furnishing any more practical instructions, shewing how the trout is to be caught; a subject on which it is far more easy to lay down rules, than to insure their being actually carried into effect. For let the theoretical knowledge in the science of angling be what it may, practice alone can render

it available ; and just as certainly might a man expect to become an accomplished skater upon his first essay from a mere elementary knowledge of principles by which that feat is accomplished, as to angle successfully with no better materials than a scientific knowledge on the subject. Yet there are some, who without either practice in the art, or the slightest knowledge of the matter, who stand so remarkably well with themselves, that with no other qualification than a rig out in fishing tackle, which they have either purchased or borrowed for the occasion, and which ten to one is ill-adapted for their present purpose, are quite disconcerted at what they term their " infernal ill luck," and still more astonished at the success of their companions, though the latter have been anglers from their youth upwards and thoroughly acquainted with every inch of the river that may profitably be fished over. But it was in honest Izaak's time, even as now ; for the scholar, though in his general language modest and unassuming, yet when his own skill proved unavailing, he in express terms attributed his want of fortune to the better rod and tackling of his master, who very justly admonished him, that the reason of his failure was, that he had not yet acquired the skill to carry his hand and line, or how to guide it to the right place, and this must be taught him ; for that he was to remember that angling was an art, either by practice or by long observation, or by both. Such of my readers, therefore, that as yet may be but tyros in angling, I would advise not to be disconcerted with any ill success they may hitherto have met with. "*Ne cede malis sed contra audentior ito,*" is the angler's motto, and he may rest assured, if he will but persevere diligently in the pursuit, and earnestly seek for information on the subject, that in the end his labours will meet their due reward. Neither let any one be cast down with the formidable requisites to a successful day's fishing, which seem even to throw into the shade the nine knotty points essential to the successful termination of a law-suit, and which have been so frequently held out *in terrorem* to the litigious aspirant to a verdict and damages ; for though the requisites in the former instance are the more numerous of the two ; the whole of them are not indispensable, and the skill and ability of a good fisherman can generally achieve the rest. It may be right however before we proceed further, to point out what these requisites are, in order that every one may see at the very first onset the force and number of the enemy he has to contend with. They

are as follows: 1. A good rod, and adapted to the kind of angling it is for the time being to be employed upon. 2. A line possessing the same qualifications. 3. Good gut, and properly fitted up for the purpose. 4. A good reel sound in all its parts. 5. Good flies or baits, as the case may require. 6. That the waters be of the proper height and colour. 7. That they contain plenty of fish. 8. A knowledge of where to find them. 9. A skilful hand, and a quick eye. 10. A good day. 11. Good temper. 12. A constitution that will endure cold, wet, and fatigue. 13. Perseverance. And 14, good luck. With all these requisites much patience will not be required, but in proportion as these fall short, in an equal degree will an increased proportion of that most christianlike virtue become necessary.

In order, also, to become an angler, it is not sufficient to follow one branch of the art only, though nineteen anglers out of twenty are content to do so, and style themselves as practised fishermen accordingly, with about the same pretensions as many men of the present day who have attained a slight smattering of Latin and Greek set themselves down in their own imaginations among the learned in languages, esteeming the vulgar modern tongues now spoken throughout the continent as utterly beneath their notice! And as there is a fashion in all things, so one particular branch of angling has its most fastidious votaries. Casting the artificial fly being now to be the only style of fishing the exquisite professors of the science will condescend to follow, every other mode being utterly disclaimed by them, particularly that of contaminating their well-ringed fingers with any thing in the shape of bait, and even requiring the assistance of an attendant to unhook their fish, should they chance to catch any. Others equally coxcomical in their way, effect great sympathy for the sufferings of worms and frogs, and even go so far as to revile honest Izaak's memory with the charge of cruelty, because he advised his scholar when he baited with a frog, to "use him as if he loved him;" and yet many of these folks feel not the slightest scruple in impaling May flies innumerable, or perhaps out of mock humanity get a servant to perform that office for them. Now can any thing be more disgusting than this monstrous humbug, which is very like the sentimental philosopher who wept with the most pathetic and fraternal sympathy over the body of a dead Jack ass, whilst he left his aged mother to starve, and sent the natural children he was sinner

enough to beget to the workhouse : or like some modern pharisees who cry out loudly against the cruelty of horse racing, and yet compel a half starved pony, by the aid of thong and whipcord, to drag the worthless carcasses of a *pater familias* of some sixteen stone, a fat and scarce less weighty wife, and two strapping overgrown daughters, up hill and down, in a rattletrap heavy enough for a dray horse. And pray let that Simon Pure Gentleman, who so much delights the elders of the softer sex, by expatiating on the cruelty of impaling worms, lay aside that tempting piece of bread and butter he has just made his own, and persuade the rest of the company to do the like: for depend upon it the ploughshare in one single hour, tears more worms to pieces than would supply the most persevering angler throughout the whole season. But no more of this, lest I may be considered as saying or even hinting a word against fly fishing, which is certainly one of the most interesting methods that ever has, or probably ever will be, of catching trout. All that is meant to be contended for is, that fly fishing is but one branch of the art of angling, which however skillfully carried out is not alone sufficient to entitle a person to style himself even a trout fisher, or at all times even to insure him a moderate reward for his labours. In many streams in which I have taken great numbers of trout, it has been next to an impossibility to cast in an artificial fly, on account of the banks being so much incumbered with wood ; and yet in these very places with the real fly, or a bait of some kind or other, I have seldom failed in obtaining a good catch. It must also be kept in mind that in such inaccessible spots the fish being less frequently intruded on, are much bolder than in more open waters, and although occasionally hooking the bushes instead of a fish may try your patience, yet practice will afford great assistance in enabling you to avoid the one, as well as to practice the other,

In such waters also as are much whipped with an artificial fly, the larger and more wary fish become exceedingly shy at rising, and even when they do rise, it is but to examine the fly and turn back again without touching it, and yet in the very same waters they will oftentimes take a bait with avidity. I well remember a few seasons since fishing in the Meavy river in the neighbourhood of Plymouth ; the day to all appearance favourable, and the waters in prime order ; and yet notwithstanding I selected such flies as were well adapted for the time of year, some of which had been

recommended to me by persons accustomed to fish the river, my success was very indifferent, the fish I caught being remarkably small and very few in number; nor could I by any contrivance coax even a moderate sized fish to the surface. Fly after fly was tried but with no better result, nor had some persons I met by the river side any better fortune, though they seemed to know pretty well how to go about the business, and had been long in the habit of fishing the river which I myself had not. This induced me to alter my plans, and after managing to kick up a few worms from under the clods, I soon pulled out trout enough to save my credit, though I lost much time in searching for my baits. A few days afterwards having a good supply of worms I again fished the same stream, when I really did meet with good sport, though amongst all the other anglers I that day encountered by the water side, and I met many, scarcely one had more than two or three fish, and not one of a size that ought fairly to have been destroyed. I have frequently also done great execution with a minnow, where fly fishing from being much practised on the waters has rendered the fish so shy that it is almost vain to try for them by that mode of angling: and I have found it to be an almost invariable rule, that where one particular mode of angling for trout has been carried on to any great extent, a different one will generally be attended with successful results, if the angler is sufficient master of the science to know how to put it in practice. This no angler whose knowledge and skill is confined merely to one branch of the art can of course accomplish. Many, indeed, of my best day's sport have been when I have been thus thrown upon my own resources: and many a weighty load of trout have I had to bear away, when disappointed of my fly fishing on account of the turbid state of the waters, I have resorted almost as a forlorn hope to a bait, and by that means have done wonders, when had I persevered with a fly, though I toiled throughout the day, I must still have returned empty home.

And amongst anglers there appears to be an almost endless variety, from the indefatigable enthusiast in the art who has extended his labours to some of the principal rivers both at home and abroad, to the gentle cockney whose angling excursions have been limited to a Sunday expedition to Putney bridge, or an occasional excursion to the New river. To distinguish every variety with its respective properties and differences, would be a task of too great difficulty even for me to attempt; a few of the common and leading must

therefore suffice. The most distinguished of the whole family is the out and out angler, who makes and fits his own tackle, and knows how to fish in every branch of the art, and has at one time or other taken every species of fish that inhabits the fresh water, from a tittlebat to a salmon. Next comes the persevering angler, who whatever he undertakes he spares no pains to accomplish: toiling away with most persevering assiduity from day light to sun set, and whose labours generally are, as they ought to be, crowned with success. Then the patient angler, who generally uses a float, the watching of which seems to give him continued delight: he usually continues all day near the same place, still anxiously awaiting the long vainly hoped-for bite; is highly delighted at the capture of a roach or gudgeon, and returns home not wholly unsatisfied, though a glorious nibble is the only reward of his day's labour, and very probably lies awake half the night pondering over in his mind what manner of fish the nibbler might have been. The exquisite angler I have already said quite enough about; and after him may next be ranked the neat and precise angler, who keeps all his fishing tackle, which he is extremely proud of exhibiting, in the nicest possible order; but rarely if ever makes the slightest use of it himself, and yet was never guilty of lending the most trivial portion of it in the whole course of his existence. His opposite is the good natured angler, who although of too indolent a disposition to go out very often himself, or to follow up the pursuit when he does, still feels a considerable share of interest in the art, and is very willing at all times to accommodate any of his acquaintance with the loan of any portion of his tackle they may require; the consequence of which is, that when he goes fishing himself, he is obliged to content himself with a crippled rod with half the rings wanting, a knotted line very much curtailed in length since he last saw it; a reel that will not travel, an almost empty fly book, and fishing pannier minus a strap or at any rate with a disabled buckle.

Then there is the pot-hunting angler, a sort of *soi disant* professor, or ephemeral nondescript; one who only makes his appearance by the river side for a few days in the month of June, when the green drake is up strong, at which time you may recognise him armed with a long cane rod near a piece of preserved water, with one or two attendants, attentively watching the stream to detect when a trout rises, who then direct this sportsman to the

place, and endeavour to make him understand the precise spot where the rise was, if the fish does not assist him by again showing himself. The May fly is then dropped in as near to where this fish's nose is supposed to be as possible, which, if not very clumsily done, will most probably insure a rise, and very possibly the fish may be hooked, and if he does not then either break his hold, or the tackle, or harbour himself snugly in the weeds, the chances are he will be caught. But there are varieties of the pot-hunter angler—this being one of the first water—for divers others, consisting principally of the operatives, from the neighbouring towns and villages, and every poaching bumpkin for miles around, all provided with rods of some kind or other, enter upon the scene about the same time, committing sad havoc amongst the trout who now throw off all restraint upon their appetites, as heedless of the consequences as an alderman at a city feast; and in like manner both go on gormandizing till the treacherous hook secures the one, and a fit of apoplexy cuts short the career of the other.

There is also the sly old angler, who, like the solitary pike, never fishes in company, and who may be found poking stealthily about mill leats, ditches, and gutters, with a rod and tackle of rather an antediluvian appearance. He is a rare hand in fishing amongst bushes, stumps and other difficult and dangerous places for tackle, knows every hole and corner in the river, and rarely comes home with an empty basket. Contrasted with the last is the dependent angler, who fancies he can never obtain sport unless he is accompanied by one of the most poaching scamps in the neighbourhood to shew him all the likely places; the consequence of which is, that he gets warned off from all the best parts of the river, and which, but for the character of his companion, he would most probably have been allowed to have fished in unmolested. Bearing some resemblance to the latter is the fisher with the silver hook, who makes up a bad day's work by purchasing fish he has not the ability to catch, and which he attempts to pass off as the reward of his own skill. Nor can I pass by the poor hen-pecked angler, who, though rarely an ardent lover of the sport, is compelled to follow it as the surest means of escaping the eternal admonitions of a termagant wife, who thus drives him to seek that quiet by the water side it is hopeless for him to expect at home. And now candour compels me to show forth some unworthy brethren who have sadly fallen off since honest Izaak's days,

who classed all anglers as sober, honest, quiet, inoffensive men. Amongst these unworthy brethren comes first the drunken angler, who stops and drinks at every public house and beer shop both out and home; the latter of which he never reaches sober, and not unfrequently, for want of cash or credit, is compelled to leave his angling rod behind him in pawn for his reckoning. Next is the poaching angler, who, not having the statute 9 Geo. 4, c. 29 before his eyes, and the penalties thereby imposed, is never contented unless he is fishing in some preserved water, without the owner's permission, and who notwithstanding he can descry a keeper an immense way off, yet could never manage to see a notice not to trespass, though directly before his nose, in the whole course of his life. Closely allied to the last is the sneaking, skulking angler, who always endeavours to steal a head of every body, and appears almost as desirous of spoiling the sport of others, as he is to obtain it for himself. Then there is the lying angler, who recounts the most marvellous tales about his angling exploits, and of the strange sights and adventures he has met with by the water side; in all of which he is of course the hero: multiplies the fish he has caught most prodigiously both in number, weight, and dimensions; and who if you meet him after his return from fishing, is certain to tell you he has hooked, and all but caught, a trout, or some other fish of such a size as you yourself never yet saw, and probably never will. And there is also the passionate, swearing angler, who invariably leaves some of his tackle dangling on the trees and bushes by the river side; who commonly retires from his occupation with a broken rod and a considerable loss of line, very early in the day; returning homewards in no very tranquil mood, blaming his ill luck instead of his temper every inch of the way. But after all we sometimes meet with the contented angler, who is by far the best specimen of the whole race: one who can patiently endure ill fortune, should it chance to cross his path, and as thoroughly enjoy prosperity when he has the happiness to light upon it. Who, as an angler, can follow the sport in its true spirit, indulging in it as a recreation, instead of pursuing it as a business, or to use the words of Sir Henry Wotton, to follow the sport "as a rest to his mind, a cheerer of his spirits, a diverter of sadness, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a moderator of passions, and a procurer of contentment," and who, like the angler depicted by Izaak Walton, "can enjoy the blessings of Providence with a meek and cheerful heart."

Fly Fishing.

Angling for trout may be classed under the three following heads: 1. Fly fishing, including both the natural and artificial fly. 2. Minnow trolling. And 3. Bait angling: all of which I purpose treating of in the order in which I have here laid them down; commencing with fly fishing, that most elegant and interesting branch of the art of angling, in whose service so many devoted competitors are engaged; one, indeed, in which both science and skill have so wide a field for display; and where young gentlemen, ambitious of the graceful, may congratulate themselves, even in the absence of success, with the consolatory idea that though the fish have this time escaped them, they have at any rate exhibited such attitudes and postures as even the most accomplished dancing master might strive in vain to imitate. There are some, however, who style themselves fly fishers, who yet, as Colonel Hawker remarks, have about as much idea of throwing a hatchet as a fly, and seem to stand about the same chance of catching fish with the one, as cutting off their heads, or beating out their brains (the fishes, not the fishers') with the other. Still some very ungraceful fishers contrive somehow or other to pull the fish out, whilst those who handle their rods more elegantly return home empty: for a fly fisher has much more to acquire than mere skill in casting out his line, which will avail him little, unless he knows to what spot to direct his flies, as also the proper flies for his purpose.

In order to throw a fly skilfully a good rod is almost indispensable, and which, as Mr. Ronalds remarks in his talented little work on Fly Fishing, should, "like the bow of the archer, be duly proportioned to the weight and dimensions of him who wields it;" but he seems rather to overrate the ordinary strength of mankind, when he proceeds to add, that the strong or tall man may venture upon a rod fourteen or fifteen feet long; but at the same time he recommends to persons less robust, a rod of twelve feet or twelve feet and a half, and light in proportion. From my own experience, though by no means weak in my limbs, I have found a rod of the latter size quite as much as I could comfortably manage throughout an entire day's fly fishing, though my rod for minnow trolling has been usually from fifteen to sixteen, and sometimes eighteen feet

long; but the great length adds so much to the top weight from the increased leverage, that, though my trolling rod in itself is not a heavy one, yet when put together few of my angling acquaintance can keep the top from falling on the ground when held horizontally, single handed, and yet from frequent use I can manage it with one hand with the greatest ease, but a fly rod of fifteen feet long would knock me up in a very short time; nor do I believe that one man in fifty, if the rod were properly proportioned, could fish with it single handed for half an hour together, and even if he could there is little doubt but he would have done better with a lighter one. Every thing in a rod—a fly rod in particular—depends upon its symmetry, as it should play even from the very hand to the extreme point at the top. The fault of a great many fly rods is, that in order to gain length, an over-long top is added to joints too fragile to sustain the weight, which consequently become over-bent, whilst the top itself remains quite stiff, thus causing a second action which occasions the line to flip back, and the flies by that means to fall short of their destination, so that the rod so constructed is utterly unfit for the purpose. No long rod can be an useful one, unless it be stout in proportion, when it becomes so heavy as to be only adapted for casting with both hands, a most in-elegant, though assuredly the most innocent mode of whipping for trout; as to salmon fishing that is quite a different matter, but with this subject we have nothing to do now.

The best fly rod I ever possessed I bought some five years since, at Shaw's, in Fore-street, Devonport. I went into the shop for the purpose of purchasing a rod to present by way of keepsake to a friend, when I was most agreeably surprised at stumbling almost unexpectedly upon a most splendid assortment of fishing tackle of all kinds, which caused me to leave the shop with less cash in my pocket than I contemplated when I first entered it; and amongst my purchases, was the rod in question, which I purchased on my own account, in addition to that I bought for my friend, and had certainly every reason to be satisfied with my bargain, as it turned out the very best I ever threw a fly with.

A great deal in the play of a rod depends upon its fitting well at the joints. Some persons prefer a rod without ferrules, being merely fitted in splices, as is the case with most of the Irish rods. But if the rod is kept constantly tied together, it is very apt to become crooked and out of shape, and is also particularly incon-

veniently to carry to any distance, especially on horseback, or in a carriage. The persons they are best adapted for are those living near the river side, and if a place under cover can be found sufficiently high to let the rod hang perpendicularly by the top, it will do much to preserve it from warping. The best, as well as most convenient plan I know for fitting the joints of a rod, is to have ferrules for all but the joint next the top, and to fasten the two top pieces together with a splice, using stout waxed thread for the purpose which may be done in a minute or two when you arrive at the water side, and undone again even in less time when you leave off fishing. By this means you gain a better play than with a ferrule, whilst putting the rod together in this manner is attended with very little waste of time or additional trouble.

As to the number of joints much diversity of opinion prevails even amongst the most experienced fishermen. I myself have been the possessor of rods with two, three, four, and five joints, all which I deemed excellent of their kind. Sometime since I gave a preference to a four-jointed rod; but having latterly seen some excellent three-jointed rods—where the splice instead of the ferrule has been adopted for the top joints—I must now confess I have changed my opinion, and except for the convenience of carriage from place to place, in which the four-jointed rod has decidedly the advantage, I now consider that a three-jointed rod with a ferrule only at the butt and the top fitted with a splice to the middle joint, is the best style of rod that can be employed in fly fishing for trout.

The materials usually employed for constructing fly rods, are ash for the butt, hickory for the intermediate joints between that and the top, and also for the first piece of the top itself, the other pieces being of bamboo, with a short piece of fine whalebone at the extreme end. Mr. Ronalds, however, in his work on Fly Fishing, prefers lancewood to hickory for the middle joints, but I am doubtful whether he can have given the latter a fair trial, as it is in every respect superior to lancewood, being much lighter, equally elastic, and far less brittle. A hickory stock, particularly in a three-jointed rod, is also better than ash, as it is more elastic as well as stronger. The only objection is, its being more expensive. Most persons like to have a hole drilled through the bottom joint to contain a spare top; but this I have for some years dispensed with, for notwithstanding a spare top in case of accidents

is highly desirable, still this advantage is more than counter-balanced by a weak butt, a fracture of which has so frequently marred my day's sport, and, to my certain knowledge, that of many others besides. There should be a spike at the end of the butt, which is not only convenient to stick into the ground to enable you to land a fish, but also for fixing the rod firmly into the earth when you find occasion to dart it, javelin like, over a hedge, at which time you must be careful to pitch it in such a manner as may insure its taking a fast hold, otherwise it will fall flat with such force to the ground, as in all probability to occasion some serious and perhaps irreparable fracture, of which in more instances than one I can bear melancholy testimony.

A fly rod ought also to be well ringed, few rods indeed, having a sufficient number, which not only causes an unequal strain on the intermediate parts, but also, when there is much wind stirring, causes the line to bag between the rings, rendering it more difficult to throw correctly, or to hook a fish when he rises; added to which the line hanging loose from the rod is apt to get entangled in the bushes, which is exceedingly troublesome. Mr. Ronalds also suggests that the rings generally used are too small, and consequently prevent slight obstacles in the line from running freely through them, and that all the rings should be of the same size as those usually put on the stock; the utility of which he considers would amply compensate for their want of neatness in appearance. In this, however, I cannot concur. With rings so large, the line would be always bagging loosely between them, causing the very difficulties just before suggested. In fact I never knew an instance of a rod that did any execution when the rings were unusually large, and I have always found that the line, unless entangled, will run freely enough through the rings commonly used, except indeed in the case of a knotted line, and that no skilful fly fisher would ever think of using. In purchasing a rod the material of the rings should also be inspected; for the greater part of those fixed to fishing rods are execrably bad, being merely stuck together by soft solder, which may easily be detected by a leady-looking bump at the join, where, with a little use, they are pretty sure to give way. Rings that are properly made, are so contrived that the join can hardly be perceived: looking, in fact, as if they were of the same substance throughout; but rings of this kind are not always to be met with, on account of their

requiring much greater skill and trouble to fabricate them than the commoner sort, yet they are the only kind worthy of gracing an angling rod. As for those slit down in the manner of key-rings, which some writers have recommended, they are both clumsy and heavy, and the only use to which they should ever be applied, is to supply the place of a ring that may become unsoldered during the course of a day's fishing, as the common sort of rings above alluded to are very apt to do; though even in these instances a common ring, if at hand, tied on with a turn or two of coarse waxed thread, will be found to answer the purpose far better. Now all this most assuredly seems entering rather fully into minutiae; but minute matters are oft of great importance, and depend upon it, a well-ringed rod is almost as essential to an angler's success as to his comfort; for as a valuable horse may be ruined outright for the want of one nail only in his shoe, so may the enjoyment of a good day's sport be utterly frustrated by the loss of one ring only on a fly rod, particularly when it occurs on the top, as the uneven strain caused by the wide gap between the rings, may enable the first weighty fish to snap it asunder, when perhaps the loss may prove irreparable, as the greater number of persons who style themselves anglers, are as capable of repairing a fracture of this kind as they are of discovering the longitude, and yet the greater part of these sportsmen never dream of the result of inattention to these minute matters, till they suffer the inconvenience incurred in consequence of it. Whenever, indeed, I have inspected the fishing rods of my acquaintance, I have generally found that after the first shine is taken out of them, it is as rare to see one possessing a complete equipment of rings as to meet with a fading beauty who has retained her full compliment of teeth: though the deficiencies in both these instances, if only to a limited extent, frequently escape the notice of casual observers. Rods after the shine is rubbed out of them do indeed sometimes retain all their rings, and beauties on the wane, sometimes all their teeth, but these are rare occurrences, and therefore the more remarkable whenever they happen.

Now as to the colour of the rod, most who have fished much, and myself among the number, seem to think it ought to be of an uniform dark colour. Others, however, prefer something pretty and gay; and a friend of mine a short time since rejoiced not a little in being the owner of one of a bright yellow colour,

whilst the ring ties, and top splices were of the most showy red. And I have seen a rod painted sky blue! A dark rod, however, being more like the colour of the sticks the fish are often in the habit of seeing waved about by the winds on the banks, seems the colour of all others least likely to excite their suspicion; yet in purchasing a rod it must be kept in mind that a dark colour will hide defects that could easily be detected in a mere coating of light varnish, and therefore defective rods may possibly be stained of a dark colour for the express purpose of concealing their imperfections.

In order to preserve a rod it must be kept well varnished, otherwise not only will the silk soon wear off the ring ties and top splices, but the rod itself will get rotten and out of shape. It is an old Dutch proverb, that "paint and varnish cost nothing," from the preservation those articles afford to the material they cover; and I think this may be aptly applied to a fishing rod, since about two pennyworth of copal varnish, laid on with a penny camel hair pencil, will last throughout the whole season. But the most superior coating of all for a rod, is the French polish. This experiment a clerical friend of mine, extremely cunning in mechanical art, discovered a year or two since and communicated to me, and never have I met with any thing that equalled it, either for appearance or durability. It is a tedious process, however, to rub it on, particularly to those unaccustomed to the work, as was my case in the commencement, but when completed I found my labours fully requited. As the art of French polishing is now so well known, fishing tackle makers would find no difficulty in getting rods polished in this manner, the good effects of which I am certain would soon be duly appreciated.

It is by no means unfrequent for anglers to make their own rods, but the greater part of those which I have seen were utter failures, as were certainly all I ever attempted to fabricate myself, which by the bye served me perfectly right, for my assurance in attempting at originality when I wanted even the capacity for imitation; and as I always attempted to make something better than I had ever seen before, I universally arrived at something a great deal worse. My clerical friend already alluded to is an exception to the generality of rod makers, having himself turned out as complete, and certainly the highest finished rods, even to the very brass work, I ever came across; and I am happy to say I

possess a trolling rod made by him, and with which he kindly presented me, far superior to any thing of the kind I ever before called myself master of, and which I prize exceedingly. One circumstance connected with this rod, I cannot forbear mentioning, which was that my friend, (not being able to procure any rings at the out of the way place at which he was then located, and having been put off from time to time, according to the custom of trade, by promises from a shopkeeper supposed to deal in those articles, that he was in daily expectation of their arrival, but which never came, and most probably had never been ordered,) set to work and put together a complete apparatus for making them; fabricating in fact a blow-pipe, bellows and all complete, with which he made those superior rings, having the invisible join I before mentioned, and with which my rod is furnished, and they are as sound now as on the day they were first put on, notwithstanding my rod has been in pretty constant use ever since, and certainly not treated with an over degree of tenderness.

Here was an independent artist for you! Would he not have made an excellent Robinson Crusoe? But as few can pretend to the talent of my worthy friend, I consider it would generally be the wiser plan to purchase a rod outright, instead of throwing away time in the attempt to make one, which after all the pains bestowed upon it, will most likely be the dearer in the end. Still every angler ought at least to learn how to fasten on a ring, or to splice a broken joint; for this at all times and places he cannot get done for him, and from this cause he may not unfrequently be prevented from following his amusement. Many indeed are the noble days I should have lost had I been unable to put a broken rod to rights by the water side. One instance I perfectly recollect, when having the misfortune to break the joint next the top very early in the day, and having no waxed silk or twine about me, I was obliged to press the ribbon of my hat into the service, and make the best splice I could with it; and I managed the matter so well, that this day (if my memory deceives me not) turned one of the most fortunate, as far at least as catching fish was concerned, that I ever remember to have enjoyed.

After the rod, the next things to which the angler should direct his attention are his line and reel. The former should be made of horse-hair and silk mixed, or of horse-hair alone: silk lines are

too soft, and are very apt to tangle. The line should be stout at the upper end, gradually tapering towards the lower extremity, which for three or four yards should be as fine as is consistent with strength. It is a very good plan in the finer parts of the line to substitute slight silkworm gut instead of horsehair, by which means a great increase of strength may be obtained; though with proper care a very heavy trout may be subdued with a very fine line even of horse-hair only; which indeed I always use, for though not so strong as the silk and hair lines when new, yet it is much less apt to get rotten by use, or when put by in a damp state; an act of carelessness few anglers are wholly guiltless of. Too great care, indeed, cannot be taken to dry your line thoroughly when you leave off fishing, and it is always desirable, if possible, to carry it a short distance on the rod after you have knocked off before you finally wind up, in order that the line may not be wound up on the reel when in a damp state; and take care also when at home to keep it in a dry place; otherwise, the consequence of your inattention most probably will be, that the next time you go out, the first fish you hook worth catching will walk off with some yards of line, as well as gut bottom and flies to boot, leaving you to conjecture as pleasantly as you may as to his probable weight and dimensions.

Some anglers are fanciful as to the colour of their fly lines, but in colour, merely as such, I have found no difference, though some dyes certainly weaken the material. The black horse-hair lines are from the quality of the hair itself, coarser than the white, and even, independently of this, have not so neat an appearance, though I am not inclined to think the trout shun them on account of their colour. The green lines look very pretty in the fishing tackle shops, but they present a very different aspect after they have been fished with a few times, as they soon acquire a dingy faded appearance, and whether it be from any thing deleterious in the dye or what other cause I know not, but certain it is, that I have ever found them get rotten much sooner than any other lines I have fished with. As for mixed lines composed of silk and hair, the pepper and salt, being a mixture of chesnut horsehair and white silk, I have always found the best of the kind; and when entirely of horse-hair, the red, the white, and the red and white mixed, all seem to answer equally well. A line for trout fishing need not generally speaking be more than from five and twenty to thirty

yards long : indeed it is not often that you run as much as twenty yards off the reel, but yet some spare line may sometimes be necessary, particularly if a large fish dashes determinedly off, and a tree or some other impediment prevents your following him, or you should chance to hook a salmon; an event that not unfrequently occurs; in which case a line of forty yards at least would be highly desirable. As for the reel, my own unfishermanlike management of it scarcely entitles me to offer an opinion. What I recommend to every angler is to spare no pains to get a good multiplier, which I have never yet been fortunate enough to obtain, though I have possessed several reels warranted to be so. They all indeed did very well at first, or when I have only met with moderate sport, but it has rarely happened that I got amongst the big ones, and found myself obliged to grind away more rapidly than common, than the rascally rattletrap would get out of order, and plague me beyond all bounds of patience, so that at length I made a resolution never to use another, but to content myself with the more simple machinery of a single reel, but which I must confess has its inconveniences, as I am obliged when I wish to shorten my line quickly, to draw it through the rings and hold it in coils in my left hand, yet I am now so accustomed to it, that after I have thoroughly stretched my line it runs out again freely enough, and upon the whole I manage it pretty much to my satisfaction. This of course only applies to trout fishing, for with salmon a multiplying reel is indispensable. And if a reel of that kind can be obtained, and that actually will stand the racket of a continued grind, when the trout are rising in true earnest, I would recommend the owner by all means to make what use he can of it, and esteem himself in high luck into the bargain.

The gut bottom or foot line will also require some consideration. This should be at least three yards long, and if the line is stout a yard or two longer. It should be composed of links of fine round gut rather finer at the lower than the upper extremity, and even at this end it should not be too stout, as this instead of adding to the safety of that part of the tackle, not unfrequently causes its utter destruction; for when the gut bottom is stronger than the line, it naturally follows that when a heavy strain comes upon the both, the weaker line must be the first to give way, and with the last goes also the gut that is attached to it. The foot line must also be kept clean, for if allowed to get furred, it looks more than twice

its usual size when in the water. The best thing to clean gut with is a piece of India rubber, or a silk handkerchief. It should also be straightened before it is fished with, by drawing it through a piece of India rubber, or even tightly a few times through your hands. The turns should also be taken out of the line, by soaking it a minute or two in the water, and then straining it gently by hand, as until this is done no sport whatever can be expected. I recollect once being somewhat amused at a person who was fishing in my company, expressing his surprise that I should have taken several fish when he had not even obtained a rise; my surprise was how he could possibly have expected one, for his gut bottom, composed of the stoutest salmon gut, was full of turns, stiff as a cork screw, and so furred as I never saw gut before or since, whilst the waters we fished in were unusually low, and almost as clear as chrystal; and yet less than two minutes time would have done more towards straightening his tackle than an hour's fishing at that time accomplished. The best way to carry your gut bottom to the water side is to wind it round your hat, when, the turns being so large, it is fit for use the moment it is unwound.

To attempt to describe every fly that may be found on the banks of our rivers, would not only require a thorough knowledge of entomology, to which I have no pretensions, but would, even if I could accomplish the task, be of very little practical utility to my angling readers. Trouts, unlike ourselves, are not partial to rarities in the eating way, and the more common the fly the more it seems to be appreciated amongst them, so that it will be quite sufficient for me to point out some of the most common kinds, as it is at imitations of these the fish are ever found to rise at with the greatest avidity. Many rivers in which I have fished have flies peculiar to themselves, and which are highly esteemed by the inhabitants of such waters, but which are almost unknown in streams within a very short distance, and in the latter place either the natural fly or its imitations prove far less attractive. This occurs in a very remarkable manner in the river Inney, in Cornwall, whose banks during the middle and latter end of June contain swarms of the fern web, or coch a bonddu, which the trout there at those times are so eager after that more can be caught during the fern web season, with that bait than with any kind of fly whatever at any other period; and yet by the side of the Tamar, into which this stream merges itself, fern webs are rarely

seen ; nor do the Tamar trout seem to show any marked partiality for them, whilst in the Inney the fish will rise boldly at this fly, when the waters are in so low a state, and so ill adapted for fishing, that it would be useless to attempt to raise a single fish with any other bait. Some anglers, indeed, whose practice has been mostly confined to those rocky rivulets that abound with the smaller kind of trout, and in which the competition for food is so great amongst so dense a population, that from very necessity they become omniverous, seem to consider that one kind of fly will do as well as another all through the year, without the slightest reference to the season ; and, as far as such localities are concerned, they are not very wide of the mark ; but in waters that are not overstocked with trout, and where insects and food of all kinds are abundant, the success of the day will almost entirely depend on the selection of the flies, though I am still willing to admit it is not always the fly that you see on the water that will do the business best. Much will depend on the colour and state of the water, whilst many artificial flies, that resemble no living creatures whatever, are often found to do most wonderful execution, even in those rivers where the trout are very particular in their diet ; but any one who has fished much in a river where the fish are shy of rising, as the Test in Hampshire for instance, will find that if he does not adopt his flies to the season, he will stand little chance of sport ; and even when the flies are in season the choice of them must depend a great deal on the weather and height and colour of the water ; for the caprice of trout in this respect is very remarkable, they being often found to reject the flies one day, they rose at greedily but the day before, and returning to them again the day after ; and this change seems to be adopted almost by mutual consent, being in short a kind of fashion amongst fishes, which renders it vulgar to eat blue duns in one kind of weather, or March browns in another, whilst cow dung flies are pronounced quite ungentleel, except in windy weather, and grannums considered a particularly elegant diet on a mild May morning. An angling friend of mine, and a person of great practical experience, lays it down as a rule that in a full water, particularly if at all discoloured, the more glaring flies are the most attractive ; whilst the exact reverse is the case under opposite circumstances. But for all this I have ever found the fly the most successful that is most prevalent at the season, some of which may usually be discovered amongst

the bushes by the water side even when the roughness of the weather deters them from showing themselves abroad. It has indeed been laid down generally in most of the works on angling that the certain mode of discovering what fly the fish are for the time being inclined to give a preference to, is to examine the maw of the first trout you catch; but this, though undoubtedly a good plan, is not one that can always successfully be carried into effect. In the first place, as Mrs. Glasse, of gastronomic celebrity, observes, with respect to the dressing of the hare, "you must first catch your hare;" so before the trout's maw can be examined the fish itself must first be caught; and when this is accomplished it by no means follows that you may find a single fly of any sort in his stomach, or if you do it is probably so mutilated by the process of digestion, that it is next to impossible to distinguish to what species it belongs; added to which, as hungry dogs will eat dirty pudding, so a sharp appetite and little choice may compel a trout to seize on by no means a favorite morsel; one in fact he might have held in no higher esteem than the bait he was taken with, or why did he take the bait at all. I have often caught trout having frogs, mice, and lizards, as also some of the younger branches of their own family in their gullets, and yet these are not the baits any angler of experience would think of adopting; and I am inclined to think that unless the portion of food found in a fish's maw amounts to some considerable quantity, and he has a power of selecting it among other kinds, that very little advantage is to be derived from an examination of this kind.

And now with respect to what the fish are to take some of the imitations for, I confess myself somewhat puzzled; for though some are sufficiently well executed to bear a close resemblance to the original insects, yet as far as the greater part of the artificial flies are concerned, if we suppose the finny natives of the waters are to take them for the insects whose names they are distinguished by, we give them credit for being wiser in their generation than the unfledged bipeds of the earth; for most assuredly the imitations, we are informed at the fishing tackle shops, the trout are to suppose are blue duns, May flies, hawthorn, cow dung flies, or grannums, no member of the Zoological Society, or F. L. S. would ever recognize, if he were among the uninitiated in the art of angling; yet for all this the artificial lures are generally found to answer their purpose, and perhaps it may be contended, that like the figures in

heraldry they are all the better, for not being too close a copy of nature. Yet though I differ in this respect, and I consider too great pains cannot be bestowed in making the imitation as like the original as possible, I am compelled to admit that I have seen great execution done with flies, that no fish possessing any power of discrimination could have mistaken for the insects they were named after. This I recollect once occurring in a very remarkable manner when fishing in company with an angling acquaintance a few miles below Winchester, when I was surprized to find that my companion, no mean proficient in the art, had only provided himself with a few small flies, with wings of starling's feathers laying very close with the body, which was rather slender, and composed of wool of every shade of yellow: from a deep orange to a pale straw colour. These he called cow dung flies, but he might have called them any thing else with equal propriety for any resemblance they bore to that insect, or in fact any other that ever I saw; but I soon found the trout took them for something or other that they liked exceedingly, giving them a marked preference to any thing I could offer to their notice, and, though I tried several flies of high killing reputation, not a fish did I slay by their means, till at last my companion, in very compassion, furnished me with a few of the flies I had before thought so lightly of, and then I managed to come in for my share of the day's sport. I also recollect, when a boy, and long before I was an adept in trimming my own flies, on two occasions falling in with wonderful luck with flies of my own fabrication. In the first instance the fly I made was composed of the slate coloured feathers of a pigeon's tail or wing, I do not precisely remember which; some of the herls being wound round for the body, and some tied on at the head with the intention of resembling wings; and this, though as clumsy a looking affair as can be well imagined, found such favour in the eyes of the fishes, that they rose and laid hold of it in a most wonderful manner, notwithstanding the place I was fishing in was much disturbed by several other persons who were flogging the water around me; but not a fish could they raise to any purpose with any fly they used, whilst I, in the midst of them, completely filled my bag—(for in those days I carried a bag)—before I was compelled to leave off in consequence of my fly being thoroughly worn out in the service, though the fish continued to rise at it long after the body and wings were torn and mingled together

in indiscriminate confusion. On the other occasion before alluded to I tied up something intended to be mistaken for a fly, though I never thought of making it resemble any one in particular. The wings, or what was intended for them, was of the quill feather of a partridge's wing, with some herls of the dark brown feathers of the same wing clumsily tied on to look like legs, for I did not then even know how to wind on a partridge feather as a hackle. The coarse brown silk with which I had tied on the hook, by winding down a second time stood instead of a body, and the result proved that nothing could have done better; as with some half dozen or so of these flies, and in the still deeps too, I rose an immense number of unusually fine trout, though not being then much accustomed to the subduing of large fish, and very nervous where withal at my sudden acquaintance with so many of the grandees of the stream, I allowed many of the most weighty to carry off my flies, till at last my whole stock was exhausted, but still, not before I had succeeded in making some very important stoppages *in transitu*; in fact quite sufficient to fill my fishing bag, and to excite a due portion of admiration on my return home.

The chief thing to be attended to in trimming flies is to get the proper colours, which is often not so much attended to as neatness in the formation of the fly itself, though the latter ought by no means to be neglected. The fault I have generally discovered in the flies purchased at the fishing tackle shops is, that a sufficient difference is not made in the proportion of the different insects they are intended to represent; as we not unfrequently see a cow dung fly and a blue dun with bodies of the same proportions, and wings of the same form; whereas the former has, as we all know, a short thick body with flat wings like the common blue bottle, and the latter a remarkably slight body with the wings erect like those of a butterfly. Most indeed of the artificial flies sold in the shops are made by persons who not only have never fished, but who in fact have never cast their eyes on the flies they attempt to imitate, which are merely taken from artificial patterns, each copy becoming less like nature, till at last they bear about as much resemblance to the original insects, as the shipping we sometimes see in young ladies drawing books, bear to the originals they purport to represent "when sailing o'er the boundless deep." In order to make good artificial flies they should be copied from the real fly, and hence no fly fisher can be considered truly such until he can

trim his own flies ; which in fact is a highly interesting amusement to those who can devote the time to it ; added to which catching a fish with a fly of your own making considerably enhances your sport. Nor is it by any means so difficult as is imagined by the uninitiated to tie up a fly that will catch fish, if composed of the proper materials, which as before remarked is far more essential than neatness of form ; and I have seen many a fly tied up with coarse thread by a village blacksmith, of such a clumsy manufacture that no exquisite angler would condescend to use it, cause the death of more fish than all the well tied flies the latter could select from his neatly arranged pocket book. In fact the very roughness of the tie gives not unfrequently a more natural appearance by representing the insect struggling half drowned and in a wounded and helpless state, in which condition flies, not properly belonging to the water, as the cow dung or hawthorn fly, are frequently blown into it, and in that form are generally presented to the view of the fishes, who in blustering weather are commonly on the look out to profit by accidents of this kind.

As to the wings of artificial flies a great contrariety of opinion seems to exist among the most scientific in the piscatory art. Some are of opinion that wings are almost indispensable, whilst others dispense with them altogether, or rather represent them by the hackle only, which makes the fly buz like the confused appearance of the wings when the insect is in the act of flying. As far as many of the small ephemeral flies are concerned, I am inclined to adhere to the latter opinion ; for the wings of many of these are so extremely delicate, that it is impossible to make a close imitation of them with any feather preserving at the same time any thing like the form of the wings, whilst a very light blue hackle wound round a few times will give a very just imitation of the insects when in the act of flying, as we may easily perceive if we notice any of them playing about over our heads ; at which time the whisks at the end of their tails are easily distinguishable, and in imitations of ephemeral flies should never be omitted. In the larger ephemeral flies, particularly such as have dark coloured wings, as the caperer, the stone fly, and dark mackerel, the wing alone without any hackle will be sufficient, to produce the right colour and effect, whilst in others both the hackle and wing are requisite to accomplish this, as neither taken singly would do so ; and this is particularly the case with the cob fly or March brown, as it

also is, when it changes its dress and assumes the garb of the red spinner. But a great many, particularly the smaller ones, are best imitated by a hackle, though some imagine that all hackles are only adapted for imitations of the palmer worm, and really some we see are as much like them as they are to any thing else; yet depend upon it whatever the intent of their makers may be, the fish generally, if deceived at all, mistake them either for winged flies or beetles; and as a proof of their often mistaking them for the latter, I have found from experience, and which is also borne out by that of many others, that the imitation of the fern web fly, when that fly was up strong, and all others very lightly esteemed, proved much more successful when trimmed as a hackle, the body being of a dark peacock or ostrich herl, with a red hackle black at the root over all, than when trimmed with the beetle wing made from the red feather of a partridge's tail, which to a casual observer gives a much more natural representation of the fly in the point of view to which it is offered to their notice; but it must be remarked, that a fern web when struggling in the water presents a very different appearance than when on land, as in the former instance it invariably expands its wings, which being black and their outer coverings red, exhibit to the fishes just the effect produced by the hackle: an appearance very different from the wing coverings when in a state of repose, in which state the fishes can rarely see them.

I purpose now to offer a few remarks upon the proper season of the year for fly fishing, which is commonly considered to commence on the 14th of February, though according to worthy old Izaak, no man can honestly catch a trout till the middle of March; and generally speaking the quaint old angler's remark is a just one; for notwithstanding all the trout may have finished spawning by this time, still they will almost invariably before March is somewhat advanced be found in such wretched order as to be quite unfit for the table; and it is much to be regretted that a fish so excellent in his proper season, should be doomed to destruction at a time he is utterly worthless in an edible point of view, and we will put it to the every fair sportsman, whether he ever committed a large trout to his basket when regularly out of season, without feeling a certain twinge of conscience which told him that this ought not to have been done. Still, as there appears to be no general rule without an exception, I am quite ready to admit that fishing may

with perfect fairness be commenced in some streams much earlier than in others: an observation that particularly applies to most of the waters in the West of England, which fall in so rapidly as the spring advances, that in by far the greater part of them, the only chance the angler has is to take all the advantage he can of the early part of the season; as many of these, out of which I have at that time taken my dozens and scores, are so diminished by the beginning of May, and sometimes even weeks earlier, that the only times they can afterwards be fished with any prospect of success is after heavy rains; and then if the stream is raised to a sufficient height, the waters are commonly too discoloured for fly fishing; falling in again to their former low ebb before they become sufficiently clear for the purpose. In places like these it is quite fair to begin fishing as early as February, and it must also be kept in mind that in these smaller streams, though the fish seldom acquire the perfection they do in the large rivers, they usually mend in condition much earlier; added to which, in almost every one of these that is protected in a moderate degree from the destructive ravages of the poacher, the trout are so plentiful, that all an angler can achieve amongst them produces no visible diminution of their numbers, however it may serve to put them on their guard against the deceit he designs to practise upon them. For the reasons before given therefore, the generality of the smaller waters may be fished as early as the middle of February, yet the larger rivers should be free from the angler's invasion till at least a month or six weeks later. Fly fishing may be continued from this time till Michaelmas, after which it is fair to give the trouts a respite, and permit some few to remain for the next season, as well for future sport as to increase their species.

I shall next attempt to point out some of the best flies that can be used, commencing with those that come in first, and treating of the rest in their respective orders as they come in season. Few of these make their appearance till the spring is somewhat advanced, but yet some attractive ones may be used even as early as February. The earliest fly I am acquainted with is the blue water beetle, which may be fished with all the year through, but is most in request early in the spring. It is made with a dark peacock herl body trimmed very full, with a dark blue hackle over all. It should be used as a stretcher fly, and should be fished with a little under water. This fly, to be used as a stretcher, with the little black

gnat, made with an ostrich herl body and small short wings of a starling's feather, or a light grey hackle to make it buz, as a dropper, are the best flies you can employ at the commencement of the season. As the spring advances, the two former flies may be ribbed with gold or silver twist, what they are intended then to represent I cannot pretend to say, but in that form they prove very attractive, and are as sure killers in a full water as almost any flies that can be met with. These, and most other flies (due regard being had to something like a happy medium) should be larger or smaller in proportion to the clearness and fulness of the waters. A small fly being best adapted to a clear and tranquil river, with an increase of size as it approaches the contrary extreme. I have myself indeed, and so to my certain knowledge have many others, found that in a very limpid stream it was better to sacrifice a little proportionate size, making the artificial less than the natural fly, than to disturb the tranquillity of the water by splashing a too bulky copy into it.

Another good early fly is the hare's ear : so called from the body being made with the dark fur of that part of the animal. The wings should be close to the body and made with the quill feather of the woodcock. The body should be rather slight, particularly towards the tail, and somewhat full just behind the head: some of the dubbing being picked out with a needle to give it that appearance. Another way of tying this fly, and perhaps after all the best, is to make it buz by winding round hackle fashion the mottled feather of a wren's wing or tail ; and if these are not at hand, the small mottled feather which closely resembles them that is found in the woodcock's wing, used in the same manner will answer the purpose. This fly may be fished with all through the year, and is one of the best we have.

Then there is the common red palmer, in which all the anglers of the West of England put their trust ; the body of which is made of the dark peacock or black ostrich herl, with a deep red hackle over all. So great a favourite is this of a fishing friend of mine who lives on the borders of Devon and Cornwall, and who can catch as many fish as any man in that neighbourhood when he troubles himself to make the attempt, will never use any fly but this and the blue hackle, only varying the size in proportion to the colour and magnitude of the waters he fishes in ; but notwithstanding this, and good as we are ready to admit these flies to be,

there are many others that in their proper season, may be far more successfully resorted to. In a strange river however, where an angler is in utter ignorance as to the flies he should adopt, it is a very prudent plan to have either a red or a blue hackle on your line, changing your flies from time to time till you find them become more attractive.

There are also some excellent small gnats which may be used all the season through, and that are taken admirably of an evening.

The first of these is the blue gnat, a very small fly, the body being warped with pale slate coloured silk, with a slight dubbing of the roots of a squirrel's tail, with a small pale blue hackle over all. 2. Another, and a rare killer, having a slight body made with the dark herl of the peacock with the fibre stripped off, and whisks at the tail, with the same hackle as the last over all. 3. A black gnat, the body being of mole's fur of a slender form, warped with dark brown silk, with a very small black hackle over all, and in addition to this you may add wings of the quill feather of a hen blackbird. Some prefer the peawit's top for a hackle for this fly. This fly like the former should have whisks at the tail, as indeed should all gnats as well as ephemeral flies; for though gnats have not in reality any whisks growing out of their nether extremities, yet from the position in which they carry their long hind legs whilst in the act of flying they present this appearance, and it is in this point of view the fish are in the habit of seeing them sport their figures over their heads; consequently it is advisable that the imitations should be presented to the notice of the fish in the same form.

The cow dung fly may also be used as early as you please, some of them like the yellow blossom of the furze being to be met with all the year round. These flies are most successful in windy weather, when a sudden gust often blows them unexpectedly from their luxurious repasts in the meadows into the flowing stream, where they themselves form a feast for the fishes, who at those times are on the look out for flies of this kind, in seizing upon which with indiscriminate haste, they in their turn become food for mankind; and here I pause, for beyond this the subject ceases to be a pleasing one. The best way to imitate the cow dung fly is to make the body of dirty yellow wool, with a little brown sable mixed with it, a pale red hackle wound round for legs; the wings to lie flat on the back, rather shorter than the body, and

made of the quill feather of a hen blackbird. The little whirling dun comes in about the latter end of February, and continues till the latter end of April. The body should be slight, the dubbing of the bottom fur of a fox's brush that is of an ash colour, and warped with silk of the same hue, ribbed with fine straw coloured silk. It must have whisks at the tail, and a grey feather of a partridge's breast wound on hackle fashion in lieu of wings. The great dun is also a good early fly; the body being made of dun bear's hair, with a smoky dun hackle, as like in colour to a cobweb as can be procured, with wings of a starling's feather; a rare killer on a blustering day if it be not too cold. Another fly equally good is made with a body of the reddish fur of the breast of a hare ribbed with gold twist, with a light grey feather from the breast of a partridge wound on a hackle. A similar fly, only that the body is made of the roots of the fur of the squirrel's tail warped with ash coloured silk, also succeeds remarkably well, either with or without being ribbed with the gold twist.

The blue dun is a first rate fly, first making its appearance in the early part of March, and continuing till May. It is an ephemeral fly, and like others of the genus, after a few days existence it casts off its first suit and assumes a different kind of dress, but as others make their appearance and supply their places, some blue duns may generally be met with till the latter end of April. In its last state it is called the Red Spinner, from the red colour by which it is then distinguished. In either form it is freely taken. There is also another ephemeral fly bearing a close resemblance to the last both in its first and second dress, differing chiefly from it in size; the latter being of about twice the bulk. Before its metamorphosis it is called the March brown, and is the same as the cob fly so much cried up in Wales; afterwards it is called the great red spinner. A few may be seen about the middle of March, but they are not usually plentiful till the mild weather sets in, when they may be seen playing about in swarms by the water side, particularly in a warm evening, but they become scarce towards the middle of May, though some may be occasionally met with all through the summer.

All ephemeral flies should be made on Limerick hooks, as the insects can be better imitated on them than on any other; the reason of this is, that the sharp extremity of the Limerick hook, if the wings are tied far enough back, gives an admirable imitation

of the two fore feet of flies of this description, which it seems they only employ as arms, never making use of them in walking or to rest upon, but usually projecting them forward in a kind of praying attitude before their heads, which forms so distinguishing a feature in the general character of insects of this kind, that unless this effect can be produced, the imitation can never be a close one.

The best dubbing for the body of the blue dun is that pointed out by Cotton, in his Supplement to Walton's Complete Angler, which is the combings of the neck of a black grey hound, extracted by a small tooth comb, which will adhere to the teeth of the instrument, and in some black dogs, for it is not universally the case, will produce the proper ash colour. If this cannot be procured the bluest fur of the root of a squirrell's tail will answer the purpose. In either case the dubbing should be warped on slate coloured silk, and ribbed pretty closely with some of the same material of a pale straw colour: the body must be slender; the whisks should be short, and made of two herls of the tail feather of a hen pheasant. It should be hackled with a mottled feather of a golden plover, and the wings, which should be tied a little way back, should be of a starling's feather dyed of a dun colour, which may easily be accomplished by boiling the feathers about a quarter of an hour in an infusion made by steeping the outer leaves of an onion, with a piece of allum about the size of a nutmeg, in warm water, and keeping it just simmering for a few hours, after which the solution may be always kept ready for use. The wings should stand upright like those of a butterfly.

The red spinner is made of the same form as the last, only the whisks of the tail, which must be of a bold red cock's hackle, should be about twice the length. The dubbing should be of dark brown sable fur, warped on silk of the same colour, and ribbed with fine yellow silk; with a pale red hackle under the wings, the latter being of the quill feather of a partridge, and to stand upright as in the blue dun. If the fly is trimmed very small, a blue hackle may be substituted for the red, and the partridge feather wing altogether omitted.

The dun drake should have a body of light brown bear's hair, spun on and warped with light brown, and ribbed with yellow silk, having a slight greenish cast; the whisks short, of a hen pheasant's tail. The feather of a golden plover should be wound on by

way of a hackle, as in the blue dun, and the wings of the quill feather of a woodcock's wing.

The great red spinner is made of the same materials as the little red spinner, only that it should be rubbed with gold twist instead of yellow silk, and should be somewhat more than twice the size.

Several varieties of these flies may be produced, which may be tried to great advantage, by substituting hare's flax, either from the head, ear, or other parts of the body, by which means many different shades may be obtained; as also by using the silver instead of gold twist.

There is also a good ephemeral fly that comes in about the middle of March termed the blue upright. It is about the size of the great red spinner and of the same proportions; the dubbing of the body should be of mole's fur near the roots, with the deepest blue hackle you can get, and short in the fibre under the wings, which must be of the starling's feather, and which must stand nearly upright. A fly of about half the size but ribbed with silver twist is also very successful in a fine water. It may also be made buz by substituting a small blue hackle. There is also a queer looking little insect called the water cricket, that in the early part of the spring may be seen actively moving about on the surface of the water, for at this time it is without wings, though like some species of the ants it afterwards acquires them. It is a favourite article of food with the trout, who, if inclined to rise may generally be induced to do so by a good copy of this insect. To tie an artificial fly of this kind, the body must be composed of orange silk ribbed with the finest black silk you can possibly procure, with the top of a peawit wound on for legs. The insect itself is a very small one, consequently the imitation must be trimmed in proportion.

Another good little fly is the yellow dun, the body of which must be of camel's hair, warped with yellow silk with a hackle from the light grey feather of a partridge. Then there is the red and all red, a little fly but a regular killer; the body must be of dark brown sable fur inclining to a reddish cast, spun on and warped with brown silk, with a red hackle under the wings, the latter of which should stand upright, and be made of the red feathers of a partridge's tail. In the summer months a turn or two of gold twist at the extremity of the tail is considered to render it very

attractive. Some anglers of experience dispense with the wings altogether ; and I certainly have found the fish rise very well at it when trimmed as a hackle only.

There is also a very gay little fly, quite in the military style, entitled the golden spinner, but what insect it is intended to represent I have not the slightest notion, as I never saw any one of the ephemeral race cut half so dashing an appearance. The body, which must be slender, should be of bright red lamb's wool or floss silk, closely ribbed with fine gold twist, and there must be a bright red hackle under the wings, which should stand upright, and be made with the starling feather. It should also have too long red whisks at the tail. It is a fly usually trimmed of a moderate size, and is one I have taken great number of fish with, particularly in bright weather. A fly something like this is often trimmed as a hackle, excepting that the body is stouter, and of not quite so bright a red, and the hackle rather full. This, which is also styled the red palmer, is so great a favorite with many of my angling acquaintance as generally to be one of the flies on their foot line, though I myself have found the red spinner the better fly of the two. I have also heard of a great deal being done with a small palmer of a rather dull red body without any gold twist, and a dark red hackle over all. There was also a fly a friend I was fishing with late in last season tied up as almost a forlorn hope, having a body rather full, composed of faded red wool approaching to a purple hue, with a bold blue hackle over all ; and with this to my great surprise he took a great many fish, though he could get scarcely a rise at any other fly in his fly book, which was by no means ill supplied. What the fish took the fly for I have no idea, as I never saw an insect at all resembling it, so I named it the old soldier, from its general colour resembling a worn-out soldier's jacket, when no longer red.

There is also a very attractive little fly made of the dark flax of the hare's ear, warped with brown and ribbed with yellow silk, and either made to buz with a pale blue hackle, or winged with a starling's feather. This fly is generally distinguished as the sand fly in the West of England, but this it appears is incorrect ; the true sand fly being the one described by Mr. Ronalds in his work on Fly Fishing, and also alluded to by Professor Wilson in his Treatise on the Rod, both of whom give much the same directions for making it ; which is that the body should be constructed of the

sandy coloured fur of a hare's chest; (to which the learned professor adds a little orange mohair;) the wings of the sandy coloured feathers of a landrail's wing, and a ginger hackle for legs. The wings must be tied so as to lie along the back, and to fall partly over the sides. It is a great favorite both with fish and fishermen, being a very general fly, and adapted to almost every water; added to which it may be used at intervals all through the season.

Another fly that stands in high esteem is the grannom, or rather the female of the species, which is familiarly known to most practical anglers from her green matronly attire, whilst the male, possessing a less attractive appearance, is usually passed unheeded by. In order to imitate this fly the upper part of the body must be of hare's scut taken from the back, some of the coarser hairs being plucked out with a fine needle, so as to represent the legs, the lower part of the body should be of pale green silk, and the wings of the quill feather of a partridge. These must be tied on in precisely the same way as in the sand fly we have just before alluded to, and should be a little longer than the body. It may be made buz with a light blue hackle.

The green peacock fly will sometimes do great execution. The body is made with the green herl of a peacock's feather, the brighter the green the better, with two or three turns of a deep red hackle over all. The white gnat is also a good evening fly. The body should be very slender, and made with white lamb's wool, warped on with white silk, with wings of the quill feather of a starling, it may be made buz with a light blue hackle, and may, towards the evening, be fished with all the season through.

Towards the latter end of the spring a very pretty little kind of fly comes in that the fish are remarkably fond of, though from its diminutive size and delicate form it is rarely well imitated, being usually trimmed too large and clumsily. Like other ephemeral flies it assumes two garbs, being first of a slate colour all over wings and all. After casting its first coat the wings become perfectly transparent, the body under them of a deep brownish purple, and the tail white, with the slightest possible bluish cast, and a brown tip at the end, but the whisks are perfectly white. To imitate the fly in its first state the body should be as slender as can be made with two or three herls of the wing of a blue rock pigeon, the whisks at the tail short, and the fibres of a bold blue

hackle to represent the confused state of the wings in flying, which are too fine to be successfully imitated when at a state of repose; finish off with a few turns of red silk at the head, to represent that part of the insect, which in the male insect is remarkably large in proportion to its size, and crowned with a kind of cap. There is one objection to making the body of this fly of the fibres of the pigeon's feather, which is, that the teeth of the trout are apt to tear them and cause them to become unravelled, for which reason many prefer mole's fur warped on dun coloured silk; but where persons are capable of making their own flies, I would strongly recommend them to use the pigeon's herls, as they give by far a better representation of the insect.

To represent this insect in its full dress, the body must be of that kind white floss that has a bluish cast, the tail must be fastened off the end with a turn or two of the finest brown silk, the whisks a pale blue hackle. Immediately under the wings must be a turn or two of a dark peacock herl, and a small dun hackle the palest you can procure must represent the wings, the fibres below being cut off the more effectually to represent the thin gauze-like wing of the insect. These flies being remarkably small must be tied on hooks of a proportionate size, and being of a slender form require to be very neatly made.

In this respect they form a great contrast with the hawthorn fly, which should be tied up in a clumsy manner in order to represent the insect: a coarse rough looking black fly that may easily be recognized by its singular manner of twisting its stout legs together when in the act of flying, so that they all seem as one, giving the fly something the appearance of possessing two bodies. Swarms of these flies may be discovered playing about the bushes, particularly those from which they derive their name, during the months of May and June, when they are eagerly taken by the trout, especially in windy weather, at which times being frequently blown on the water the fish are then on the look out for them. In the artificial fly the body should be made of black ostrich herl, with a pale dun hackle, (the lower part being cut off) to represent the wings; the legs should be represented by half a dozen black horse hairs, of a proportionate length, tied at knot at the end and let to hang down like the legs of the insect. I formerly tried to accomplish this by leaving some portion of the end of the ostrich herl, but though this answered to some extent, it was not stiff

enough to answer the purpose completely in the way the horse-hairs do. The head and shoulders of the insect are stout, and therefore the rougher the fly is trimmed thereabouts the better; stout black silk is the best for the purpose. Some prefer wings of the starling or the blackbird; but neither make so good an imitation as a bold hackle over the back, with the under fibres cut off.

Another fly that comes in about the same time as the hawthorn fly, and continues till the middle of September, I must next notice. It is a small fly called the red tail. The body being of black ostrich herl, with a few turns of red silk inclining to orange at the tip of the tail, with a dark red hackle, with a black list at the root. It is best taken about the time the wheat comes in blossom, but still a killing fly at all times.

There are also some very good flies made with the mottled feathers of a golden plover wound on hackle fashion. One with a yellow body made of light floss silk is a very good fly, and there are several others equally so; the bodies being made with rat's fur ribbed with silver twist, with hare's flax of different shades, fur from a fox's brush, or a squirrell's tail, mole's fur, mohair, and many other materials, which, without attempting to imitate any known insect in particular, are yet found to answer their real purpose, *i. e.* that of catching fish. The like observations apply to flies tied with the grouse hackle, which is made with the reddish brown mottled feather of that bird. There are also various hackles made with the red and blue hackles, the principal of which are those with the dark peacock body, or of yellow floss silk; but every sort of body like those already enumerated may also be successfully employed.

To return again to the real flies, the carperer, or as it is often termed the alder fly, is well taken from the middle of April till the latter end of June. It may frequently be discovered pitched upon bushes, and is also particularly fond of resting on old dry timber. It is an excellent fly to dap with, and also makes a useful artificial fly, though I have rarely seen it well imitated. The best materials I am acquainted with is, first to make a slight body of the brightest orange floss silk, and over this wind a strip of the darkest India rubber you can procure, which will together produce a kind of mulberry colour. A bold black hackle may be wound on to represent the legs, which must be trimmed in form afterwards. The wings of the mottled feather of a brown hen's wing tied flat and

so as to lap over the sides, and must be fastened at the head, which should extend some little distance before the wings with very dark brown or black silk. In a blustering day it may be made buz with a bold blue hackle trimmed full and extending beyond the body.

The soldier fly, so called from the red jacket that covers his wings, is a beetle winged fly that comes in about the early part of May, and continues during the two following months. There is also another fly precisely like it that may be seen at the same time, with the only difference that its wing coverings are of a slate colour. The former fly may be imitated with a bright orange floss silk body, ribbed with the finest black or brown silk, with a blue hackle under the wings, which should be made of the red feather of a partridge's tail; the other may be imitated by substituting a starling's feather for the wing. Both these flies are in proper season in the warmer months, but I have known imitations of them very successful at the very commencement of the season.

The black fly, or cow dung beetle, is a killing fly. It is commonly imitated by a black hackle, but I have found it far more attractive when tied in the form of a beetle. To accomplish this take a few strips from the long feather of a cock's tail, which must be of a black colour, with a strong green cast, as most of those feathers on a dark coloured bird commonly are. Place these strips on the upper side of the hook, inclining to the bend, and warp your silk over them till you come down as far as you intend the body of your fly to extend: then take a few more strips, or a dark peacock herl, and wind on for a body which must be tolerably full, beginning at the tail and finishing off towards the head, having slightly secured this by a half hitch, turn the strips you fastened on first, and now hanging from the tail, over the back of the fly so as to represent the horny covering of a beetle's wing, and afterwards fasten it off securely at the head, which you need not trouble yourself much about the neatness of, as the head should be tolerably large. Then cut off the superfluous particles, and you will find you have as perfect an imitation of a beetle winged fly, as the materials of a fly maker can make. This species of insect in its natural state, is found in great abundance in cow dung, about the middle or latter end of May, and all through the month of June. It is a fly much used in dapping, but tied on as above directed, it is one of the best flies that can be employed in a clear water on a bright May day, when in fact this and the fern

web it will catch fish, at times it is vain to try with any other bait. As a proof of the success of the black fly in this respect, an angling acquaintance informed me that with one of these flies tied as above directed, and which I had given him a short time previously, he captured two dozen and a half of trout on a very bright day, at a time when the waters were remarkably low, and this after he failed in hooking a single fish with any other fly belonging to his stock; nor did any of the party who accompanied him, and who he considered, *nearly* as expert fishermen as himself, succeed in catching a single fish.

But this last mentioned fly, good as it is, must yet give place to the fern web, or coch a bonddu as the Welshmen term it, which is a pretty little miniature cock chafer, whose wings or rather horny coverings are of the same colour, and it is about three times the size of the lady cow beetle, though the former insects vary considerably in size from each other. They are seldom seen in any quantities till June, during which month in some localities they may literally be said to swarm, not only on the ferns, but also on the willows, hazles, brambles, and apple trees: the latter of which they have the character of injuring to some considerable extent. But be this as it may, they are a most killing bait for a trout, rivalling even the green and grey drake in the estimation of the fishes, particularly in those parts of the West of England, where the latter flies are not very abundant. It may be used with great success in dapping (of which hereafter) and may be easily imitated as an artificial fly. The body must be made very full, either with a very dark coloured peacock or a black ostrich herl, with a dark red hackle black at the root over all. The fibres of the hackle must be short, and the red must not prevail too much, which in fact should only show at the tips of the fibres. To represent the insect in a state of rest, some strips of the red feathers of a partridge's tail may be tied on in the same manner as just before suggested in the imitation of the black fly.

There are also two very pretty yellow flies, viz. the little yellow May fly, and yellow sally, that come in about the latter end of May, and continue through the following one, though both differ much in appearance, one having an upright wing, and the other carrying its wings quite flat on the back and close to the body, and yet the same imitations will do very well for both. The body should be of lamb's wool of as near to the colour of brimstone as can be;

warped on with silk of the same colour, with a hackle stained yellow over all, which any white hackle may be by boiling it in a solution of tumeric with a piece of alum about the size of a walnut. It should have whisks of the same colour at the tail. If you use wings, a canary's quill feather will answer the purpose. The yellow May fly when it changes its garb becomes a very homely looking brown spinner, and may be imitated by the peacock herl stripped, with a wing of a mottled feather of a partridge, the whisks at the tail should be rather long.

Another good May fly is the oak fly, which is usually found about the trunk of that tree, as also upon dry stumps of timber near the water side; it has the singular habit of always placing itself when pitched in such a position as to carry its head downwards, from which remarkable property it has obtained the name of downlooker; in addition to which it is also styled the ash fly, woodcock fly, and cannon fly. It is best adapted for windy weather, when it is apt to be blown off the trees into the water. The artificial fly should be made with a body of the brightest orange floss silk, which must be subdued to the proper tint by winding over it a strip of transparent India rubber, or a piece of transparent bladder laid over so as to imitate the ribbed appearance of the hinder parts of the insect, two or three turns of a mottled golden plover's feather should hackle form be used to represent the legs, the wings should be the mottled feather of a woodcock's wing, the palest that can be procured, and tied on with dark coloured drab silk, and tied full at the head, the wings lying flat, and if possible made to stand a little out to the right and left.

The *stone fly* is also a famous fly for May and June, being considered by some to contest with the green drake, the title of the May fly. Cotton, indeed, enumerates four that contend for this title, viz. the green drake, the stone fly, the black fly, and the little yellow May fly: all of whom he states have their champions and advocates to dispute and plead their priority; though he, at the same time, observes that he does not understand why the two last should; the first two having manifestly the advantage both in their beauty, and in the wonderful execution they do in their season, in all of which I concur; except so far as relates to the stone fly's beauty, which I consider far too like a winged earwig to claim any title to rank with the beautiful amongst created beings, whilst the little May fly may fairly dispute the palm of loveliness

and elegance with any insect to be met with by the water side, and whose active flight and sportive gambols in the air form a strong contrast with the crawling motions of the stone fly; but then as a bait for a trout give me a stone fly all the world over; and to give it no more than its due, it has a more just claim to be styled the May fly than even the green drake itself; for it comes in as soon as the month commences, and not only continues manfully all through it, but even lasts a week or two longer than the green drake, which seldom rises in any quantity till the last few days of May, and continues up strong rarely longer than a fortnight. But though the stone fly appears so early, he is rarely taken well till the middle of the month of May, for it first comes out of its shell a mere crawling insect resembling a corpulent earwig, and possessing only the rudiments of wings, during the growth of which it conceals itself under loose dry stones, and chinks and crevices in the rocks by the water side; and it is not until its wings are full grown, and it ventures upon the water, that its merits are sufficiently known to the fishes to be so duly appreciated as they deserve; yet for all this the real insect will often answer well by being allowed to sink and so be carried on by the current, and will catch fish sometime before the artificial fly is well taken on the surface.

The insect is rather a difficult one to imitate, from the circumstance of the under part of the belly being of a dirty yellow colour, whilst the rest of the body and sides are of a dark brown. The way to imitate this, is first to make the body of pale yellow wool or mohair, and then lay on a dubbing of dark hare's flax over that, leaving a space between each turn to expose the yellow under, which may afterwards be picked out beneath, as well as the dubbing on the sides expanded with a needle. The whisks must be very short and stout, and may be well supplied with two herls from the tail of a hen pheasant; the hackle for the legs, the mottled feather of a golden plover. The wings of the quill feather of a woodcock which must be tied so as to lie flat on the back and narrow and close to the sides, otherwise the insect can never be properly represented, as it is rarely seen to play on the wing, but is found either paddling with its feet on the top of the water, or resting quietly and floating down the stream.

And next we will turn our attention to the green drake, for the green, grey, and black drake are all the same insect in its different

garb; the grey being the female in her matron's attire, and the black the male in the more sober costume of advanced life. In their first clothing I have always found them most attractive, the reason of which probably is, that in their latter form the wings, from their gauze-like texture are so exceedingly tender, that they are destroyed the moment they come in contact with the water, which gives them a drowned and less tempting appearance; but as this fly last some days longer than the green drake, it is in the latter part of the May fly season the fly the trout are on the look out for, and will at that time answer the better of the two when well artificially imitated.

In general most execution is to be done by dapping with the natural May fly, as in the fine weather that generally occurs in that season of the year, an imitation so large is not so likely to deceive a wary trout in very limpid waters, and in which he has so many opportunities of comparing the copy with the original; but on a dark blustering day I have done very wonders with the artificial May fly. I have indeed, when it has been blowing a brisk gale, taken some very good trout with the artificial May fly even as early as April, and I have known many who have taken good fish in stormy weather by adopting the same plan whenever such weather occurs. But it is not altogether a fly I would recommend to be used out of its season, as it makes rather a heavy splash in dropping on the water, which is very apt to excite the suspicions of the fishes—who, like some of our neighbours, are apt to mistrust whatever it is beyond the scope of their intellect to comprehend; and here we see the fishes are in the right, as are doubtless sometimes our neighbours.

As the green drake is a large fly, greater attention will be required to form the imitations of corresponding colours and dimensions than in those of smaller size, which has not been attended to as it ought to have been in most of the specimens we may find in the fishing tackle shops, many of which are much more likely to be mistaken for a white moth than a May fly; and with such as these it is not to be wondered that the angler should invariably meet with disappointment. The sort of flies I allude to are those trimmed with a corpulant body of white wool, ribbed with a bold red hackle, with wings of a grey feather of a mallard, dyed when intended to imitate the green drake, and left of their original colour when intended for the grey. Now with the exception of

the wings the imitation is in every other respect unlike. To make the flies properly the hook must be long in the shank: the body of the green drake should be fine, and of bright straw coloured floss silk, the brilliancy of which must be subdued by winding over it a thread of the most transparent India rubber cut of about the width that marks the rings in the insect itself, which indeed can be easily managed from the stretching nature of the material. Wind on a mottled feather of a golden plover, selecting those with as much yellow in them as possible. The wings of a mallard's feather dyed of the proper colour, and the whisks at the tail of the boldest fibre of a white hackle died in the same manner as the wings. The body may be fastened at the tail with pale brown silk, which will represent the colour of that part of the insect. To make the grey drake substitute white silk for the yellow, using the India rubber in the same manner, and using undyed whisks and wings.

The best way to dye the wings is to give them first a good boil, in order to extract the grease; then put them into fresh water with some fustick and a little copperas with a piece of allum, keeping them there till the water is nearly boiled away. If the feathers are too bright add more copperas; if too dull increase the quantity of fustick. The outer skin or peeling of an onion may also be added if a greener cast be required. Some portion of the onion peel will always be an improvement. The black drake I have never attempted to imitate, as I don't consider him popular amongst the trout, though doubtless they have never heard the heavy Blue-beard charge that has been preferred against him of killing the females who have outlived his liking; a charge which, though not usually a sceptic, I do not place much reliance on. Perhaps the term "death drake," by which appellation in his latter form he is thus commonly distinguished, may be the sole cause of his ill reputation, carrying out to the letter the old adage, "give a dog a bad name and hang him."

The black fly, as described by Cotton, does not seem to represent any living insect that is met with at that, or, in fact, any other season, nor have I ever found it to do much execution in rivers when the green drake was up; the only time I have really known it successful was by dropping into a stickle just over a bank in very hot weather. The fly is made with rather a longer body than the generality of hackles and of the herl of an ostrich, not over full, ribbed with silver twist, with a black hackle over all.

At the conclusion of the May fly season, many anglers consider fly fishing at an end for that year, but this is not so; as excellent sport may be still looked forward to, not only in the earlier part of the autumn, but even in the very dog days, if some gloomy and blustering weather should chance to set in about that time. Generally speaking, however, little can be done with an artificial fly during the burning heat of a bright summer's day, even if an angler could bear of fatigue of stewing beneath the mid-day sun, though early in the morning or late in the evening a few good fish may be occasionally picked up, as indeed they may all through a cloudy day when there is sufficient breeze to crisp the waters, and these still contain a sufficient body, for at this time many of our streams are so reduced in their supplies, that the fish, aware of the diminished protection their native element then affords them, dart off and conceal themselves in any covert they can find upon the slightest alarm, which even the glimpse of an angling rod is sufficient to excite.

One of the greatest drawbacks to the chance of success in hot weather is the rapid change which so frequently occurs in the degree of atmospheric pressure upon the water, which M. Agassiz has observed affects the air within the swimming bladders of fishes, sometimes causing them to be distended to a painful degree, even to bursting; so that those fishes whom the angler sometimes supposes to be too much engrossed with their sportive gambols on the surface of the water, to pay any attention to the lures he casts most temptingly before their eyes, are in reality tumbling about in all the agonies of a desperate colic, which it must be apparent to all my readers—every one of whom I presume have at one period or other of their lives in a greater or a lesser degree experienced this painful malady—is quite sufficient to account for a loss of appetite amongst the sufferers. I myself have noticed this effect upon most fresh water fishes, particularly those of the carp tribe, whose air bladders are remarkably large; and the manner in which minnows either take or reject a bait, during the warmer months, when that means of catching them is resorted to, may not unfrequently afford the angler a fair criterion of the sport he is likely to meet with in trolling with them afterwards. The same effect is also produced by the atmosphere upon salt water fishes, even those that inhabit the deepest waters, and it not unfrequently happens that the air bladders of the common cod fish

become so inflated, that the fish is unable to sink itself below the surface, in which helpless state it may easily be captured. I myself have sometimes in very hot oppressive weather noticed large shoals of the grey gurnard swimming with their noses above water, and refusing every bait that was offered, though few fish are usually found that bite more freely. I have also remarked the same with respect to the mackerel, though in that fish the air bladder is wanting; as it is in every one of the flounder tribe, not one of whom, from a turbot to a smeadab, will ever take a bait freely when there is thunder in the air. Porpoises also who breathe through lungs after the manner of terrestrial animals, are nevertheless extremely affected by this kind of weather, coming frequently to the surface, and tumbling and rolling about in a state of evident uneasiness. And yet eels are known to bite more eagerly during a thunder storm than at any other time.

The best flies for July are the wren hackle, the orange fly, the gauze wing, and two small ephemeral flies, called the yellow dun and July dun. All these flies may also be fished with during the whole of August and the early part of September, at and after which time most of the spring flies may be again resorted to.

The wren hackle is intended to imitate a very small beetle-winged fly called the frog hopper, so called from his progressive motions being by a series of extended hops like that reptile, multitudes of which—the insect not the frogs—may be seen at this season of the year hopping with wonderful celerity from one blade of grass to another, so quickly indeed as to be scarcely visible in their transit. Of these some are found of a brown, and others of a green colour, but those in which the latter colour prevails, being very difficult to imitate, and the merits of the former equally appreciated by the fishes, that insect alone is usually attempted to be copied. To effect this the body should be made of ginger coloured fur, with the feather of a wren's wing or tail wound on for a hackle; and if a wren's feather cannot be procured, a small mottled feather from a Woodcock's wing will answer the purpose nearly as well. The real insect being so very small, the imitations must be made accordingly. The orange fly is nearly as small an insect, bearing some resemblance to the ant fly, only that the lower part of the body is of a bright orange colour with a black tip at the end. In the artificial fly the body must be made full of bright orange floss silk, inclining towards scarlet, with a turn or two of

dark brown silk at the end of the tail, which must be thick at the extremity: for in the natural fly it terminates there abruptly. A very light coloured red hackle with a black root must be wound on in the place of wings. Sometimes part of a starling's quill feather is substituted for the hackle, in which case a turn or two must be made under them with a black ostrich herl.

The gauze wing is a very beautiful little fly, and is equally remarkable for its extraordinary fetid smell, which though disagreeable to its biped admirers, may perhaps render it even more attractive to the fishes, and most assuredly it is a morsel they hold in high estimation; for if you disable one and cast him on the waters it will seldom remain long there before some fish or other will venture forth to seize hold of it. The insect derives its name from the extremely transparent texture of its wings, through which its slender pale green body is distinctly visible, which being contrasted with a little round crimson coloured head forms upon the whole a truly elegant little insect. The imitation must be made with a slight body of pale green silk with but a turn or two of the lightest blue hackle that can be procured over all. The fibre must be long, as the wings of the fly itself are much longer than the body, and some of the under fibres should be cut off. Their head must be made with a turn or two of crimson silk, and the fly must be trimmed on a limerick hook as the head cannot be made sufficiently small on a hook of the ordinary kirby form.

The two ephemeral flies already alluded to for July very much resemble the blue dun and red spinner, only they are much smaller. And by keeping this object constantly in view the same materials may be employed in making both kinds of flies so as to answer every useful purpose. The flies for July indeed take them altogether, are the smallest that are fished with during the whole year; and form a strong contrast to the green drake and other giant ephemerae of the month before, yet upon the whole they are the best as far as the angler is concerned that could be seasonable at the time they actually appear, and afford him a much better chance of success by falling lightly on the then diminished waters, than a larger imitation could possibly be made to do, and which, fortunately for him, the fish seem no longer to look for or expect; being then like an unsatisfied shotsman at the conclusion of the shooting season, who is obliged to content himself with only popping at the few snipes he may then chance to stumble on.

The grasshoppers, however, which come in about this time, afford something more like a mouthful for the trout, by whom they are certainly held in no mean estimation, and in windy weather an imitation made of green and yellow lamb's wool mixed, warped on green silk, with either a dark dun or pale red hackle will prove successful. As soon as August begins the ant-fly comes in, which is an easy fly to imitate, and a rare one for taking in the trout. The body should be made very full, with a peacock herl, with a very light dun hackle, with a fibre rather long, but not too much of it, to represent the gauze like wing of the insect, which it does much better than the starling feather, though the latter is more frequently employed for that purpose.

The blue bottle is often taken well during the months of July, August, and September, particularly in the two last weeks of August and the two first in the following month, at which times these flies, becoming weak and blind, are often cast upon the waters where they soon fall a prey to the ravenous fishes, being not only held in good repute amongst the trout, but by roach, dace, and chub also, all of whom seem to entertain an equally high opinion of their edible qualities. This fly is however chiefly useful to the angler in its natural state, which I must defer saying any more about till I come to treat on the art of dapping. When made up as an artificial fly, it is one I have rarely or never seen well copied. It has often struck me how admirably the blue feathers of a jay's wing would imitate the body if any device could be found of tying them on without altering their barred appearance, a feat that has hitherto defied my skill. The way the fly is usually made is with a body of floss silk, as near the colour of the insect's hinder part as possible, and the wings, which should be of starling's feather, should be tied flat on the back as in the real insect, and before them should be wound on a peacock herl with the fibre partially stripped off; before this you may fasten off with a turn or two of red silk by way of a head.

And now I really fear that by this time I must have exhausted the patience of my readers by describing so many flies; yet numerous as they are they form but a small portion of those that may be profitably employed; and yet upon the whole with a fly book stored with a few of each kind, a skilful angler may confidently at all times and seasons fish from one end of the kingdom to the other, without the slightest apprehension of lacking a fly, adapted to any kind of water that may chance to cross his path.

And now we will suppose ourselves by the river side attentively watching the manoeuvres of two anglers, both duly rigged out, and with an air of evident malice prepense towards the whole finny race. One is apparently but a tyro; the other undoubtedly a cunning adept in the mysteries of angling. The day is upon the whole a favorable one for their purpose: the sky slightly overcast, though sometimes the sun peeps out, but soon again to be obscured by a passing cloud: a brisk breeze ruffles the more open waters, whilst every now and then a fresh gust flits over the more sheltered deeps, for a short interval casting a dull ripple over their glassy surface, but as transiently it passes away, and they again become calm and tranquil as the face of a polished mirror. We will also suppose the river, on whose banks our fishermen are standing, contains a fair supply of lusty trouts; one of whom we may even now detect in the act of poking his greedy nose above the water to devour a little ill-fated ephemeral fly that was floating gladly down the stream, having but a moment or two before cast off its grub-like slough, emerging full of grace and beauty into its new and perfect state of existence, and preparing to wing its flight to join in the joyful gambols of its fellows in the air, no more anticipating its untimely doom, than is its fell destroyer, that a lure as like it as the skill of man can put together, beneath whose attractive form there lies the fatal hook, is at this very moment held in the bend of the left hand, between the finger and thumb of the tyro—who we will call the scholar—and is pursuant to the directions of the cunning adept—whom we will distinguish as the old angler—to be cast most temptingly before his (Mr. Trout's) eyes as soon as that dark cloud shall have obscured the glaring rays of the sun, and the fleeting breeze that already agitates the adjacent foliage shall have crisped the water sufficiently to hide the fall of the line by which he is designed to be secured. "Now's your time!" exclaims the old angler. The deceitful lure drops on the rippling waters. "What a splash you do make, but I will have you for all that," says the trout to himself as he closes his jaws upon his supposed prize, when he discovers its utter worthlessness, and at the very self-same instant feels the sharp prick of the hook as it is driven beyond the barb into his flesh, and becomes firmly fixed in his tongue. In vain does he attempt to eject the deceitful morsel from his mouth, or to free himself from the line to which it is attached. In very fury he tears and plunges, hopelessly

striving to rend the line asunder, when he suddenly catches a view of the powerful monster he has to contend with, and actuated by extreme terror he rushes on with mad impetuosity he knows not where, but finds his course impeded by a power which, though apparently yielding to his force, yet speedily exhausts his strength. He then endeavours to make for the bottom, to hide himself among the weeds and stones, but still the same power keeps him in check, and as he looks hopelessly around for succour he encounters the eye of his foe gazing intently upon him. He can read no mercy there. It is indeed fearful; far too fearful to look upon, and he strives in vain to avoid a gaze so dreadful: but there is no escaping from it—all his efforts are fruitless—the plaint rod has subdued all his energies and he is dragged passively down the current, so exhausted as to be unable to resist being drawn to the very surface of the stream, whose waters rushing rapidly through his mouth and gills produce a feeling of suffocation—a faint and sickly dizziness obscures his senses, and he is hauled powerless towards the bank. A hand is extended and roughly seizes on the line to guide him towards the fatal landing net. The dead strain causes the barbed steel to penetrate more deeply into the lacerated wound, the pain of which again awakens him to consciousness; he makes one weak effort in very desperation from the agony—he feels the flesh torn away—He is free!—and is borne safely onwards by the friendly current far, far beyond the power of the relentless monster who so lately held him captive.

“I tell you what, my fine fellow,” says the old angler, who still holds the unwetted landing net, “if you had’nt touched the line the chances are you would have caught that fish.

And so he most probably would, and as

Experience bought
Is experience taught,

or as more learned men might express the same ideas,

Experienta docet,
Them what feels it knows it;

I think we may venture to predicate from the premises that the scholar will not lay hold of his line in the same clumsy awkward manner should he chance to hook another fish. Thus it is with angling—as with many other of our worldly matters, and through much tribulation is it that an angler hoards up wisdom.

Mishaps which cause serious vexation at the time seldom fail to make a deep and lasting impression; and many there are who may trace the acquisition of much useful knowledge to this unpleasant source, which is a far better strengthener of the memory, than the more pleasant events which sometimes also fall to our lot, and rarely failing to make a lasting impression; a fact proved beyond all doubt, from the well known experiment of whipping unlucky urchins at boundaries, in order to give them a perfect recollection of the locus in quo, which has been found from experience the most efficacious means for the purpose that human ingenuity has yet devised; for though gingerbread has been given with the same intent, it is well known it leaves a far less clear and lasting impression. It is true the remembrance of the gingerbread often endures, but the recollection of the exact spot of the feast is usually a very vague one; whereas in the case of those who have undergone the flagellation, their memories are generally found to be as perfect as to place, as of the sufferings they once endured there.

“Come, my honest scholar” continues the old angler, observing the manifest chagrin of his companion, “Come, never let a little ill fortune thus cast down your spirits: there are better fish in the stream than the one you lost, some of whom I dare say you’ll become better acquainted with before the day is over; and as it is pretty clear your recent transactions hereabouts must have shown the trouts what a dangerous personage you are, we’ll just walk on and try our fortune in the next pool. Look do you see that hawthorn bush growing out from the opposite bank, and overhanging the water? Now I’ll wager a trifle that if you throw carefully under that self-same bush you’ll surely raise a fish there.”

“You may well say if I can,” replies the scholar; “for I don’t see how the matter is possible, as some of the lower branches overhang for a considerable distance and are scarcely a couple of feet above the water, so that the flies must fall upon them in the attempt; at least I’m pretty sure that would be the fate of mine.”

“There’s no must or would in the case,” rejoins the old angler, “so if you won’t venture I will.” Observe—you should not attempt to make a direct overcast throw, but must manage to whip in horizontally like that. No, not quite like that either; for I have made my cast a little too high, and my flies are unluckily lodged in the bush in consequence.”

“That little gust of wind must have deceived you I suppose,” observes the scholar.

“No, no,” replies the angler, “we must place the saddle upon the right horse, the deceiver was my own conceit which made me overrate my skill.”

“But why didn’t you flick off your flies the moment they touched the bush?” inquires the scholar.

Old Angler. Because if I had done so I should have undoubtedly fixed one or both of them firmly in some twig or other: whereas now my case is not utterly hopeless. Now mark me—should your line or flies at any time chance to drop upon a branch of a tree or any other obstacle, don’t try to catch them off suddenly, as that will most likely fix them there—but pause for a second or two, and then endeavour to draw them slowly off in this manner—see—not a fly catches by this slow and quiet process—gently—aye—all clear—and I’ve a rise the moment my flies reach the water, and a good fish too, and firmly hooked I’ll be bound from his making at once for the bottom. No, no, master trout, no grubbing against the ground; come down the stream you must. You see, scholar, this is a game fellow. Ah! master trout, that trick won’t serve your turn. Now observe, when a fish makes a quick rush as this fish just did, you must be ready to follow him up instantly, at the same time indulging him with a little line which you must make him work hard for, taking care to keep the butt of the rod well up so as to keep it in constant play, and reel up short again the first opportunity. Come, he’s beginning now to wax faint, and one turn more will subdue him. There, now he’s fairly beaten, so put the landing net quietly under him: now lift away and he’s all my own. That’s right, and thank you. Well he really is a fine fish; and well worth risking a fling with the hawthorn bush for the chance of getting hold of? eh!

Scholar. Upon my word he really is a splendid fellow! Such a small head and deep body, and such splendid spots and colour, we have no such trout in any of our rivers. But tell me, I was so anxious lest my clumsiness with the landing net might cause the loss of your fish that I can’t decide with certainty, but it did appear to me that you put your hand to your line to draw the fish towards the landing net?

Old Angler. And you consequently thought my practise didn’t correspond with my preaching; but you did not at the same time

observe that I only passed my bent forefinger over the line, still keeping the fish within the play of the rod, whilst you grasped the line itself, thereby causing a dead strain upon it; whatever you may see me or any one else do, take my honest advice and never touch your line at all whilst you believe the fish at the end of it has a kick left in him.

Scholar. But if laying hold of the line is so improper, how comes it that the plate in Cotton's Supplement to Walton—a high authority on fly fishing—represents the angler, who is playing the grayling, not only as holding the line in his hand and thus raising nearly two thirds of the fish above water, but the line itself has actually a turn or two round the butt of the fishing rod?

Old Angler. For this simple reason, that though Cotton wrote the text, Messrs. Wale and Nash it seems designed the plate, who whatever they may have understood of the science of painting, were evidently ignorant of the art of angling. Depend upon it Cotton was too apt a pupil of honest Izaak to have depicted the subject in the manner it is done there. Whenever, therefore, you hook a grayling and consider him worth the catching, don't trust to his leather mouth and dispense with your landing net, or should you be without one; tire him thoroughly out—which by the way it won't take you very long to do—and then manage to grasp him with your left hand; but never attempt to lift him out by the rod and line, as he will then by his own dead weight detach the hook, and so drop off midway between land and water. If you are really determined to part company with him, you can adopt no better plan than to take a turn or two with your line round your rod, and play the fish from the butt with your left hand, as represented in the plate to Cotton: I know of no other way, except breaking your line, more likely to insure your complete success.

Scholar. Now this is as pretty a stickle as a man would wish to throw a fly upon; I think I must at any rate get a rise here. Ah! my little fellow, I had you out there upon the ground hop a little sooner than you anticipated I imagine.

Old Angler. Yes, and I'll recommend you to let him hop back again without further loss of time, take pity pray upon his youth, he is much too young to die yet, and is no fish for an angler to make a meal upon.

Scholar. But you must take it into consideration this is the

first fish I have landed for the day, and we should call him a good sized trout in many of the streams I have angled in.

Old Angler. But we don't consider him so here; the sportsman's law in these parts being never to destroy a fish that weighs less than a pound.

Scholar. If that were the case I don't know how the anglers are to manage in some of the crack streams in the West of England, in which, though an angler may average his two or three dozen a day all through the season, he does not five times in the year amongst the whole of them meet with one that comes up to the standard weight you require here?

Old Angler. Your observations are very easily answered. In most of the streams in the West of England the trout usually run small, and their increase is so great, that an angler may conscientiously kill almost every one he catches without any apprehension of causing a scarcity thereby. But it is very different here. The fish, though they grow large, do not increase in any thing like the same ratio, and if "all was fish here that came to hook," a diminution in numbers would be very soon perceptible.

Scholar. Well, then, here he goes again if it's not too late—but it's all right I see—he has already so well recovered the use of his fins as to waddle away from our sight, and I've no doubt will soon recover his usual health and spirits.

Old Angler. And now you've spared the life of your little captive, I'll point out to you a spot where, if you cast in your flies cunningly, you are very likely to meet with a fish more worthy of your skill. You see that abrupt gravel bank on the opposite side, which you may perceive owes its steep sides to being worn away by the floods when the river is overcharged. Now in the deep water under this bank there always lurks a good sized trout or two, and at such a favorable time as this, if you'll attend to my instructions I'll insure you a rise. In the first place keep well back from the brink, and get ready line enough for a long cast. And then try if you can throw so that your stretcher fly may strike the gravel sides of the bank before it drops into the water. That's right, you've hit the mark to a nicety, and got a rise too almost before the fly touched the water.

Scholar. Ah! but he's gone again—tackle and all—why I might as well have tried to lug out a rhinoceros as such a monstrous trout as that, and he's actually walked off, not only

with my flies and gut bottom, but with a good yard or two of my line besides! Did you see what an immense fish he was?

Old Angler. Yes I saw him, and the whole proceeding too very distinctly; and I don't at all wonder at the occurrence from your striking so hard as you did then. You should have only just given a gentle twitch to fasten the hook; but you must pardon me when I say that you appeared to haul away as if you had really some serious design of pulling the fish's head off.

Scholar. No, no, not quite so bad as that either: all I tried for was to catch him on the ground hop as I did the one I caught just before.

Old Angler. Then let me tell you plainly I don't at all approve of your ground hop system; at any rate not for this river; and of this you may rest assured, that you will rarely catch a sizeable fish by that mode in these waters. I have indeed often known it practised successfully in streams which contain nothing but small fish; and many of my West country friends always fish in this way, and they tell me they catch the more by so doing; but be this as it may, the plan won't succeed here; so if you are desirous of securing a trout worth catching to-day, you must at once make up your mind to abandon the hauling out neck and crop system.

Scholar. Well I'll do my best to obey your instructions; but, to tell you the truth, the large size of the fish here, and my over anxiety to catch them, places me very much in the position of the anxious cockney, who misses the partridges in thinking of the bread sauce, just as I lose the trout here, from knowing the respectable appearance they would make at table. Added to which I scarcely know where to expect a rise exactly, which always takes me by surprize when it occurs.

Old Angler. Here is a spot then where I expect you'll stand a fair chance of a rise, so don't be at all surprised when it happens. See that large flat stone that breaks the current and causes an eddy. Now into that eddy try to drop your flies as lightly as you can. Ah! there you have him. That's right, don't be too hasty. Now lead him down the stream, and in this open pool you may play him at your leisure. Here's a nice clear place for landing him. Guide him steadily towards the bank, whilst I steal behind and clap the landing net under him—we have him now, and a whacker he is too!

Scholar. It is indeed a trout worth flogging the water a week for; even a larger one than that you caught. This has really put me in such spirits that the bare hope of securing such another will be sufficient to keep me up to my work, which I must say I wish I could execute in a more masterly manner: for if you perceive when I use an extra degree of strength in order to cast out a greater length of line, my heel fly pitches foremost fairly distancing the stretcher in a manner by no means satisfactory to their owner.

Old Angler. The fault, I am inclined to think, rests much more with your rod than yourself. Your top joint I perceive is a great deal too long and limp, which causes a second action after you have made your cast, thereby jerking the line, and causing the further extremity of it to recoil back, and the more force you employ the more likely is this to occur. Try my rod, and see if you can't throw better with it than with your own.

Scholar. Yes, I find I can throw a perfectly straight line, and should doubtless succeed admirably if your rod were not quite so heavy. But ah! there I've hooked him. A beautiful fish, see there he springs out of water—ah! there he's gone.

Old Angler. But lost through no want of skill on your part; that fish I saw was only slightly hooked from his leaping out of water and plunging about on the surface, which is generally a sign the hook has taken but a slight hold, and therefore the fish requires to be played more tenderly, as with a strong strain the hold will surely give way, as indeed it often will under such circumstances, play your fish as tenderly as you may.

But notwithstanding the scholar at once discovers the old angler's rod casts a fly with greater accuracy than his own, he soon feels it too heavy to fish with in comfort for any length of time; and so we soon afterwards find him in possession of his rod again, with which he is whipping away with great assiduity, but with as little success some couple of hundred yards or so down the stream ahead of his companion, who having now furnished his pupil with a good stock of wholesome instructions, is at length commencing business on his own account, and seriously trying his best to procure a good dish or two of trout; and notwithstanding his chances are by no means improved by the scholar's going over the ground before him, he still contrives every now and then to

bring some lusty trout to grass, that had before completely baffled the other's skill and ingenuity.

But see! the scholar has another rise at last, though he has missed hooking the fish; and then startled by what at the moment was somewhat unexpected, and over anxious at the same time to lose none in again offering the tempting lure to the fish—who had before risen short without taking his fly—he makes his next throw with so much more force than is at all necessary, that off come all the upper joints of his rod with no small splash, souse into the stream, which astonishes him a little, and the fishes a great deal more. Now a result like the last is the common consequence of neglecting to take a turn or two with a waxed thread between the wires that are fixed to the ferrules and corresponding joints of the rod for that express purpose; but which is seldom resorted to, till an occurrence like that above alluded to has occurred, at least once in the course of the day.

But the scholar soon regains his pieces, which his line is fortunately strong enough to keep from being carried off by the current, and then he adopts the precaution he ought to have adopted before and is again flogging away as busily yet as fruitlessly as ever, till at length, as he is expecting his flies to pitch with the utmost nicety in a most likely part of the stream, and where he feels confident some noble trout must lurk, he has the supreme mortification to discover his stretcher fly, or rather the hook appertaining to it, has caught fast hold of a limb of a lofty oak behind, any attempt to climb which, or to reach the fly even if he could, a single glance at once shows him to be impracticable. And then he feels the lowering consciousness that a man who goes fly fishing ought to have his eyes about him. If indeed an angler had not only the chameleonlike power of looking two ways at once, and distinctly contemplating objects independently of each other, but also a third eye placed in some convenient part of his occiput, just under his bump of philo-progenitiveness for example—he would doubtless, as an angler at any rate, derive great advantage from it. Yet as man never was formed so yet, and would cut a mighty queer figure if he was to be, we must all of us be thankful for the two eyes with which providence has blessed us, and make the best use we can of them, and when fly fishing in the neighbourhood of trees and bushes, take care to keep a good look out behind, otherwise a mishap like the scholar's will be pretty certain to occur. Yet a very annoying

thing such a mishap is let me tell you, and so the scholar seems to think too, as once—twice—thrice he tugs away, regardless of the old angler, who seeing the accident from afar, is bawling to him as loudly as he can to forbear, and is posting at the top of his speed to his assistance, when at tug the fourth—creck—snap in halves goes the bamboo top; and then the scholar wished he had used less violence, and for some moments he looks hopelessly upwards, regarding the fatal consequences of his haste and his still firmly fastened fly, with a countenance in which any thing but satisfaction is depicted. He next grasps hold of the line, trusting he may be enabled to break it clear near the unlucky fly, whilst he reaches up in vain to lay hold on some part of his gut bottom—the very last of his stock—and which indeed shows a very evident intent of soon dissolving partnership from the line—one strand of the latter is already gone, and the remaining two, now strained to their very utmost extent, bid fair soon to follow, and which in fact takes place just at the very moment the old angler comes up, between whom and the scholar the following dialogue now takes place:

Scholar. Here you may perceive my day's fishing is most provokingly brought to a close; for I've broken my rod, and have parted my line from my gut bottom, and the last I have with me, which as you may perceive I have irretrievably lost amongst the limbs of this old marplot of an oak.

Old Angler. No, no, my honest scholar, you mus'nt abandon too soon, your loss is not so irretrievable an one as you imagine. In fact I'll undertake the loss of your foot line shall be only a partial one.

Scholar. Because I chance to know where it is I suppose?

Old Angler. No, indeed, I'm not disposed to be merry at your expense, or to make a jest of your misadventure; and I confidently assure you, that although we both see your foot line flying away from the branch like a pendant with the breeze at least six feet above our heads, I shall with very little trouble or difficulty be able to recover the greater part of it, for I've all the necessary machinery close at hand.

Scholar. I must say then I'm curious to see it, for though you say it is at hand, I don't see how you are to avail yourself of it, unless like a Proteus you could transform yourself into a squirrell, or like a magician press one of those little gentlemen into your service for the occasion.

Old Angler. If you'll attend to me for a minute or two I'll shew you almost as effectual a remedy, and certainly a very simple one. Cut a small branch from a bush—a thorn, white or black, is the best—slight enough to fit into the ferrule of the joint next your top, though perhaps the better plan is to whip it to the rod itself with a piece of stout waxed thread, as I now do in little more time than it takes me to talk about it. Having this thing, which for want of some more applicable term, I call a ragged stick, fixed to the rod, I reach it upwards till I bring it to bear upon the broken line. See the affection with which thorn bushes and fishing lines ever embrace each other when they meet! So that with a little turning and contriving I find no difficulty in getting them firmly attached to each other, and having effected their union, I twist and turn away till I bring my ragged stick as near as I can to the fastened hook. Now you may perceive I have wound up tight to within a foot of it, and it is fastened too high to allow me to progress further—so now I pull steadily right down and break the gut to within a few inches of the fly. And now you see when you have disentangled your foot line from the stick, the fly and part of the link attached to it, is the utmost extent of your loss, as far as that portion of your tackle is concerned.

Scholar. Your very simple plan has indeed surprised me, for though I have fished so often, and I believe have read most of the publications on the art of angling, I was never aware of the existence of so simple a contrivance as this. If I had, I am certain it would have saved me yards and yards of gut, and a double portion of vexation into the bargain. May I ask are you the inventor of this truly useful discovery?

Old Angler. Why as to that I can hardly pretend to say: I certainly made the discovery without any previous hint being given me; but at the same time it is very probable that Dame Necessity, who beat the invention into my head, may have suggested the same simple contrivance to many others beside. And now the next thing to be considered about is the repair of your fractured top.

Scholar. That I believe I have sufficient skill after a manner to set to rights myself, and as it is broken off in the middle of one of the joins the silk of the splice can perform the same office again.

Old Angler. Yes, it certainly will, but as this splice is only intended to be temporary, and the old silk is very fine and some-

what the weaker for wear, it would be your better plan to use it double or even treble, as well as to give it a rub of shoemaker's wax, with which I perceive like a good fisherman you are provided with. And as the sun has come out too bright to expect much sport just now, I will sit down beside you, and offer a little advice on one or two points on which it seems you require some instruction. In the first place, I observed that you approached far too near the banks, and that you devoted more attention to fishing the opposite side than your own, generally trying that part of the river first; and in approaching near enough to the brink to enable you to do this you exposed yourself to the view of every fish on your own side. As a general rule I have found it the better plan to fish the near side first, but which I invariably depart from when the opposite side is the more likely one to succeed in. I also remarked that you cast your flies too far down the stream below you, and drew them across towards your own side: the effect of which must be, that every fish that approached your flies came directly towards yourself at the same time, and consequently detected your presence, which in nine times out of ten would cause him to turn tail without touching your fly at all.

Scholar. I admit the truth of your remark, having so often to-day had ocular demonstration of it; and yet I have known many who esteem themselves no mean proficient in the art, who always fish in precisely the same manner I have done.

Old Angler. And so have I too, but the method is an equally bad one notwithstanding. I recollect on one occasion angling in company with one who called himself a good fisherman, and who threw a fly in the mode I have just before condemned. The day, if I remember right, was not a very favorable one for our purpose, the sky being almost cloudless, with a raw March North Wester blowing, whilst the stream we fished in was very clear and narrow, yet by keeping well back from the water, and throwing always up stream, I contrived to pull out a few trout; but on coming up with my companion, who had been fishing ahead of me the whole time, I found that he had caught nothing! As it not unfrequently occurs in such cases, he laid the whole blame on his ill luck and the weather, and the river, and the fish too, for not being more plentiful there; and then I ventured to hint to him, as delicately as possible, the real cause of his failure; but this he by no means took, as it was intended, expressing at the same time an opinion that his skill

in piscatory matters was least rate equal to my own; which I never for one moment attempted to dispute, knowing well and perfectly agreeing with Solomon, "there is more hope of a fool, than of a man wise in his own conceit;" so for the remainder of the day I allowed him to fish on as he thought proper. The result was just as I anticipated—he caught nothing—I nearly filled my basket. Another thing I am going to observe, which is, that the instant your fly drops, you begin to draw the line. Now it is generally better to pause a second or two before putting your flies in motion, particularly when you cast them on a smooth water. I have often indeed taken fish on a calm day by allowing my flies to be carried onwards by the stream, in which state they appear to the fish in a wounded and disabled condition, and in that way I have taken at least a brace to-day, and that from a part of the river where if I had played my flies on the calm surface, the disturbance my line would have thereby caused, must have put every fish upon his guard. Sometimes also, in very bright weather, I have taken trout by dropping in lightly over the near bank; and when the waters are very low, I have found it an advantage to enlist a gentle into my service: the hook of the fly being run through the narrow part of its body, as I also have a cadis by running the hook through the head; and I have seen a good imitation of the gentle made with a piece of a white kid glove of a proportionate size, with which some of my Devonshire friends tell me they achieve a great deal; but it is a plan I must honestly confess I have never myself put in practice. But now as you have repaired damages I'll detain you no longer. So suppose we again resume our labours, in order that I may see how far you are inclined to follow out my precepts by your practice.

Scholar. Do see how very nicely my rod plays. I have reason indeed to rejoice at my late accident, to which it owes the correction of the former fault; in fact no rod can now throw better; so that what I regarded as a piece of ill luck, has in reality turned out a most important benefit.

Old Angler. As do doubtless most of the events we are too apt to regard in the light of our worldly misfortunes, which would assuredly appear far otherwise in our eyes, were it not that our vision is too limited to enable us to look beyond the temporary inconvenience they occasion us, or to descry the views that have directed an Almighty hand, in very love and mercy, and for our temporal as well as eternal welfare, thus to inflict them upon us.

It is now high time to offer a few observations on angling with the natural fly, as well as to set forth such insects as are best adapted for the purpose. Of these the green drake ranks preeminently first throughout the greater part of the kingdom, being so tempting a bait, that many anglers consider fishing with this fly in its natural state as little better than a system of poaching, by which persons who at other times would toil all day and catch nothing, manage at this season to take the best trout in the water ; and it is therefore contended that if those proprietors who liberally permit their waters to be fished, were to close them during the May fly season, no real sportsman would be disappointed, and half the fish would thereby be saved. This I consider would bear rather too hard on the, "toil all day and catch nothing anglers," whose labours surely ought now and then to be crowned with success : and though I am ready to admit to the full the annoyance of encountering an angler at every whip and turn of the river, and finding nearly every inch of the stream has been previously fished by half the bumpkins of the neighbourhood, yet for all this, so boldly do the trout feed at this time, that an angler who is blessed with skill, may generally reckon upon coming in for his fair portion of the spoil, and need not make himself unhappy with the supposition that fish enough will not after all be left for his future diversion. As far indeed as my limited experience has gone, I have reason to believe that the nets of the poacher,—and that too frequently by the connivance of the water keepers where gentlemen try strictly to preserve their fish,—destroy more in the course of a single night than all the May fly fishers during the whole season. I was once very much amused by the account an intimate friend gave me of a netting affair of which he was an eye witness, that took place in some preserved waters of an old gentleman he well knew who was mighty tenacious over his fish ; like a thorough dog in the manger, neither fishing there himself, or allowing any one else to do so. Now it so happened that for some purpose or other the old fellow was desirous to obtain a handsome dish of trout, so in order to make sure of a catch he desired his keeper to procure one of the most poaching rascals of the neighbourhood to attend there with his nets, and though the joint labours of the poacher and keeper were not rewarded with the success that might have been expected, yet it was really wonderful to see how well they worked together, and how every stump and obstacle was to be

avoided, of which they spoke as familiarly about as if they had been in the daily habit of fishing the same water together. My informant fancied they had ! But the old gentleman told him that to his certain knowledge no net had been cast in those waters for the last thirty years !

In wide waters that are not incumbered with wood, a long rod, made all except the top joint of hollow cane, is generally employed, and with it a light silk line, which is allowed to be floated out on the breeze, and guided by the angler towards the desired spot. To this a gut foot line must be attached having a fine double swivel within a couple of links or so from the hook, in order to prevent the line from twisting, a very light air of wind being sufficient to cause the flies at the end of the line to spin round with great rapidity. Some degree of skill is requisite to guide the fly to the exact spot as well as science to know where that exact spot is. But in this respect the rising of the fish at the flies which float in great numbers down the stream affords very considerable assistance, and if the bait is dropped in, or swam down carefully near the same place—the angler being careful at the same to keep himself well out of sight,—it will usually be taken. The proceeding should be so managed that nothing but the flies touch the water, so that they may float dry winged on the surface ; for if the line is allowed to fall on the stream, its weight, or the action of the water upon it, will draw the flies under, and soon give them a drowned and forbidding appearance. When the fish takes the fly, lower the point of the rod slightly, so as to allow him to turn, and as he draws the line tight, strike right up the contrary way to the course the fish pursues, as by so doing you will be less likely to pull the hook out of his mouth. Be careful also, particularly with a cane rod, not to strike too hard ; a fact that generally terminates the existence of most May fly rods ; especially such as are very neatly rasped off at the joints. When hooked, play your fish carefully if he's big enough to be worth the trouble, and never let him have a slack line, always keeping him within as narrow a compass as you can, in order that his fate may not operate as a warning to his fellows. Should you miss the rise without touching the fish, it will be the better plan to leave him for a short time—a quarter of an hour for instance—and try your fortune elsewhere in the interval, and then return to him again ; when, if not pricked with the hook on his previous rise, he will most likely take again, which in all prob-

ability he would not have done had you tried for him immediately after your first essay and failure. This I consider one of the most important things to be attended to where the angler is desirous of filling his basket; for though a trout will often rise again immediately after you have missed hooking him; yet if he does so it is generally with great caution, so that the chances are much against your capturing him; added to which he is much more likely to suspect there is something wrong in the whole proceeding, and to baffle your skill and ingenuity for the remainder of the day.

The Limerick hooks being lighter than any others in proportion to their size, are on that account the best adapted to this kind of fishing, where it is so desirable that the flies should float lightly on the top of the water. These I have always baited according to the instructions laid down in Cotton's supplement to the complete angler, which I now offer to my readers in Cotton's own words. "We first take one, for we commonly fish with two of them at a time, and putting the point of the hook into the thickest part of the body under one of his wings, run it directly through and out at the other side, leaving him spitted cross upon the hook, and then taking the other, put him on after the same manner, but with his head the contrary way; in which posture" says Cotton "they will live on the hook and play with their wings for a quarter of an hour or more; but you must have a care to keep their wings dry, both from the water, and also that your fingers be not wet when you take them out to bait them, for then your bait is spoiled."

In some rivers the cross line fishing is practiced, though most sportsmen consider this in the light of poaching, and declare it ought to be put a stop to by law. It is carried on by means of a line stretched between a couple of rods, one on each side of the river, and from this cross line a gut foot line is suspended, which can easily be guided to within an inch of any desired spot. It is generally agreed before hand which is to strike on the rise, as if both were to do so, most likely the tackle would give way in consequence. When the fish is hooked one party plays him, the other slackening out sufficient line for the purpose, as also to enable the trout to be drawn to land. It is certainly a kind of fishing I cannot say a great deal about, having never tried it but once, when, though tolerably successful, it afforded me very little interest as compared with fishing in a more fair and legitimate manner, so that I have since felt no inclination to resume the attempt;

added to which, in almost every one of the streams I have chanced to fish in during the time of the May fly, it was considered un-sportsman-like to practice the cross lines.

In rivers that are much incumbered with wood, particularly the narrower streams, a stout angling rod of fifteen or sixteen feet, with a tolerably strong line, somewhat stouter than that commonly employed for fly fishing, should be used. In places of this description splendid sport may occasionally be met with in dapping, which is carried on in a different manner than in the more open waters; the baits being there flipped in under the bushes, or dropped through them. The former is effected by holding the rod in nearly an horizontal position, the extremity of the top being pointed towards the intended object, and the line, which is usually fished with rather shorter than the rod, is held just above the bait between the finger and thumb of the left hand, tight enough to bend the top. The hold of the line is then suddenly relinquished and the bait is thus flipped in the intended direction. With some practice, and a due portion of patience, a line may be thus cast with a great degree of accuracy, though like every thing that requires skill, the ability to do this is at first somewhat difficult to attain. Nor must a man fancy himself perfect in this branch of the art, let him flip in as neatly as he may; for he must be enabled as well to drop in through very small interstices in the bushes, which indeed sometimes proves a more successful plan than flipping under them; as by the former mode it is easier for the angler to keep himself concealed from the fishes sight. There is much indeed to be done in this kind of fishing by dropping close in under the near bank, and there are also many cunning little spots perceptible only to the eyes of the scientific fisherman, where a lusty trout is sure to be lurking on the watch for prey, which a mere novice in the art would pass unheeded by, and consequently without venturing his fortune there. Where the water is still and open, particularly in extensive pools, it is often advisable to agitate the flies gently on the surface, so as to represent the struggles of the insects, thus rendering them visible to the trout at a considerable distance. This may easily be effected by gently shaking the line: some say rapping, the butt is the better plan, but though I have tried the experiment, I cannot say I derived any advantage from it, or that it was any improvement to the simple shaking of the rod, which produced the same effect with far less trouble.

Dapping amongst the bushes, it must be admitted, though a most killing mode of angling, is one that levies a heavy tax on the angler's patience, as in spite of all your skill and precaution, either the hook or somepart of the line will get entangled in the leaves or twigs of the bushes, as also in rushes or some other of the numberless impediments an angler so frequently encounters by the water side. By this means your baits are often mangled and destroyed, and you have the trouble of rebaiting; and sometimes your troubles don't even end there, as it occasionally happens you lose your hook in tugging away too freely in the hopes of clearing it, and sometimes you lose some portion of your line as well; and almost times out of number are you, in order to prevent these consequences, compelled to drop your rod and advance to clear your line, with the certainty that by so doing you scare away every fish in the pool. Before now indeed I have broken my line purposely when caught in this manner, rather than spoil my chance of a pool in which I bargained I should get hold of a good fish; and thus rigging out my tackle afresh, have found my labours rewarded according to my expectations; when regaining the remainder of my broken gear, I have continued my pursuit with far greater satisfaction than if such a misadventure had never occurred.

The rod for this kind of fishing should be much stiffer than a rod used for casting the artificial fly, which every time you missed a fish would be pretty certain to flip up your line, and with such a spring as to cause it to entangle round every twig it might come in contact with, which a stiff rod is not so apt to occasion; added to which a limp rod does not give you sufficient command over the fish after you have hooked him. In dapping I have often found the ragged stick employed by the old angler to clear the scholar's line a highly useful appendage, not only to regain my line when entangled overhead, but even to recover such portion of it as a fish by playing the rogue with me may have managed to run off with. I first made the latter part of this discovery when put to my wit's end by a fish having walked off with my foot line, in fact the only one I had with me, so that unless I recovered it my sport was over for the day. As the stream, though tolerably deep just where the accident occurred, was not a very wide one, and as the fish had broken my tackle by running me under the roots by the near bank, I calculated he was lying in hover there; so supposing the

stray line would be carried straight onward by the stream, I cut a nice ragged piece of white thorn, and stripping off the leaves I fitted it exactly in the ferrule of the joint next the top, which diving close down by the bank till I reached the bottom, and then raising gently up, the very first dip I made I crossed the lost foot line, and as it is a very easy matter to entangle a line securely in a thorn twig, I found no difficulty in accomplishing it here, and then by a steady determined pull compelled the trout to abandon his hover, and eventually made him my own, in addition to the regaining of my lost tackle, which really gave me more satisfaction than catching half a score of such fish would have done, though, unless my memory deceives me, it was the means of my catching more than twice that number before the day was over. Since that time I have more than once had occasion to call in the ragged stick to my assistance, and in almost every instance have I either regained the whole or the greater portion of my lost tackle.

A dapping rod should also be very thickly ringed, containing at least twice as many as we commonly see on angling rods; otherwise the bagging of the line in the spaces between the rings is perpetually causing it to get foul of some twig or branch, which indeed ring a rod as closely as you may you cannot wholly prevent; on which account a great many experienced anglers only make use of a line tied on to the top of the rod. Another thing to be attended to is always to have the ends of the knots or joins in the footline whipped with fine silk, for unless this be done, however neatly the ends may be cut off they will still receive a check from every slight obstacle they come in contact with, which occasioning a sudden jerk, often causes the hook to get foul of something or other, which you must then clear again the best way you can; an evil that in some degree may be prevented by having the ends well whipped. It is also a good plan to rub on a little copal varnish with a camel hair pencil over these whippings, which will prevent their loosening or becoming unravelled; as it also is for the same reason to apply it to the finishings and fastenings of an artificial fly, as we may perceive is usually done in those purchased at the crack fishing tackle shops.

Besides the green drake there is the stone fly I have already alluded to, and many other flies that may be fished with in the same manner, and with nearly equal success, particularly in those rivers

where the green drake is not intimately known, as in many of the rivers in the West of England, in which as we before remarked their deficiency is supplied by the fern web or coch a bonddu, which sometimes swarm upon the river banks from the middle to the latter end of June, and so fond are the trout of this insect, that I have known numbers of them taken by very clumsy fishermen, when the waters have been so low from a long drought that it would have been utterly hopeless for the most skilful angler to have looked for sport with any other kind of bait. As these insects are but small, two, and sometimes three, and put on the hook one after the other, by running the point of the hook into the head, and bringing it out again at the tail; it is of no consequence the point of the hook showing, as it resembles so much the legs of the insect that the fish seem to take no notice of it. It is usually fished with on the top being quietly dropped over the bushes, and played close in under the banks, or swam down the rippling stickles. Sometimes I have found it a good plan, particularly where the waters are broken into rippling stickles, to sink the baits, allowing them to drift down about mid water, as I also have in the still deeps by sinking them to the bottom, and raising them gradually towards the surface. The tab fly or black beetle may also be fished with in the same manner as the fern web, and when the latter is not up will answer remarkably well. Sometimes indeed I have known some fine trout taken by sinking the green drake in very rapid parts of the stream, or where the waters are broken into foam, as in lock holes or places of like kind; sufficient lead should be attached to the foot line to keep the baits constantly beneath the surface, and I have known many trout caught by this means when not a single fish could be moved in the more tranquil parts of the stream. A grasshopper also used in the same manner as the fern web, either on the top or sunk, is a very attractive bait. A chafer is also said to be a good bait for trout, as it doubtless is for a chub. I have tried it occasionally, but though I have generally obtained a fair proportion of rises I have found the trout too apt merely to nibble at it, and I have consequently secured but few.

The ant fly, or rather two or three on a small hook at the same time, may like the fern web or grasshopper be fished with either at the top or sunk beneath the surface; but most of the other dappies are more successful when only floated at the top. This is par-

ticularly the case with the caperer or alder fly, which is a killing fly to dap with on the top, but which soon acquires a drowned and untempting appearance if allowed to sink beneath. The oak fly is also a good surface fly; and last but not least the common blue bottle, which is one of the most attractive we have: and thus an insect we find a great nuisance may be turned to some advantage, as the fish will take them when dead equally as if alive, if they are preserved in the proper manner. To do this, take a bottle with rather a wide mouth, and put in the bottom of it a small portion of strong smelling salts, and some camphor. Have this bottle always at hand, and every blue bottle who intrudes upon your domains, catch if you can, pop into it, and cork him down tight, when the strong salts and foul air will suffocate him in a very few seconds, and by this means you will always have some ready for use.

“How abominably cruel!” exclaims Simon Pure. What, smother the poor flies by corking them down in a bottle, as if they were so many green gooseberries? We answer thee aye Simon, but if in this we are guilty, who we ask thee can eat honey and be blameless? For unless the bees are smothered, or starved, we can never enjoy the fruits of their labour. And yet men more merciful than thee Simon have partaken of this sweet food without any scruples of conscience for the fate of the industrious insects who toiled so hard to procure it.*

To insure success in dapping, it will always be advisable to provide yourself with a stock of baits before you set out, otherwise you may consume much of the time that you might have employed profitably in fishing, in the act of looking for them; indeed it not unfrequently occurs that the baits are the most difficult to procure in those very parts of the stream they may be the most successfully employed upon. The best contrivance for carrying May flies, is a small wicker pannier, which may be purchased at all the principal fishing tackle shops, and being strapped round the body may be carried along with little inconvenience. These flies ought also if possible to be caught on the same day they are designed to be used; as they usually become weak or die in a state

* “And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and an honey-comb; and he took it and did eat before them.” Luke xxiv. 42, 43.

of confinement; added to which they may change their dress during their imprisonment, which out of a considerable number many will be found to do in the course of twelve or fourteen hours, when they will, from the tenderness of the wings in their new attire, become almost useless for dapping, as they will assume a drowned appearance almost the instant they touch the water. The best thing to carry fern webs and tab flies in, is a common tin flour dredge, but without the handle, and should have small holes for the admission of air punched in the sides as well as on the top. A few bramble leaves, or a slip or two of fern should be put in with them, as well for food as to prevent their crowding too closely on each other, and in this manner, by changing the leaves occasionally, you may preserve them alive for several days. Grasshoppers may be kept in the same manner, but they are far more tender than the fern webs, and if too crowded they will soon all die.

Minnow Trolling.

Of all the wiles that have as yet been discovered for entrapping the wary trout, there is none in my humble opinion more exciting than trolling with a minnow, and if the runs obtained are fewer than the rises got in fly fishing, and the numbers of captures in the same proportion, yet the fish that are caught with a minnow are usually much larger than you can move with a fly, whilst the consciousness that you are employing the most effectual means of getting hold of the largest fish the stream contains, whom it is almost in vain to expect to attract by any other kind of bait, serves to keep your hopes alive through many a fruitless cast. In waters that have been a great deal fished with a fly, the larger fish, from having so often felt the prick of the hook, and sustained so many narrow escapes in consequence, become at length too cautious to risk their lives for so insignificant a morsel as a fly, delicate as they may esteem it, yet when a lordly trout perceives a minnow come spinning within his reach, partly perhaps between avidity to lay hold of something that will at least afford him a mouthful, and partly perhaps in very wrath that so insignificant a little rascal should thus impertinently presume to dance about and cut his capers unawed by his august presence, he dashes forth at once to seize and crush the impudent intruder, no doubt purporting to make a meal on him afterwards; and the sport such a trout as this affords, is superior to catching a dozen of the common average that are taken with a fly.

But for all this when a person has acquired much proficiency in fly fishing, he has seldom the patience afterwards to follow up the practice of trolling sufficiently long to acquire the degree of science necessary to insure even a moderate portion of success, the consequence of which is, that the trolling tackle is cast aside almost as soon as it is taken up, and the pursuit denounced as flat, stale, and unprofitable, long before it has been fairly tried—for neither this or any other branch of angling is to be brought to perfection by a day or two's practice, and though knowledge in fly fishing, or any

other branch of angling is of the highest assistance, yet for all this practice alone, and that to some extent too, is absolutely necessary to constitute a troller: but with sufficient practice it can rarely happen but that a corresponding improvement will sooner or later be the result, and he that has the fortitude to persevere to the end will have good cause for congratulation, inasmuch as he has considerably enhanced the pleasure of his angling pursuits, by adding to them one of the most interesting as well as successful branches of the art.

What deters most beginners from undertaking the task of learning to troll, is the apprehension of fatigue, which a very early insight into the practice convinces them must be gone through to carry it on advantageously; and I am compelled to confess there is some truth in this; for though a child may cast a fly, it takes a man to troll with a minnow, or at any rate to catch trout by that mode of fishing; but as we read of a celebrated wrestler of antiquity who by daily carrying a calf was enabled to carry the animal when he became an ox, so by continued use the weight of the trolling rod will daily become less irksome, till at length it will be scarcely noticed.—At any rate before the pursuit is altogether abandoned do give it a sufficient trial to see if you are not man enough to master it, which if you can accomplish there can be little doubt but you will become attached to the sport, particularly when it enables you to exhibit such living specimens of your skill as you have never by any of your former devices been able to get hold of. Well indeed do I recollect my first attempt at spinning the minnow, though so many summers have since rolled away, for I was then but a stripling of seventeen or so at the farthest. I know at that time there was a great mystery with those gentlemen who practised spinning the minnow, not one of whom could I prevail upon to give me any instruction in the art, till at length I found favour in the eyes of a cunning old gentleman, and obtained a promise from him that he would teach me all he knew about the matter, and to my great gratification he fixed the day for carrying his promise into effect which I must do him the justice to say he faithfully performed to the very letter. Although so long since, I remember almost as if it were but yesterday, how with that nervous trepidation an ardent beginner so frequently experiences, and a hand trembling with anxiety, I tried very much to the old gentleman's amusement to fix the bait in precise accordance with

the rule he laid down, when I had done this, he kindly took the rod and tackling in his hands, and setting to rights a blunder or two I had made, he cast the bait into a pool close at hand to see if it would spin properly, when at the very first throw as he was drawing it across the stream a fine trout made a bold dash towards it, but he caught a sight of us, as we were standing close to the edge of the bank not expecting to move a fish there, and turned back short without touching it.

This however gave me confidence, and showed me how attractive a bait it was, yet knowing it was useless to expect another run in this pool after so completely showing ourselves, my friend having resigned the rod into my hands I proceeded to a tempting hole a few yards below, where a rippling stickle over a shallow bed of gravel emptied itself suddenly into a deep pool. I possessed sufficient tact to throw just into the eddy by the opposite bank so as to bring my minnow across stream in the underset caused by the swift current running at once from a shallow into deep water, and ere I had drawn it a couple of yards a fierce tearing succession of tugs, accompanied by the bright flashes from the sides of the noble fish told me that so far I was successful, though the issue was for some time a doubtful one, as it was a most powerful fish and a very cunning one wherewithal, making several desperate struggles and trying to get me foul of the weeds at the bottom; but after many fiercer tugs and struggles, by the assistance of my worthy comrade, I at last succeeded in landing him, and a noble fish he was, weighing something between three or four pounds, for we weighed him on the steelyards that very evening. It was certainly rather singular that I should have met with this extraordinary piece of good fortune the very first cast I ever made in minnow spinning, and from what I had before seen of a trout dashing at the bait in an open place whilst we were standing openly on the very edge, I began to imagine that at last I had discovered a lure that was infallible, and I even went so far as to puzzle my brains as to the means we should find for carrying home all the fish I had then fully made up my mind to make my own before the day was over; but I soon found my expectations were far too sanguine, and that here I had reckoned without mine host, for the day shortly after turning out bright, I toiled away for several hours without moving another fish, nor was my comrade, though an experienced angler one whit more fortunate. At length towards the

latter part of the day I came to a part of the stream where the waters running with great force through a very straitened channel, emptied themselves into a large and deep pool. The summit of the bank on the side I was, was about four or five feet above the water's edge, perfectly steep though completely overhung with brambles. On the opposite side the bank was nearly on a level with the water, sloping gradually upwards towards the meadow, and having a complete fence of alder bushes, except just at the elbow where the waters discharged themselves into the pool where there was a stunted willow bush, which though not forming any thing like so impenetrable a fence as the alder bushes, yet gave me no small trouble as the sequel will show. The current running swiftly through the whole length of the pool on the side I was, I spun my bait in the eddy on the opposite one, and succeeded in hooking a trout almost the moment I cast in. The trout the instant he felt the hook, made a quick rush down the stream, yet without making any very tearing struggle swam rapidly about the pool, making the line chatter again as he turned quickly round, and attempted to make off in an opposite direction, which at first induced me to suppose I had gotten hold of a pike, of which there were some in the stream, (not having caught so many large trout and pike then as have since fallen to my lot,) and as the fish I had hooked persisted in keeping near the bottom of the water which was far from clear, and I being fearful of exerting any strong efforts to bring him to the surface, some time expired before I was undeceived, till at length I brought him to the top of the water, and to my no small satisfaction discovered what manner of fish he was; being in fact a splendid trout, and apparently in high condition, though not so weighty a fish as that I had before taken. How to secure this gallant fish was now the question, my comrade who had charge of the lauding net was far beyond call, whilst to attempt to lift the fish up over the steep bank overhung with brambles was evidently impracticable. At last I resolved to try and find a landing place on the other side of the stream, so lowering myself down the bank, and scrambling in the way I was able through brambles, thistles, and stinging nettles, which, as I had to manage my rod and keep the fish in play all the time I found no easy task, I at length succeeded in obtaining a firm footing somewhat above my knees in the narrow channel at the entrance of the pool, the confined waters of which nearly carried me off my legs as I waded across to the other side,

but which when I reached I had no trouble in clambering up the low bank, which as I before stated was nearly even with the water, and here I hoped to draw up the trout which now lay disabled on his side; but here I was disappointed, as soon finding the current in this narrow part was so powerful, that even the dead weight of the fish drawn along passively on the surface was more than my tackle was capable of pulling ahead against it; and the small willow bush I before alluded to completely balked me from bringing him to land in a more quiet part of the pool. At last the thought struck me—the trout being now apparently lifeless—that I might cut away a sufficient portion of the willow to form a small cove sufficient for my purpose, which when regarding the resplendent golden sides of the trout, as he lay motionless upon the water I thought was well worth the attempt; so elevating my rod sufficiently to allow my line to keep clear of the stunted willow, I guided the fish into a part of the pool that was perfectly still and tranquil, and sticking the spike of my rod into the ground I commenced my labours, but ere I had proceeded far the trout had again revived, and though not quite so active as before, yet, had not happily the stop of the reel been free, so that the line could run off, some of the tackle must inevitably have given way, as the fish made right away for the stiffest part of the current, and as I could not follow him up, many yards of the line were run off the reel before I could again bring him in check, which having done I soon mastered him, and again brought him apparently lifeless to the surface. I then resumed my work, but before long he had again revived, and again had I to subdue him to a dead stand still, as indeed I had to do more than once afterwards, it seemed in fact as if this fish was possessed of many lives as a cat; till at length a sufficient portion of the barrier was cut away to enable me to guide my line safely to the bank, when sticking in my rod and guiding in the fish with my bent fore finger, I stooped down and flung him motionless upon the grass; and never I believe, with the exception of the first trout I caught, did I feel so much satisfaction as I did in seeing this one, though in size as I before remarked it did not quite come up to the one I had before taken on that day. This concluded my first day's essay at minnow spinning, nor has I believe the most successful one I have since enjoyed afforded me more real gratification than the result of my labours that one afforded me.

And now for my instructions. In the first place, a long rod is indispensable, otherwise it is impossible to keep sufficiently out of the fishes sight, without which there is little chance of your hooking many large ones, however many you may move, the bait probably first attracting their notice, but catching a view of you as they approach to seize hold of, they turn back short without touching it.

As for the length of the rod, I consider that for most streams it ought to be as much as eighteen feet long, though for a narrow stream one of fifteen or sixteen would be sufficient. The rods that are usually employed for this purpose are constructed of hollow cane, with the exception of the top, which is generally of hollow bamboo; yet a rod of these materials is hardly strong enough for the work it has to go through, and if a fracture does take place in any part but the top, the injury is almost irreparable; as it is utterly in vain to attempt to splice a piece of hollow cane: the only chance is to cut off the shattered parts as well as you can, and winding some string or tape about it, fit it into the ferrule below in the best manner you are able. The rod I have used for this purpose for some seasons past consists of a butt of well seasoned deal of about eight feet long, the middle joint, which is of hickory, of about five feet, and the top, which is a little short of five feet, has the lower half of hickory, and the remainder bamboo, with the exception of a small piece of whalebone at the end; so that this rod is altogether about eighteen feet long, and is by far the best trolling rod I ever called myself the master of; being in fact the same I alluded to as having been presented me by my much esteemed clerical friend, whose skill in constructing fishing rods I have before mentioned. I have a shorter butt for narrower streams, which is something less than six feet, but I rarely if ever make use of it, preferring the longer one, even for the narrowest rivulets.

The line should be stouter than that used for a fly, and should be at least thirty yards long, as it often happens, as I have before had occasion to remark, that trees and other obstacles prevent you from following up a strong fish who is resolved to go his own way, which if he is determined about, you cannot sometimes prevent him from doing without endangering your tackle by forcibly bringing him to a check; at the same time I would recommend every angler not to allow a fish a greater scope of line than is absolutely requisite, as, unless he can keep his fish tolerably short, he has far

less command over him. The footline for this kind of fishing should be quite as long, if not longer than for fly fishing; but stouter gut may be used, and at least two double swivels, one near the hooks, and the other about midway the footline should be employed.

As to the hook part of the tackle, there seems to be almost as many patterns as there are specifics for the tooth ache, but like the latter, though each stands up stoutly in defence of his own plan, they are none of them infallible. As for myself, after having tried as many as most of my neighbours, I am inclined to return again to exactly where I first set out, adhering to the mode of baiting laid down by honest Izaak, with the addition only of flyer hooks arranged in the manner I shall shortly hereafter notice; and if the minnow does not spin well under this contrivance, it is the fault of the fisher not of the tackle. The worthy old angler's instructions are, and which I repeat in his own words: "Put your hook in at his (the minnow's) mouth, and out at his gills, and having then drawn your hook two or three inches beyond or through his gill, put it in again into his mouth, and the point and beard out at his tail, and then tie the hook and his tail about very neatly with a white thread which, (simple as it may appear, by causing this part of the minnow to adhere more tightly to the hook,) will make it apter to turn quick in the water; that done, pull back that part of your line which was slack when you did put your hook into the minnow the second time; I say pull that part of your line back, so that it shall fasten the head so that the body of the minnow shall be almost straight on your hook; this done, try how it will turn by drawing it across the water or against a stream, and if it does not turn nimbly, then turn the tail a little to the right or left hand and try again, till it turn quick, for if it does not, you are in danger to catch nothing: for know, that it is impossible it should turn too quick."

The anal and dorsal fin being cut off will assist materially in making the bait turn quicker, as those fins, like the keel of a ship, serve to keep the fish from rolling over: a pectoral fin on one side, and a ventral fin on the other should also be cut off. Sometimes if you are fortunate enough to have a hook with the exact kirby bend, the minnow will spin away merrily enough without being either tail tied or the fins cut away, particularly if your bait is not an over large one. The best minnows are those of a middling size with a white belly, though any minnow that will spin well will an-

swer the purpose. Many persons consider these baits are improved by being kept a few hours in bran to harden before they are used : but I have always found the fresher the baits are the better, which I have always taken care to avail myself of whenever I could procure them.

The hook on which the minnow is spitted should be proportioned to the size of the bait, and must be no larger than the minnow can be well baited on ; it would be well therefore to be provided with hooks of two or three different sizes, which may always be shifted as occasion may require. The hook should be long in the shank, and round and short in the bend, the barb inclining well either to the right or left, which will materially aid the spinning of the bait. My plan of fixing the flyers is a very simple one : I tie a common loop of gut, leaving two ends, one not above an half an inch, and the other from four to six inches long. To the short end I fasten a single hook about No. 5 or 6, and to the long one three rows of double flyers back to back of small sized fly hooks, these I fasten to the link next the hook, looping it on the same way as a bob fly, and not drawing the loop quite tight at first, I slide the flying gear down till the hooks assume their proper position ; the large flyer hook I run carefully in at the mouth and bring it out again, either through the gills or the cheek on the side to which the bend of the hook inclines, whilst I run in one of the double flyers in the lateral line on the other side just behind the pectoral fin leaving the others unattached to the bait. By loosening the loop the flyers may be run up the hook link whenever it is necessary to rebait, for which purpose a common toilet pin or stocking needle is the best instrument that can be used for forcing open the loop should it be tightly drawn together.

There is another plan of minnow trolling I have occasionally employed to advantage, by substituting a wire of about the length of an ordinary sized minnow, barbed at the end, and slightly leaded at the other extremity, instead of the large hook on which the minnow is commonly spitted ; this wire being thrust into the minnow's mouth in the same manner as the hook ; and the wire, being pliant, it can be turned in any way so as to make the bait play more freely, and flyers are attached to it as in the former instance. As far as spinning went it certainly did very well ; but I fancied I lost a great many of the fish I got hold of, for want of the large

hook, which if it does once get fast hold does not often break away again, which the diminutive flyers, from their small size fixing themselves only in a tender piece of the skin only, are so often liable to do; so after a short time I returned to my former way and by carefully selecting a good baiting hook, I find I can make the bait spin with equal velocity as in the other plan. As for several other modes I have tried, they answered altogether so badly, that I consider it needless to take up the time of my readers by giving any account of them.

In most of the minnow tackle that I have seen fitted, the flyer hooks have been soldered together back to back, which, unless very cleverly done gives them a very clumsy appearance, and what is still worse, the heat of the soldering very often injures the temper of the hooks, as I have before found to my no small annoyance; one day in particular I am not very likely to forget, which occurred by the side of the river Torridge a few seasons since, the runs I lost from this cause were incalculable, though my catches were easily told, as I do not think they amounted to above half a dozen, and none of these large trout. Now to remedy this I have been content, after first ascertaining the temper of my hooks, simply to flatten the backs of each with a small file, so that the two hooks may present a flat and even surface to each other which if they are tied on carefully together with waxed silk, will answer every purpose. It is a good plan to insure security to tie a single knot at the end of the gut to which the flyers are attached, which will effectually prevent their slipping off, as they are sometimes apt to do with a strong pull upon them, on account of the short space allowed for whipping them on.

As to the leads; these must depend much upon the strength of the stream and depth and power of the water in which they are to be used. The best are those something of the shape of a barley-corn, only of rather a more enlongated form; they must have a small orifice through them, just sufficient to allow the gut to be pushed through, and may be fixed in a proper position by jamming the ends of the leads. The above form is preferable, on account of the little resistance it offers in being drawn through the water in proportion to its weight, in which respect it has decidedly the advantage of cleft shots, though, for want of better materials, I have often been compelled to enlist them in my service, and have usually found them to answer my purpose. Adapting the proper quantity of lead to the proportion of the stream is the most important

point in minnow trolling next to spinning and playing the bait, and this nothing but experience can teach, and practice enable you to achieve. Many anglers make use of leaden caps, which in addition to aiding to sink the minnow, keep the flyers well against the bait; my objection to them is, that they serve to disguise the fish, giving it an appearance that does not belong to it, and also concealing the eyes, which is I am inclined to think a disadvantage; and to say the least, makes it look as if it had stuck its nose into the mud.

Playing the minnow is another point on which your success must in a great measure depend, and which it will take both time and practice to manage in a masterly manner; nor is it possible to lay down any fixed rules that can give one half the information that is required. I have indeed been sometimes amused with the arguments of some pretenders in the art upon this very subject: one contending that in every case and under all circumstances, the only correct method is to play the bait at one steady pace right down the stream; another as stoutly holding it should be drawn right up: a third that this should be done by a succession of jerks, which jerks, a fourth utterly condemns, and asserts the pace should always be unvaried, whilst a fifth firmly insists that the only way is to draw the bait right across the stream, and thus the discussion may be carried on *ad infinitum*, and, as far as either party's being convinced is concerned, ends just where it commenced; each one having just sufficient truth on his side to base an obstinate adherence to his original opinion; for indeed every one of these plans are proper under circumstances that may require them; and as one or other of those circumstances must constantly arise, so will it be necessary that every one or other of these modes will in its turn require to be practiced during the course of a day's minnow trolling.

The casting in the bait in the proper spot is also a matter of no small importance. In fly fishing, as I believe I have before stated, a great deal of your success depends upon your dropping the flies in such a situation that the fish may see them fall upon the water, as they then present a more striking appearance than they can be made to display by playing them over the surface afterwards; but in minnow trolling the reverse is the case, for the minnow—being an inhabitant of the water instead of the earth or air—its flying through the latter element, and then sousing down into its native

one just before the trout's nose, who with no small wonder has been viewing this extraordinary flight, must be quite sufficient to lead him to suspect the whole as some device of the enemy to entrap him ; and, confident am I that as much depends upon exercising a proper judgment in casting in the bait, as in any other part of this branch of fishing. This, if possible, should be done in such a manner that the trout neither sees it flying through the air or its fall into the water. I say if possible ; because I am aware that the angler must often be compelled to take his stand or make his cast in such a manner that the above effect cannot be altogether accomplished ; but if it can, the opportunity of doing so should never be neglected.

As another necessary precaution ; before you attempt to make your cast for a trout you should first ascertain that the minnow spins properly ; I myself have lost fish without number merely from inattention to this matter. Where I have found beginners most frequently err is, the too common practice of always hauling the bait against stream, without making sufficient allowance for the strength of the current ; the consequence of which is, up comes the minnow flustering to the surface, bobbing about on the top, and so exposing the whole trick of the machinery ; added to which, if a fish should make a dash at it before it arrives to this most unattractive position, he commonly obtains a view of the enemy, upon whom he is pretty certain to turn tail without venturing to assail the bait.

If a trout runs and seizes the minnow boldly, he should be allowed to turn with it before you strike ; as by this means your chance will be considerably improved, as you will be less likely by that means to draw the bait harmlessly out of his mouth. By striking too suddenly also many persons who have been accustomed to fish principally with an artificial fly, lose many runs. This should be done pretty smartly, having due care not to endanger your tackle, and the contrary way to that the fish is pursuing : the line being all the time kept between the thumb and fore and middle finger of the right hand, and the reel all clear and ready to let out the line if required, which, if the fish is a good one you are frequently compelled to do, as on feeling the prick of the hook, a trout usually darts off, and makes a desperate struggle, often springing to a considerable height above water, doubtless with mingled feelings of rage and astonishment at thus finding a little

insignificant scamp of a minnow, whom he intended to bolt at a mouthful, has fastened his fangs upon him in so unaccountable a manner, and is dragging him against his will in a direction he is utterly averse to pursuing; and that although literally smashed to a jelly between his ponderous jaws, his pigmy opponent still continues to haul away as determinedly as ever. I have, however, sometimes found that a trout, particularly a very large one, when first struck has allowed himself to be hauled along like a log for a short distance without offering the slightest resistance. When this occurs depend upon it he has not felt the prick of the hooks, which repose quietly in his mouth, and are prevented from doing him any injury on account of his holding the bait tightly compressed between his teeth. In such case, therefore, your best plan is to shift your rod as quick as you can, and strike pretty determinedly the opposite way to the fish's head, and sufficiently hard to detach the bait from his teeth, which will effectually rouse him to action; but if you strike the way he is moving, he will probably, taking offence at your rudeness, open wide his mouth, and eject your whole paraphernalia of hooks harmlessly forth; when if the fish be so large, as some of the trout I have seen perform this feat, your feelings—in the language of the novel writers—may be more easily imagined than described.

It often happens that a trout runs very warily at the bait, just touching it and turning back again, and then renewing the charge, and this often occurs when the minnow spins badly; but happen from what consequence it may, when a trout runs in this manner you seldom succeed in hooking him. The best way to excite his eagerness is to increase the speed with which you play the bait, and if he then refuses to seize upon it, your only plan is to leave him alone for a short time, when with a better arranged bait you may probably deceive him. In fact whenever a trout runs shy, or turns short without taking the bait, it is always the surer way to leave him quiet for a short time, as, if unpricked with the hook he will most likely run again, if you don't excite his suspicion, by attempting to decoy him too early after your first failure. By adhering to this rule I am confident I have made many a good trout my own that would otherwise have been swimming about in safety in his native element. In standing open waters I have often taken good trout in minnow trolling, as I also have from navigable canals, My plan in fishing the latter has been to walk leisurely

along the towing path, having out about eight or ten yards of line, and in a clear water four or five yards more. In this way I have met with most delightful sport, having been often brought to a dead standstill by a lusty trout; nor do I know a more interesting kind of fishing. When I used the artificial minnow, upon which I intend next to offer a few remarks, I found it necessary to increase my pace to about one third faster.

Professor Wilson, speaking of the artificial minnow, observes, it "is justly discarded by all judicious anglers;"* I presume he means on the ground of its inefficiency. If so the learned professor is mistaken; for artificial minnows are to be made and may be so fished with as to be a match for any bait whatever. For "judicious" I think we must read "prejudiced anglers," though I am ashamed to say that until I had given the artificial minnow a fair trial, I was of precisely the same opinion as the learned professor, and just as deeply prejudiced as any one of the judicious gentlemen he alludes to; but having made the trial, I have not only gotten quite rid of my previous prejudice, but am convinced I have acquired a most certain mode of fishing that can be resorted to for catching large trout.

I was a year or two since invited to meet a clerical gentleman who was reputed a most excellent fisherman, as from his conversation he soon shewed himself to be, and I much regret I have never had an opportunity of seeing him exercise his skill by the water side. On this occasion he shewed me an artificial minnow on which he said he placed entire reliance, rarely in fact fishing with any thing else; and he also recounted to me some excellent days' sport he had recently obtained by its means. The form was certainly not very prepossessing, as it was a plain piece of brass, but as I was informed made of hollow plates. The size and proportion was that of an ordinary sized minnow, but what was intended to represent the tail, which was brazen also, was cleft in sunder and turned out diagonally to the right and left; so that upon the slightest resistance in drawing the bait through the water, or opposition from the current, it would spin round with a velocity truly surprising. To this a number of flyer hooks, of rather large size fitted singly and not tied back to back, with the exception of a triangle of three hooks fastened to the tail and about three inches from it,

* See "The Rod," p. 246.

but between which and the tail was a double swivel; otherwise the velocity of the bait so rapidly flying round would have twisted it up in an instant. Another swivel was fixed to the nose, and indeed one is required to almost every link, on account of the wonderful rapidity with which the bait spins round, being in fact so great, that though almost envelopped in hooks, not one can be perceived. Now although I believed every word that my informant told me of his own success, I could not even then fancy I myself should meet with it in streams where the minnows themselves were abundant, and where the trout from seeing them constantly would be so easily enabled to detect the difference; and of that opinion I should doubtless still have been had not Necessity—who harsh as she may appear has often proved my friend—stepped in and compelled me to try the brazen imitation, or relinquish all chance by my day's sport; so in plain terms obliging me fairly to put its merits to the test. The matter fell out thus: I was one of a party of three, the other two fly fishers—I myself purposing to try my skill in spinning the real minnow. As the river we intended fishing in, and every ditch running into it, may be said almost to swarm with minnows, I was under no apprehension of lacking baits of that kind; yet from what cause it was I know not, but on arriving at the river, and looking in some never failing spots, not a single minnow could I discover, so that at last I resolved to give my old brazen killdevil a trial, so fixing it on, although without very sanguine hopes of catching any thing with it, I just threw it into a clear pool before me to see how it would look in the water, when I was even more dissatisfied with it than before, as it seemed to bear no resemblance to a minnow, or any kind of fish whatever, looking in fact in the water just as it did out, the velocity with which it turned making it appear motionless, only that the hooks were completely invisible. I resolved, however, not to condemn it untried, so stepping down to a good pool below, I threw in amongst the rippling water at the entrance, and was drawing rapidly across, when to my agreeable surprise, a smart tug informed me I had a run, and a pretty yellow sided trout instantly leaping a foot or two out of the water with the killdevil in his mouth, assured me I had hooked the fish, which I safely landed. I afterwards during the day caught several more trout with this said killdevil, though the weather was ill adapted to the kind of sport, being hot, calm, and bright; though it proved even less

favorable for fly fishing, as my companions, one of whom is a crack fisherman, caught little or nothing. Strange to say I tried the real minnow, happening to fall in with a shoal of them afterwards, and did not succeed in getting a single run with it. Since this I have tried the kill devil several times, and have every reason to be satisfied with the result, having in fact taken trout with it, when I could move them with nothing else. What the trout take it for I cannot pretend to say, but I am certainly of opinion they do not mistake it for a minnow, seeming to rush at it with that fatal eagerness with which we see moths repeatedly rush into the flame of a lighted candle. But be this as it may, it is one of the best baits an angler can use; the great drawback is the great labour that is absolutely indispensable, to carry it on as you must draw it very rapidly through the water at least as twice as fast as the ordinary rate of spinning a minnow, and I have always found it succeed best when drawn down the stream. With other artificial minnows, even the red and tinselled killdevil, which some anglers almost swear by, I have not succeeded so well; and perhaps it was owing to this, that I was prejudiced so much against the brazen one; so that upon the whole I am not surprized that those who are ignorant of the merits of the latter, should be so ready to declare the artificial minnow to be "justly discarded by all judicious anglers." Let them but try the brazen one, and I have no doubt they will change their opinions as readily as I did.

As it requires an open scope to spin either the killdevil or the minnow properly—as any obstacle that impedes the action of the rod causes the bait to stop and so exposes the trick—it cannot be carried on with any degree of comfort in a stream whose banks are much incumbered with wood: but in that case the diving minnow may be resorted to, and is a mode by which I have taken some very excellent fish. The tackling is contrived by attaching a wire about two inches long to an ordinary sized hook, just of such a size in fact as coming out of a minnow's mouth, will repose closely cheek by jowl with one side of his face. This hook and a portion of the wire attached to it must be loaded with as much lead as can be thrust down the minnow's throat without bursting the bait, which being tied like an ordinary hook to a piece of gut, is baited with a long but fine stocking needle, which being run in at the minnow's mouth and out again at its tail, the link and hook





Others

are drawn after it, till the latter just protrudes out at the mouth; the needle and gut link must then be passed through the vertebre, as close as can be to the caudal fin, and then drawn tight, which will effectually prevent the bait from shifting its position on the hook, as otherwise it undoubtedly would.

The bait is then fished with by diving it down the stream, keeping it constantly in motion, raising it and letting it sink suddenly, when by reason of the lead within, it will dart about in a very business like manner. This kind of fishing requires a very sensitive hand, in order to give way to the fish the instant he lays hold, as unless he gorges it you are not likely to hook him, and if checked he will probably reject the bait. If the fish stops and afterwards makes a second motion, you may conclude he has gorged the bait, which will generally be found the case unless the fish is a small one, the latter seldom bolting the bait freely, being unwilling perhaps to overload its stomach with such weighty food. This is not the case with all small trout, which by the way brings to my remembrance an instance of the extreme voracity of one I once caught in the Attery or Ottersey in Cornwall; the same stream honest Izaak mentions to be so named from the numbers of otters that infested it, as they do even unto this day. But to do them justice, I believe they are not the worst enemies the fish there have to contend with, the misdeeds of the otters being very mercies as compared with the destructive acts of the poachers of that neighbourhood. But to return to my subject—I was trolling with a diving minnow in a leat communicating with this said river Ottersey, when feeling a fish bite and allowing him a fair time to bolt the bait, I struck, and rather harder than I ought to have done it seems, for the gut snapped off a few inches from the hook and away went the fish, hook and all. Passing the same spot about a quarter of an hour afterwards I again cast in, and instantly had another run—this I missed, though not without pulling the fish, which I perceived to be a small trout, above the water—and yet the very next cast I made what appeared to be the same identical little fish rose almost the instant the bait touched the water, and this fish I caught, when to my great surprize I discovered that this most determined and voracious little gentleman, who only weighed three ounces and a quarter, was in the actual possession of my lost hook, which minnow and all was sticking fast in his throat, in addition to the one I caught him with; the two to-

gether making in fact nearly one sixth of his whole weight. This is a convincing proof, if further proof were wanting, of how little cold blooded animals are susceptible of pain, and that wounds which would terminate mortally among animals of warmer blood, are little felt or regarded by them; for what warm blooded animal is there, I would ask, be he as ravenous as he may, who, having attempted to bolt some ponderous article of food and finding it stick fast in his throat as if fixed there by a two-inch spike nail, would attempt to get such another morsel down, or in fact long survive the effects of the first?

Since the above occurrence I received an account of two cases somewhat similar, and both equally surprising. A very old friend of mine to whom I had mentioned my adventure soon after its occurrence, happened not long afterwards to accompany Lord Vivian on a fishing excursion, to whom he related my adventure with the desperate little trout in the manner I have above recounted; when his lordship mentioned two instances which certainly were most extraordinary, and which, with his permission, I now lay before my readers. Lord Vivian, who is a first rate fisherman, was spinning a minnow in the neighbourhood of Guildford, when he saw a lengthy trout dart forth and seize upon his bait, which he succeeded in hooking, but was surprised to find how tamely the fish submitted to his fate; in fact suffering himself to be drawn like a mere string of weeds unresistingly to the bank, where he was safely landed almost without a struggle; when it was discovered, that though long enough for a four pounder, he did not weigh two, being a sick fish utterly out of season, and so he was, as he ought to have been, forthwith recommitted to the place from whence he came; and yet, wonderful to say, the very next cast the same identical trout again seized the bait, was again hooked and secured, and again returned to his native element. What became of him afterwards, or whether his gallant captor essayed to tempt him a third time my informant did not state.

The other adventure occurred in sea fishing, but as it happened while the vessel was under way ploughing her course across the British Channel, the circumstance seems more wonderful. At the time I speak of, Lord Vivian and one of his sons, (the Honorable Major Vivian) were fishing for mackerel from his lordship's yacht, but being unprovided with fish bait, a sixpence with a hole bored through it was attached to the hook, which indeed is a very

common plan. The Major, as I understood, was the first who got a bite, when probably being over eager he struck too hard, and away went the hook, fish and sixpence; but incredible as it may appear, when fishing with a fish bait afterwards—several mackerel having been taken in the interim—the gallant major actually hooked his former acquaintance, which this time he had the good fortune to secure, as also to regain his lost hook and sixpence, which was found still firmly fixed in the fish's mouth.

In places adapted for the purpose I have taken some good trout with a live minnow, having the hook stuck either through the upper lip or back fin. No float should be used, and just a sufficient quantity of lead to sink the bait and prevent its rising to the surface. Yet this mode, though a very good one in its way, is only adapted to certain places, such as where the stream is broken, into foam and eddies, from the sudden escape of the confined waters; but in these places no better plan can be resorted to. Deep and narrow gutters also, communicating with the main stream from an adjacent leat or backwater, when they contain a full current of water, are admirably suited to this mode of angling, as trouts, as soon almost as the waters are set in motion, come up from out of the main river in pursuit of the minnows; and many a gutter that an angler has jumped thoughtlessly over, has contained more and better fish than for some time have found their way into his fishing pannier; some of which he would have most assuredly got hold of, had he but known the proper way to set to work about it; for the object of the trouts in coming up is to make a hearty meal there, which the very boldness of the adventure shews they are determined to have at all risks. A minnow therefore being the very thing they are on the look out for must consequently be the best that can possibly be employed, and one drifted carefully down, baited as above directed, is not often permitted to pass unheeded by, if the angler does but keep himself concealed from the view of the fish. In fishing these gutters it is the better plan to commence near the main river, letting the stream drift on your bait towards it, and if you do not succeed there, go up a little higher and fish down to where you first commenced, and so keep on till you hook a fish; which having done play him down stream so that he may not alarm any of his acquaintances above, as he would be very apt to do if led captive before thir eyes: on this account it is that I recommend beginning at the lower end of the

gutter and working your way by degrees upwards. When a large fish bites in a place of this kind, he generally remains pretty quiet, and often retires to the very edge either on one side or the other, so that it would almost appear to an inexperienced hand that the hook had got foul of the sides or bottom; but by tightening the line by gentle degrees, so as to get the fish short, a sort of bowing motion may be felt, which is a pretty certain sign the fish is a good one; a small trout being always more restless, as he finds it no small labour to hold on against the resistance the gut, even fine as it is, offers to the current, though he has generally the pluck not to let go, but in spite of all to swallow the bait. A little time should be given previous to striking, when if the hook is gorged there will be little danger of the hold giving way, but you must keep a sharp look out for your tackle, particularly if the fish makes off full split for the river, as, if he is a heavy one, it is most likely he will attempt. I have generally used minnows for this kind of fishing, but I have heard that loaches, where they can be procured, are still more attractive, being a kind of food the trout are extremely partial to.

4. *Bait Fishing.*

Bait fishing, though not a fashionable mode of angling, is one by no means to be despised, and a great deal of the unmerited disrepute into which it has fallen, is owing more to the narrow minded prejudices of those who have never practised it, than to any defect of this branch of the art. One of the principal causes of its unpopularity is the mistaken supposition, that it requires no skill, and wants the charm that active exercise produces. But nothing can be more erroneous than both these suppositions; there being no kind of angling that requires a greater portion of skill, or more ground to be travelled over to follow it up. But the fact is it is not fashionable, and consequently little followed or understood except by a few cunning old anglers who keep the secret to themselves, and profit by it accordingly.

As this sort of fishing is carried on principally with worms, I purpose first to say a word or two about them, as also the most approved method of preparing them for use. The best worm for angling for trout, take it for all in all, is the lobworm, which is of a dull cast, and of a dark slate colour about the head; but if two worms are put on, then the garden worms, which are small worms of somewhat a flesh colour cast, inclining to pink above the knot, are preferable. Walton however gives a preference to a red worm called the squirrel tail, from that part being broader and flatter in proportion than in any other kind of worm. There are also several other kinds of red worms, some large, and some small; some with a knot, and some without; all of which when scoured will do very well. Nor must I pass over the brandling, which is a very high flavoured morsel, and an excellent bait in a clear water, and which is distinguished by the bright yellow rings at the joints, and also from emitting a yellow fluid that has a peculiar effluvia, doubtless very fragrant to the olfactory nerves of the fishes, whatever it may be to our own. And there is also the gilt tail, distinguished by the yellow tag at the tail, but one that I do not think stands very high in the estimation of the trout, or of those who are in the habit of angling for him. Cotton however expresses an opinion that the sort of worm is not very material, and adds that it must be such a worm as he never yet saw that a trout will refuse if he be in the humour to bite. But with all due deference to so respecta-

ble an authority, Cotton's opinion is incorrect ; as it must be known to every experienced angler that a trout will reject one sort of worm, and yet greedily devour one of another kind.

A singular instance of this is still fresh in my memory, though it must have occurred at least twenty years since. On the occasion I allude to I had ridden some distance to fish in a part of the Test a few miles below Romsey. As I intended to troll with a minnow, I had taken a small bag of worms with me, purposing to catch my baits with a hook and line ; but scarcely had I taken sufficient minnows to begin my sport, than the sun burst out through the clouds, and the sky, which had previously been overcast became so perfectly clear that any hope of trolling to any purpose in those limpid waters I soon found to be impracticable. Resolved not to return home utterly empty if I could help it, I tried my skill with a worm in some of the smaller watercourses that flowed through the meadows. At first I tried with two brandlings, such being usually the best baits for bright weather and a clear water, and with these I fished down a watercourse in which I suspected there was more than one lusty trout, but without even obtaining a nibble ; at last I chanced to discover a lobworm or two amongst the other worms in my bag, and putting one of these on, I very shortly after got hold of a good sized trout, which I had the luck to catch. This encouraged me to retry with that same kind of worm the identical ground I had previously fished over without success with the brandling, and before I had retraced one half of it I had taken several more fine trout, when I had the mortification to discover, or rather not to be able to discover, another lobworm in my bag. I then tried a red worm, hoping that might do, but this succeeded no better than the brandlings had done before. At last I was much tantalized at perceiving a noble great fellow of a trout lying in a shallow evidently on the look out for food ; but it was in vain I kept myself closely hidden from his sight behind a willow bush, and drifted the bait most temptingly past him, having run nearly the whole length of line off my reel for the purpose, for he merely followed the worm for a short distance, and after examining it, and finding it unsuited to his taste, turned back most provokingly without touching it, and resumed his former position. Like a blockhead, instead of leaving him quiet a few minutes, I put on a couple of brandlings and drifted these down, but he would not condescend even to notice these, though they must have passed within

an inch of his nose. I saw plainly enough that master trout, notwithstanding he thought it was dinner time, was not pleased with the bill of fare, so I began to think of trying to drift down a live minnow, and was turning over my stock of worms to find a tempting little one for my minnow line, when I discovered a lob worm snugly coiled among the moss; this I immediately put on my hook and swam down towards the trout, who no sooner caught a view of it than he darted fiercely up the stream, and seizing the bait gorged it almost instantaneously, and then fine work I had with him before he allowed me to bring him to land, but which at length after a spirited resistance I accomplished.

I have found indeed from experience trout are equally capricious in their choice of worms as of flies, for at certain times I have known them reject a lob worm for a brandling, and sometimes they have shown a dreaded preference to a red worm, which at another time they would scarcely touch; but generally speaking a well scoured worm of any kind will do, though upon the whole as I said before I am inclined to give a preference to the lob worm when used singly, and to the garden worm when two are put on together. But be the worms of what kind they may, they are always the better for being scoured for at least five or six days in clean moss before they are used. By far the best moss for this purpose is the long white moss found in bogs; but if you cannot procure this, then the coarsest and cleanest you can get should be substituted. The moss should be changed every four or five days. Sometimes new milk or raw cream is dropped on the moss for the purpose of fattening the worms when they begin to fail; but when this is done the moss should be changed the next day: otherwise by becoming sour it will do the worms much more harm than good.

The best way to preserve worms for any length of time, is to have a large earthen pan with some fine mould at the bottom and a layer of moss at the top; and such worms as are wanted for immediate use should be transferred to a bag containing clean moss only; and should any of them appear to fail after being kept in the moss, they should be returned again to the pan, where they will most probably soon recover. Care must be taken not to allow the mould to become too dry, and it will be advisable every now and then to change it for fresh earth.

And now having said thus much about the worms, I next pur-

pose showing how they should be baited. If one worm only is used, and that worm is a lob worm, the hook should be run in at the head and worked on through the body of the worm till it reaches the very tail, the upper part of the worm being threaded above the arming on the gut sometimes to the length of three or four inches or more above the point of the hook. If your worm is a red one, the point of the hook should be run in at the tail, and carried on through to the head. The reason of baiting the two kinds of worms differently is that a trout generally shows a preference to the tail end of a lob worm, and the head extremity of a red one, there being something in the brains of the latter which particularly suits the palate of a trout, in which the lob worm is sadly deficient, whilst his tough hard head seems by no means so delicate as his nether extremity; which a trout invariably attempts to bolt first, often where the worm is a large one, biting it off below the knot, and rejecting the upper part altogether: for this reason, when my lob worms are large, I cut them off at the knot, only using the part below, and I am confident I have succeeded better in consequence. It must also be kept in view that unimportant as it may appear which part of a worm a trout will swallow first, it is very essential if you wish to catch him, that it should be the part that contains the hook; for if the hook be swallowed heel foremost, it will probably give the fish's mouth a prick, though it rarely take a fast hold, and should you strike at a time like this, its only effect will be to draw the whole bait in a lump together, thus entirely preventing the hook from fixing itself.

If two worms are used, they should be put on according to the directions laid down by Cotton, which are as follows: "You are first to run the point of your hook into the head of your first worm, and so down through his body, till it be past the knot, and then let it out and strip the worm above the arming that you may not bruise it with your fingers till you have put on the other, by running the point of the hook in below the knot, and upwards through the body towards his head, till the hook be but just covered by it, which being done, you are then to slip your first worm down over the arming again, till the knots of both worms meet together."

Walton also gives directions for baiting a single worm which for bottom fishing is preferable to any other; the hook being by that mode less likely to catch in any slight obstacle it may encoun-

ter there ; but for every other purpose I consider my own plan the best. Walton's plan is set forth in the Complete Angler, in the following words :—" Put your hook into him (the lob worm) somewhat above the middle, and out again below the middle ; having so done draw your worm above the arming of your hook, then put the point of your hook into the very head of the worm till it come out near to the place where the point of the hook first came out ; and then draw back that part of the worm which was above the shank or arming of the hook, and so fish with it."

The same sort of rod should be used for bait fishing as for trolling with the minnow, and the line should be equally stout. The gut foot line should be at least two yards long, and the upper links pretty strong ; the last but one should have a double swivel, to which the hook link should be also attached, and this link should be of very fine gut, as a trout is shy of gorging a bait when stout gut is used. Care also must be taken to keep it clean, as it will become furred with using, when it will be more easily discerned by the fish.

The foot line should be leaded in proportion to the strength of the current in the same way as for minnow trolling, only that a far less quantity will suffice ; what will be required is to have a sufficient weight to keep the bait constantly under water, without sinking it too suddenly to the bottom.

In worm fishing the success will depend in a great measure in knowing the best places to make your casts ; otherwise much time and labour may be fruitlessly thrown away. Much time I have always remarked is lost by beginners from their always showing a marked preference for the large deep pools, in which though trout may be taken they never bite so boldly as in the scours and stickles, or the rippling runs at the head of a pool ; in fact, except when the waters are discoloured, little can be done in the still deeps with a worm, nor even then unless the banking system is resorted to in the manner practiced by honest Izaak and his scholar, when they spent their time so agreeably under the sycamore tree ; a mode of fishing that is rather tedious, and not to be compared to the more active process of worm trolling ; for I know no more apt term applicable to this active mode of worm fishing, which in fact very much resembles minnow trolling, only that in the more rapid parts the worm should be simply drifted onwards by the current, or slightly checked to put the bait in lively motion ; at the other

times it should be constantly played and kept actively spinning and turning at different depths, never being quite brought up to the surface, and never permitted to rest at the bottom. As a general rule the best place to make your cast is in the eddy, as near the head of the pool as you can, or in the eddies near the bank. The best places in fact are the stickles or rather the rapids at the higher end of the pools, and the more quiet parts close by the banks just clear of the rapid current; or in narrow spaces between weeds, or where the stream flowing over them causes a counter under current; to reach which the bait should be cast in the opposite eddy, and allowing it to sink rather deeply, draw your line across, when the bait being below the power of the stream will reach the desired spot. When the force of the main current is considerable, the eddies only should be fished.

As soon as you feel a bite be careful not to check the fish, and after waiting till such time as you think he will have gorged the bait, get your line nearly tight with him, and strike upwards in the contrary to which you find him moving. When you have hooked him, if he is a little one, pull him slap out at once; if a large one play him as carefully as you can, using every precaution to keep him clear of the weeds, as also of the roots under the banks, moats, or other strongholds he may strive for.

Sometimes a trout carries your line under the banks amidst roots and all sorts of incumbrances; promising fairly to get you as well as himself into difficulties, but if you are desirous of getting easily out of them, as also of catching the fish, you must be even content to take your chance, and not disturb him till you think he has swallowed the bait, trusting to your good fortune to get him out afterwards, which most probably if he's firmly hooked you'll succeed in accomplishing; but if you miss, the chances are that the loss of the fish is not the only one you will incur, there being a very long odds that the hook will lay hold of some root or other which it will be pretty certain to stick fast in. Should the latter at any time occur to you, don't stamp your foot on the ground or swear after the manner of some who shall be nameless; nor drive the spike of your rod furiously into the earth as I have known others do smashing their reels to pieces with the concussion; neither take off your hat and dash it forcibly to the ground—for none of these things can avail you any thing; but, "if you feel angry at the occurrence, count ten, if very angry twenty." Count

the numbers in a solemn and distinct manner, and whilst so employed look around you to see where you can cut a forked stick (if not already provided with one) which having made fit into the upper ferrule of your rod, having first unshipped the top for that purpose, holding the line in your left hand, run the cleft of the forked stick down it with your right till it reaches the hook, then give a gentle push forward, and unless the hook has got a turn round or is otherwise entangled you will clear it; and if it is entangled by pushing with a little more force, you may break off the gut close to the hook, and so save the greater part of your tackle. And don't let an accident of this kind deter you from again trying in a like spot, for I can promise very little hopes of success in this kind of fishing to those anglers who are over careful of their tackle: in fact one of its greatest advantages is, that it enables a person to catch fish in places where it is utterly impossible to throw a fly; nor is every ardent follower of the sport so fortunate as to enjoy the privilege of an open river to exercise his skill upon; he must therefore in many instances either abandon the pursuit altogether, or put his skill and ability to the proof by angling in such places as more fastidious anglers in the art will never venture their fortune in. Nor in fact are these spots in reality so inaccessible as they seem, whilst it should ever be remembered that these difficult places contain the best fish, and who will most probably bite too if you can but place your bait in a favourable point of view before their eyes: so that if an angler can but manage to get in his line there, he will be amply repaid for his labour.

One day I had been fly fishing in a brook that runs between Bishop's Waltham and Botley: the day was a very bright one, and the stream very clear, so I whipped away for a long time and caught nothing. At last I came to a part of the stream that was completely overgrown with lofty alder bushes, so much so indeed that, being then in full leaf, no part of the stream was visible through them. As I knew nothing of the country, having never fished in that part of the brook before, I walked on for some distance hoping to find it less incumbered, but all to no purpose; so I abandoned the fly for the time, and having cut away a few of the bushes so as to admit of my flipping in my bait, and a small portion of my line, I set to work amongst the clods of turf that were lying about the gutter drains, and soon picked up a supply of worms. Having baited with some of these I cast in through one

of the apertures I had made; the current being just sufficient to carry on my bait, I drawing out the line through the rings as it proceeded onwards; but it had not gone far before I had a bite and caught my trout too; then fresh baiting and casting again into the same opening I drifted further down, sometimes letting out the full length of my line, and when I had fished as far as the limits of my line would allow, I commenced pioneering again and cut away another space; and in this manner I fished all through these otherwise inaccessible parts of the stream, and so fortunate was I that my basket, a very large one, was not only filled, but the pockets of my fishing jacket also; (which fortunately for my future comfort was a washing one;) and yet but for trying in this apparently unapproachable part of the stream, I should in all probability have brought home an empty basket.

Many fine trout also have I succeeded in taking with a worm in places that no one else would have dreamt of trying in, dropping through small interstices in bushes that have completely overgrown the stream, and could I but get the bait to reach the water, it was pretty certain to be seized upon; yet casting in was not my only difficulty, for even when the bait was in the water some twig or other would be constantly laying an embargo on some part of my line, which often checking the fish, would cause him to abandon the bait; at other times, the fish darting quickly off, rendered it necessary I should strike immediately, when if I missed the bite it was seldom my hook did not get foul of something or other; but yet in spite of all these drawbacks, I have enjoyed many a pleasant day's angling in these troublesome places, and rarely failed in being able to show a handsome dish of fish at the conclusion of it.

In very hot weather, when compelled to abandon fly fishing on account of the brightness of the day, I have frequently met with great sport with a worm, by wading in the stream and drifting a long line down over the shallows a-head of me, and this at times would have been utterly useless to have tried from the banks. I have however found from long experience in these matters, that a small stream is much better adapted for this kind of fishing than a large river, though sometimes I have succeeded even there with a worm when every other plan had failed; but this I have rarely done in the deeper parts of the stream, nor have I ever caught many trout with a worm in a sluggish river, though I have had

excellent sport with perch and other fish with that bait in such places. A float is never required in fishing a trout stream, unless it is in the very dead waters, and even in these it may be dispensed with, as when a trout bites it may generally be discovered by the motion of the line, even where the rod is fixed and the bait allowed to remain stationary. A very killing way of catching trout, but it must be admitted a very poaching one, is when the waters are foul to use a number of willow rods, with a line of about three yards attached to them, which being baited with a good sized worm is cast into a quiet part of the pool, the rod is then stuck firmly in the ground. After some respite these rods are visited one after another; the fish taken off, and the hooks rebaited. Generally speaking this is an unfair way of fishing; the only places in which it can honestly be practised, are those brooks that from a scanty supply of water it is utterly hopeless to angle in at any other time; and not even in these can the banking system be justified, unless there is a great dearth of fish there, so that it is scarcely possible to catch a dish of fish by the ordinary means of a single rod and line,

The worm may be fished with all the year through, but when the flies are plentiful upon the water it is not so well taken as earlier or later in the season. It is generally taken best towards the autumn. In the spring the best time is from the middle of February to to the middle of April.

Many persons erroneously imagine that nothing can be done with a worm except in a discoloured water, but this is incorrect. When the waters are discoloured the fish are certainly often found to bite very freely, and as at such times the presence of a clumsy bungler cannot be so easily detected, or his ill-arranged tackle noticed by the fish, it sometimes happens that at those times he catches some of them; but a really good angler will never quarrel with a clear stream if it is well broken up into scours and stickles. As for myself, I always, even for worm fishing, prefer a limpid stream to a turbid one; though a slight tinge on a clear stream upon the clearing up of a flood it must be admitted is an improvement; but I have an utter dislike to fish in a puddled water. The best weather for worm fishing is a grey overcast sky, neither too hot nor too cold, though I have met with good sport in all weathers, and have sometimes been doomed to disappointment when it

has appeared most favorable that could possibly be desired for the purpose.

In the summer months I have known very fine trout taken with the gentle, or rather a string of them, which should be strung on the hook by running the barb through their narrow end, using about a half a dozen or so, more or less, according to the proportion they bear to the hook they are to be fished with; the latter of which by the way must not be a very large one. This bait should be fished with in the same way as the worm, and in the same places. The best time for using it is early in the morning or late in the evening. The cadis may be used in much the same way, only that they must be strung up by the neck.

I have also taken trout with slugs when I could procure nothing else, and I found the trout take them freely enough; but I have not repeated the experiment often enough to give a positive opinion of their merits, as I have never put them to the proof, except when my other bait has fallen short, from the fish biting so freely: so that whether this bait would entice them when inclined to practice the total abstinence system, I can at present offer no opinion.

Another very destructive bait is the preserved salmon spawn, which is made with the roe of a salmon when in an advanced state, which being boiled for about a quarter of an hour in water, is then beat up in a mortar with salt and saltpetre, (equal parts,) in about the proportion of an ounce to a pound of roe, the membranes being afterwards picked out, the roe is put into gallipots, and mutton fat run over it to exclude the air, in which way it will remain good for a long time.

It should be drifted down the stream in somewhat the same manner as the worm, only it is the better plan to try in the more tranquil parts of the stream, always keeping the bait near the bottom. It is not so lively a bait as the worm, but is a very killing one, particularly in the autumn months. It is well taken when the bait is allowed to lie ledger at the bottom of a quiet pool, when the fish attracted by its smell, will soon or late seize upon it. The usual size of the bait is about that of a horse bean, in which form it may be cut out of the paste with a pen knife, or moulded into shape with the fingers. When a bite is felt the fish should be allowed to turn with it before you strike, when, if he is a good one, he will lose no time before he gorges it.

I have sometimes had very good sport with the spawn fresh from the salmon before the fish has been very far advanced in that way; and as for the eels they are perfectly voracious after it, being enabled by their keen sense of smell to nose it out from a considerable distance.

THE BAIT

THE BAIT

The bait is a small fish, about the size of a minnow, and is found in the rivers and streams of the north of Scotland. It is a very voracious creature, and is particularly fond of the spawn of the salmon. It is a very common bait for the salmon, and is used in the same manner as the minnow. It is a very good bait, and is particularly useful in the rivers and streams of the north of Scotland. It is a very common bait for the salmon, and is used in the same manner as the minnow. It is a very good bait, and is particularly useful in the rivers and streams of the north of Scotland.

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SECTION II.

Lake and Pond Fishing.

Although the common trout is usually considered as strictly a river fish, it will thrive exceedingly well in a pond where the soil suits it, and the water is of a good quality. The best bottom seems to be a clear gravel, and the worst clay, in the latter of which trout never do well and rarely breed; nor will they ever get on well in a stagnant muddy water whatever the nature of the soil may be. A trout pond ought to be fed with a running stream sufficient to keep the waters from becoming stagnated during the summer months, and that will become large enough in the latter part of autumn to receive such fish as may be inclined to travel up it, in order to deposit their spawn there; such places being better adapted for vivifying it than the deeper and more extensive waters; and even the great grey trout, which as I have before stated is a distinct species from the common trout, and solely an inhabitant of the lake, (being very rarely caught by the angler in any of the streams that discharge themselves into it,) will yet ascend the latter for some considerable distance for the purpose of spawning; having doubtless some instinctive knowledge that the latter localities are better adapted to its preservation and increase than their usual and more extended haunts.

But notwithstanding the streams communicating with ponds and lakes are better adapted for the breeding of the fish, they are generally found to improve most both in growth and condition in the larger waters; and no idea can be more erroneous, than that trout will not acquire good condition in a pond: in fact I have known instances, far too many to recount, where persons who have constructed fish ponds, and never taken any trouble to stock them beyond allowing the trout from the rills with which the pond was fed to descend into them, which have in a very short time been

stored with good sized trout, though nothing but very pigmies were to be met with in the brooks from whence they came. It has indeed been shown from experience that the growth in fish depends greatly on the contracted or large extent of waters in which they are located, as well as the quantity of food with which they are supplied. Carp which are kept in glass globes are found to increase but very slowly in bulk, scarcely acquiring as many ounces in their straitened dwelling, as they would have reached pounds in a wide expanse of water. The same indeed has also been found to occur where gold and silver fish, or even roach or minnows, have been confined within very narrow limits. Professor Wilson in fact mentions an instance of a minnow of about an inch long, that he kept for two years confined in a small glass vessel, during which time it did not perceptibly increase in size, though he considers it would have attained twenty times that bulk in cubic dimensions had it remained in its native stream; and the trout which I before alluded to* as stated having lived for upwards of twenty years in the well in Dumbarton castle, never during that time increased in size, which there can be little doubt he would have done had he been permitted to range at large in the stream.

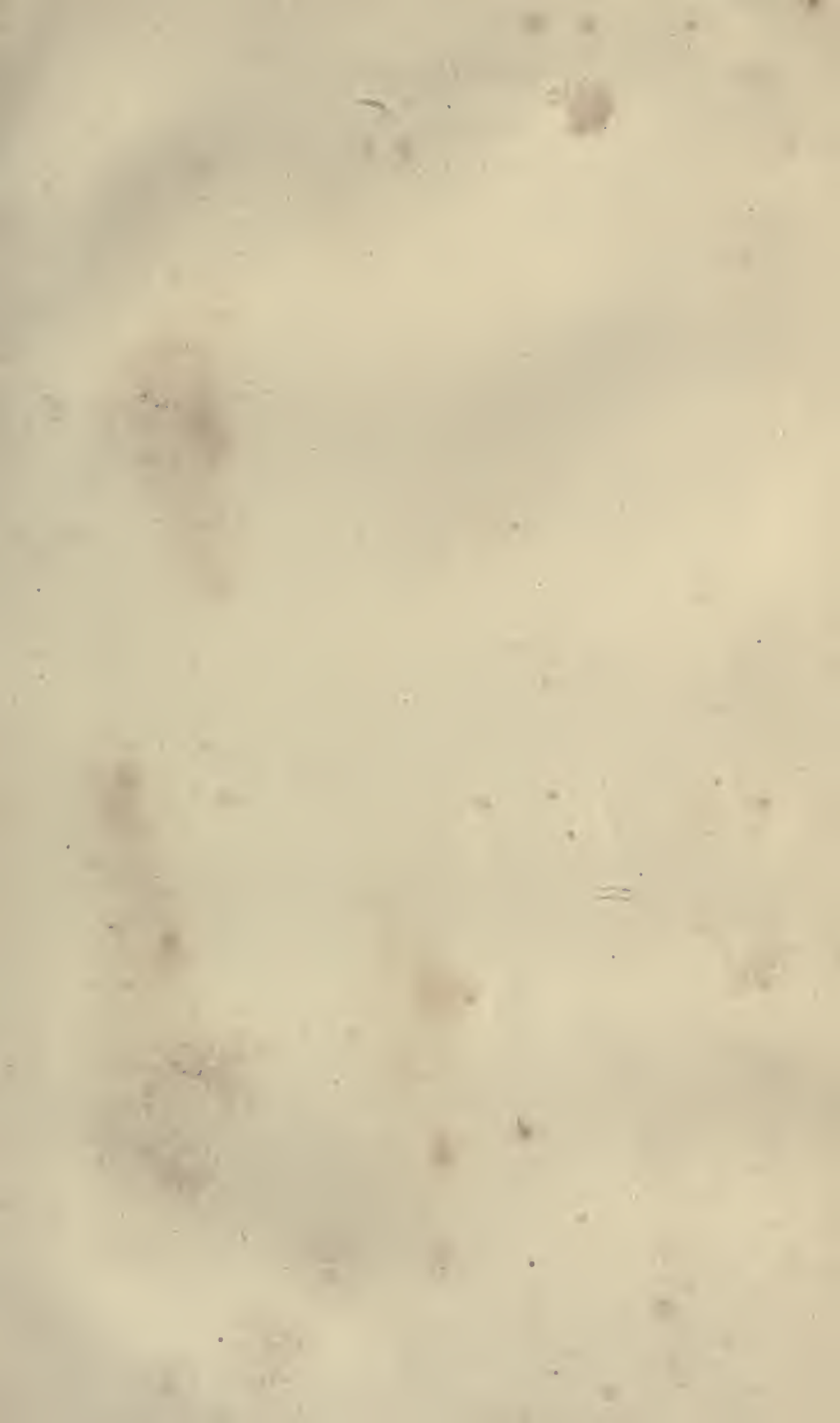
Trout may be fished for in ponds with the same baits both real and artificial as are used for catching them in the streams, unless you are prevented from so doing by weeds or obstructions of that kind, which in standing waters are often found to interfere greatly with the angler's pastime. It is not often however that the whole surface of the water is so coated over as to prevent angling on the top with the artificial fly, and though in some ponds this may occur, yet it rarely happens but that some space may be found upon which a fly may be thrown. This observation is particularly applicable to those spots cattle are in the habit of resorting to, which however shallow they may be, are invariably the best parts of the pond for fly fishing, let the other parts be ever so good. If a pond is tolerably free from weeds, the most gravelly parts are generally the best, and in ponds that are much clogged up with them, there is often a clear space near the shore; and here if the angler throws in his fly, keeping himself at the same time well out of sight, he will stand the best chance of sport. Indeed let the

* Sup. p. 18

pond be as clear of weeds as it may, it is the best plan to make a cast in shore first; as large fish when prowling about in search of food are sure to come there, well knowing that in that quarter they are the most likely to obtain it.

The like observations will also be equally applicable to large waters where a boat is employed; and most anglers will find that by keeping at a moderate distance from shore, fishing inwards, dropping into even the shallowest waters, they will in the long run, not only catch more, but much finer fish than by casting outwards into the deeps. But it often happens that there is some gravelly bar or spit rising some distance from the shore, or running out a considerable distance from it, and shallows of this kind are always depending localities in ponds or lakes; and although at certain times fish will rise in very deepest parts of the lake, where doubtless there are plenty of them at all times; yet when pinched by hunger they generally leave their more secure retreats in the deep to forage for supplies in the shallow waters. Every pond and lake has in fact some parts far better than others, and where the limits are not too extended, the anglers best plan will be to try every where, when he will most likely light upon them. When a boat is used, as little splash as possible should be made with the oars or pole, either in propelling the boat or keeping it stationary. When the wind is favourable for the purpose it is a good plan to allow the boat to drift before it either broadside, or end on, according to the strength of the breeze, for if drifted in the latter position when a fresh wind is stirring, the progress of the boat would be far too rapid.

Either minnows or the brass killdevil may be employed to great advantage in ponds that are free from weeds, being the best bait that can be there used to entice the larger fish. If you fish from the land, it is the best plan to make a cast, and then walking on by the water side draw on your bait after you, first rather in shore, and then deeper, till you have tried over all the ground you can reach; but make as no more casts than you can help, as by so doing as I before remarked,* you are likely to excite the suspicion of the fish. If you troll from a boat, you should have out a good length of line, and also a long rod to keep your baits clear of the boat, which should be rowed along gently through the water.





View of the River
from the Boat

This mode of fishing is usually practised for catching the great lake trout, only that the bait is a small trout or parr; and though I have not yet had an opportunity of making the experiment, I have little doubt a good sized brass killdevil would be one of the most attractive baits that could be used. As the great lake trout is very powerful in its native element strong tackle must be employed. The line should be of fine whipcord prepared in boiled linseed oil, that is to say, steeped in the oil for about five or six months, when it will turn out a most excellent line for this purpose, as also for trolling for pike. The footline should consist of three strands of good round silkworm gut of even lengths but loosely twisted. If the real bait is used, tackle fitted like that for minnow trolling, (where the loaded wire is used instead of spitting the minnow on the main hook,) should be employed with flyer hooks of about No. 2. or 3, tied back to back. There should be three or four stout swivels to prevent the line from twisting and kinking, and the hooks should be of excellent temper, as a good sized grey trout would put their metal to the proof, there being no stronger fish in proportion to its bulk to be met with in the fresh water or the sea either, not yielding in this respect even to the salmon; with this difference, that the effort of the salmon seems to be to get away from the scene of danger, and may be compared to the active speed and strength of the greyhound, whilst the lake trout with dogged determination strives to hold his ground with the pertinacity of a bull dog. It will not therefore do to pull too hardly against him, or to be too impatient to get him either aboard or ashore, and if you choose to persist in attempting it, the chances are that your skill never places him there.

They grey trout may be considered more as a fish of prey than any other of the salmo genus, feeding chiefly on fish, and rarely rising at a fly after it attains any considerable size. Professor Wilson however mentions that he was an eye witness to one of six or seven pounds being taken with a fly in Loch Assynt, yet he seems to have considered it as rather an unusual event to catch one of that size by that means, though some of three times that weight have frequently been taken in trolling, to say nothing of the numbers that have made their escape by breaking the tackle. Being of an extremely greedy nature they are often caught by night lines of very clumsy construction baited with dead fish, and some of the largest are taken by this means; yet such is their strength,

that they often manage to rend this stout tackle asunder before they can be brought within the reach of the gaffhook or landing net. When younger however their tastes appear to be different, as till they reach a pound weight they will rise very freely at an artificial fly, but as children outgrow their early taste for tarts and sweatmeats, so do these fishes after they attain a couple of pounds weight, eschew the flies thus formerly so much delighted in for more solid fare; preying without pity or remorse upon such of the weaker finny inhabitants of the lake, as they may chance to pounce upon, and displaying such ferocity, as well as courage, as to have acquired the destructive appellation of *salmo ferox*. A title by no means inappropriate; for when one of these fish has made a run and seized upon a bait, he will not part with it, though dragged onwards with some force, but still keeping it tightly compressed between his powerful teeth will continue to hold on, till drawn further than he likes, he suddenly expands his jaws, and the mangled bait is drawn out without his being injured by a single hook; still when this occurs, at the very next cast he will most probably run again, and this time I would recommend you immediately to give away sufficient line, allowing the fish to turn right away if he will with the bait, and then pull as hard as you safely can the contrary way to his movements, when if you do draw the bait out of his mouth, you must at the same time draw your hooks through it, and the chances are that in so doing one or other of them will take fast hold, and if this takes place, look sharp, for depend upon it, the previous struggle will be nothing to the one you have now to expect; but it is a kind of bull dog fighting affair, and if you are not too violent you will most likely come off the victor, for though the grey trout may be stronger than the salmon he has not the activity of the latter fish, and therefore is not likely to start away upon his travels in the way a salmon does: added to which the grey's struggles seem more a matter of dogged hard fighting than of cunning, though on reaching the surface when apparently tired out, he frequently makes a desperate dart downwards, and if he takes the angler unprepared at that critical time, he often breaks some part of the tackle and escapes. The first and last struggles of the grey trout are those most to be dreaded. It is much to be regretted that a fish that affords such sport should not be a more general one in this kingdom. It is found in a great many of the lakes in Ireland, and in most of the deep and large lochs in Scot-

land, as also in some of the great lakes in Cumberland; but as far as I can learn, it is not found in any of those in the midland or southern counties.

The flesh of this fish does not like the salmon acquire the beautiful pink colour, being more of a yellow orange cast; nor is it considered in flavour equal to the common trout, but the fact is, the flavour is a totally different one. When eating therefore a fish of this kind, you must neither expect to find the flavour of a trout or salmon, but one peculiar to the fish itself, which is the only way to do justice to its edible merits. What man would relish a red mullet, if he expected it to have the flavour of a trout or a salmon?

But to return again to the pond, which I cannot take my departure from till I have said a little about bait fishing, which is a good way, take it for all in all, for catching fish there, as either fly fishing or trolling. The best bait is a worm, though in some waters preserved salmon spawn will answer equally well. In bait fishing in a pond for trout, you may use two or three rods, either with or without a float: you should select such places for casting in as are most free from weeds. I have almost invariably found the spots the cattle are in the habit of resorting to, the most depending places as well for bait fishing as the fly. So if you chance to arrive at a strange pond and see the cattle occupying any part of it, you have only to drive them ashore, and you have the best spot you could possibly have chosen. Fish have no fear of cattle beyond that of being trodden on by them, and therefore should the latter kick up a little splash in being driven ashore, there is no fear even if the fish are forced away for the time, but that they will speedily return again.

In ponds where the bottom is clear, being quite free from weeds or large stones to intercept the hook, I have found it a good plan to make a very long cast, throwing out as far as I possibly could, my line being baited with a single worm in the way pointed out by honest Izaak,* and tolerably heavily leaded if the water is deep. After letting it rest for about five minutes, my plan is to draw it almost at a snail's pace over the bottom, taking care to give line when I feel a bite, and in this way I have taken many fish, when with a line close alongside I had allowed to lay ledger, I was

*See ante p. 114.

unable to obtain a bite. This plan can of course only be available where the bottom is clear and unobstructed, for if the ground should prove foul, the first weed or other obstacle your hook comes in contact with, it will probably become entangled in, and which if you get clear of without further loss, will have injured your bait, as well as alarmed the fish.

In pond fishing for trout, early and late I have found them take best in shore, but in the middle of the day I have met with most success in fishing the deep water; excepting always the cattle stands—I have also found, even where the waters have been by no means clear, that it is the better plan to fix the rod in the ground, and to stand back at some distance from the brink, having a little stray line so that the fish may not be checked too suddenly by a dead pull on the rod when he bites. I have seldom used a float, as it has rarely happened I could not detect a bite by the motion of the line. Whenever I have met with a bite, my practice has been to step forward, and raising the rod gently get in the stray line, if the fish by running right off does not tighten it for me; and when the line is nearly tight to strike sufficiently hard to hook the fish. If I struck before I got a tight line, I generally found the fish made his escape, and I rarely hooked a fish striking in that way unless he had previously gorged the bait. The effect of striking when the line is slackened is only to produce a kind of jarring sensation, which is rarely sufficient to drive in the hook beyond the barb, though it is pretty certain so to alarm the fish as to cause him to cast away the bait, which, whilst the affront is fresh in his memory, he will not very easily be prevailed upon again to lay hold of.

And now in concluding my remarks on the trout I would strongly recommend every one of my angling readers when they have succeeded in catching their trout, if he be large enough to retain, forthwith to put him out of his misery by rapping his nose pretty smartly against the toe of their boot or shoe, whichever for the time being they may chance to wear, which will speedily kill him. Some of the smaller ones may be easily dispatched by turning back the heads over the shoulders till a faint crack informs you you have succeeded in breaking the fish's neck, who then dies instantaneously. The latter plan has however this disadvantage: that when you come to fry these trout, every head will separate from the shoulders in the frying pan, in a manner that appears very

unaccountable in the eyes of the cooks, who are not aware of the cause.

Not only is it right to kill a trout before you bag or basket him, on the score of mere humanity, but even for your own convenience; as the struggles of an expiring trout, particularly a large one, which you may sensibly feel if you carry your own basket, is by no means a pleasant sensation, and a sudden movement is apt to startle a person of excitable nerves. The British Naturalist gives rather a ludicrous account of the results produced by an alarm of this kind to a learned Professor of one of the Scotch Universities, who having one day succeeded in landing a very large trout, put it alive into his basket, and as the day was favorable renewed the pursuit with even more ardour than before; but at length his hook unfortunately got entangled in the bank which was rather steep, covered with long grass and bushes, and contained the holes of water rats, shrews, and as was understood otters. As he lay along the bank, and stretched down to disentangle the hook, the trout in the basket on his back gave a flutter, and the belt of the basket came in contact with his neck. The idea that *lutra* had him by the throat in vengeance for the inroad made upon his mansion and preserve darted across the angler's mind; to escape from the foe he tried to start up, but position had given his heels buoyancy, and he pitched somerset-wise into the water. We are not, however, favoured with the name of the learned Professor, yet I fancied that in that most talented elaborate and facetious treatise on angling, "The Rod," I might have met with something that might have enlightened me a little upon the subject; but I sought closely and in vain for it there: all we can do therefore is to hope that the ducked angler did not belong to a family subject to rheumatism, or that if he did he sustained no serious attack of that disorder in consequence of his unlooked for immersion.

SECTION III.

MIGRATORY SALMONIDÆ.

The Salmon.

The salmon is a fish too well known to require any particular description. It is a very general fish, frequenting most of our rivers, though from being so much sought after its numbers are far less in the Southern parts of the kingdom than formerly, when it was the common practice to insert in the indentures of all the parish apprentices when bound out, that they should under no circumstances be required to eat salmon oftener than two days out of seven. The cause of this falling off may be attributed in a great measure to the cupidity of the owners of the lower parts of the river, who erect weirs it is impossible for the salmon to pass over, except during the time of heavy floods. The greater portion of the fish therefore that are detained by this barrier, being caught by the owners of these weirs, but few are left to ascend to reproduce their species; and of those that do go up by far the greater number are taken in their progress, or are doomed to perish by the spear of the poacher when in the act of depositing their spawn; the effect of which must be apparent to every one: added to which immense numbers of the tiny fry that seek shelter from the strength of the turbulent current of the river in the more quiet leats that supply the neighbouring mills, are destroyed by the turning off the water, which it is the common practice to do for the express purpose of catching them; so that what with the weirs below, a considerable sprinkling of fishermen fair and foul above, and the poachers, it is really wonderful how salmon should be as

plentiful as they are, or in fact that the race should not be all but exterminated.

Salmon are in best condition when first they come up from the sea, being then of a dark colour over the back, which strongly contrasts with the silvery scales beneath. At this time they are infested with a parasitical insect, and it is said by some that the annoyance they receive in consequence is the cause of these fish abandoning the sea, as these vermin soon die in the fresh water. Be this as it may, they produce no ill effect on the health or condition of the salmon, which are ever found to be in the best condition when these vermin are on them. After being a short time in the fresh water, the colour of the back assumes a lighter tint, whilst the sides and under parts assume a duller cast, approaching sometimes even to a dusky hue: and the low jaw particularly in the male becomes elongated to a considerable degree, turning upwards in a hooked form. The spawn is deposited amongst the gravel, and just as this takes place the fish are at their very worst; but immediately after this they cast off their old scales, and assuming fresh ones regain in some degree their former appearance, but which bears about the same proportion to what they looked in their prime, as a man just recovering from the jaundice would bear to one of healthy appearance, so that notwithstanding some little improvement may take place, these fish can never be said to be fit for food till their constitutions have been again renovated by a visit to the sea, which the greater part make off for soon after the moulting is over, though some remain behind till the spring is somewhat advanced, and by that means not unfrequently get beneaped, like ships in a bar harbour for want of sufficient water to float them from pool to pool.

The distance that salmon will ascend the fresh waters, even to the very spring head, and the difficulties they will overcome to arrive there, is truly wonderful. Instances have occurred of these fish travelling some hundred leagues from the sea, having in their course to leap up over cascades and struggle through rapids, a person unacquainted with the extraordinary powers of the fish would scarcely believe possible; though instances frequently occur of their perishing by missing their aim, and being cast on the dry rocks, where they are either killed by the violence of the fall or expire on the dry land, being unable again to reach the natural element. At the fall of Kilmorac on the Beaulay in Invernesshire,

the author of the *British Naturalist* informs us accidents of this kind very frequently occur ; and indeed it is said they were so frequent there that the Frazer's of Lovat, who were the lords of the manor, were in the habit of entertaining their guests with a boiled salmon, who as one of the wonders of the place, voluntarily offered himself as a sacrifice, by jumping into a kettle of boiling water placed for that express purpose on a flat rock on the south side of the fall ; and although the company might sometimes have been kept waiting for their dinner, it does not appear that they were often disappointed of it altogether. A noted salmon leap in the Tivy in Pembrokeshire, is also noticed by Camden in his *Brittania*, and celebrated by the pen of honest Michael Drayton, in the following lines :

“ And when the salmon seeks a fresher stream to find,
 Which hither from the sea comes yearly by his kind ;
 As he towards season grows, and stems the watery tract
 When Tivy falling down, makes an high cataract,
 Forc'd by the rising rocks that there her course oppose,
 As though within her bounds they meant her to inclose ;
 Here, when the labouring fish does at the foot arrive,
 And finds that by his strength he does but vainly strive ;
 His tail in his mouth, and bending like a bow
 That's to full compass, drawn himself along doth throw,
 Then, springing at his height, as doth a little wand,
 That bended end to end, and started from man's hand,
 Far off itself doth cast ; so does the salmon vault,
 And if at first he fail, his second summersault
 He instantly essays : and from his nimble ring,
 Still jerking never leaves until himself he fling
 Above the opposing stream.”

Although salmon advance so great a distance up the fresh water, yet they frequently make pauses or stages, in their route, either to rest for a season from their fatigues, or else waiting for a rise in the waters, so as to enable them to pass over falls and obstacles of that kind ; or from an instinctive fear of venturing within the more narrow limits of the stream, till the whole body of water by the autumnal springs, shall be elevated to a sufficient bulk to afford them some degree of security. In this way as fresh arrivals are still taking place, if the fish were allowed to remain undisturbed there would soon be an immense assemblage ; but this is rarely

permitted; as but few known resting places escape being swept daily by nets, and unless from the inaccessible nature of the ground, it rarely happens that the salmon are long permitted to remain in peaceable possession of their quarters. Some places there are where the sean cannot be used, but even there the spear or dip net are resorted to. A remarkable place of this kind at the Keith of Blairgowrie, is mentioned in the *British Naturalist*.

The river there, which in times of drought is so narrow that an active man might easily leap over it, the waters after a fall of about thirteen feet, discharging themselves into the pool below, have hollowed out a deep and circular well of thirty feet deep, in which during the continuance of dry weather, the salmon, for want of a sufficient supply of water to achieve the ascent, accumulate in such numbers, that in a favourable state of the light they may be seen, not merely covering the extent from side to side, but actually built as it were one stratum above another, all hanging suspended in the water, and waiting till a flood by overflowing the whole bed should convert the narrow gorge into a broad rapid, over which they may then ascend. Great numbers, the same learned writer observes, are caught there by a bag net on the end of a very long pole, which is plunged into the water until the net is supposed to be further down than the salmon, when it is moved laterally out of the place where it was plunged and drawn to the surface, and generally with success, though it seems the pursuit is attended with some danger on account of the slippery nature of the rocks; added to which, the fishers having to overhang the rocks to obtain the best fishing, are sometimes thrown off their balance by the struggles of the fish and precipitated into the abyss, from which escape is very difficult, even for the most expert swimmer to effectuate his escape.

Salmon ascend different rivers although within a very short distance from each other, at different seasons of the year; and are in good condition in the one, when they are utterly worthless as an article of food in another, and this even where they all discharge themselves into the same estuary, which is a circumstance so well known in these localities, that the fence days have been extended in those rivers the fish are in the habit of ascending late in the year, allowing them to be fished after it becomes unlawful to do so in the more early waters of the neighbourhood, as occurs with respect to the river Plym, which with the Tamar discharges itself

into Plymouth sound, the latter of which together with the Camel, and some others, by a special act of parliament, it is allowable to fish for salmon in after the fisheries have elsewhere closed for the season. It has been remarked that those rivers that issue from extensive lakes are generally the earliest; whilst the exact reverse has been noticed of rivers, whose waters are swollen by the melting of the snow. A striking instance of this, though by no means the only one that might have been adduced, is mentioned by Sir W. Jardine, and quoted by Mr. Yarrell, respecting two rivers in Sutherlandshire. "One the Oikel, borders the county, and springs from a small alpine lake, perhaps about a mile in breadth; the other, the Shin, is a tributary to the Oikel, joins it about five miles from the mouth, but takes its rise from Loch Shin, a large and deep extent of water, and connected to a chain of other deep lochs. Early in the spring all the salmon diverge at the junction, turn up the Shin, and return again as it were to their own warmer stream, while very few keep the main course of the Oikel until a much later period." Walton also mentions a singular occurrence respecting the salmon of the Dee and the gwyniards of Pemplemere. "The river Dee which runs by Chester springs in Merionethshire, and as it runs towards Chester, it runs through Pemplemere, which is a large water: and it is observed, that though the river Dee abounds with salmon, and Pemplemere with the gwyniad, yet there was never any salmon caught in the mere, nor a gwyniad in the river.

On their first arrival from the sea salmon will not often either rise readily at a fly or take a bait; seeming to require a little rest before they look about for food; and it is generally after an increase in the waters has sent them again upon their travels, that they are found to take most freely; a slight rise, and a water a little coloured being the best time for catching them. But they rarely if ever take well in turbid waters. The greatest numbers are usually caught after they have passed their prime, particularly on their return in the spring, but being at the latter time wholly unfit for food, it is a great pity that any one should then be put to death.

A salmon is not like a trout generally to be found lying under the banks or in the shallows, but usually in the deepest and central parts of the pool. In casting therefore the best plan is to throw first on the opposite side drawing your flies across the stream by a

succession of jerks. When a fish rises let him just turn and then with a twitch fix the hook ; then be wary having all your wits about you, as he will most likely dash off with amazing velocity often springing to a considerable height out of water the moment he feels the prick of the hook, causing your reel to fly buzzing round as the line rapidly unwinds itself ; but even then you must follow up your fish, and get in line again as quickly as you can, as finding his first effort unavailing, he will very probably make for the bottom, as he does indeed sometimes in the first instance, and endeavour to grub out the hook against the gravel, this he will the more easily be enabled to do if you allow him too great scope of line, though if a heavy fish, and determined to have his own way in this matter, it is no easy task to prevent him. Throwing in stones and clods is often resorted to in this extremity ; but if you have an attendant who can reach him with a long rod, and just awaken his attention by a poke in the ribs, it will be sure to arouse him to action, particularly if you fix a stout darning needle at the end of it. If you have space it is generally the better plan not to check the fish, or be too anxious to turn him, as many anglers are too apt to do when they hook a moderate sized fish, and they can depend upon the strength of their tackle ; for if you persist in endeavouring to turn the fish against his will, he will be very likely to plunge and flutter at the surface, and so detach the hook which is much more apt to break its hold in a small than a large salmon ; the mouth of the former being remarkably tender. Force indeed seldom succeeds in salmon fishing, and a too eager desire of making the fish your own too soon, is often the cause of your losing him outright. A salmon cannot be mastered without being played for a considerable time, and even when apparently exhausted will frequently make a fresh effort and escape. This often happens when the fish on first showing his side is supposed to be utterly exhausted, and is consequently too hastily attempted to be grounded on the shallows, when, being aroused to a sense of his danger, he flounders about and frequently either breaks his hold or the tackle. Many a fine salmon indeed has been lost even when thoroughly tired out by an attempt to draw him onwards as he lays on his side upon the shallows on which he is grounded, when the additional strain this brings upon the hook frequently causes the hold to give way ; which, when the fish discovers, if he has a kick left in him he'll not fail to avail himself of it. Some say you should use

no gaff hook as it injures the appearance of the fish ; but as it is very difficult to land a weighty fish by hand, I don't consider the gaff can often safely be dispensed with.

Salmon flies are not often intended to represent any particular insect : the form is generally that of the dragon fly although of all sorts of gaudy colours. Sometimes a fly like the May fly only twice the size, is found to answer. There is also a good fly made with brown sable, with a bold red hackle wound round it, and with a gilt tag at the end of the tail, the wings being of the grey feather of a mallard ; as also the horse leech fly, having a long body of deep blue floss silk inclining to purple, with a black hackle under the wings, which should be of the dark speckled feather of a teal. The hooks should be long in the shank of the best temper. In this respect the Limerick are the best ; but from their form, I do not consider they keep so firm a hold as those of the Kirby bend.

It often however happens that a salmon rises at an ordinary trout fly, when in fact his presence is by no means anticipated, though he never can prove an unwelcome visitor ; in fact the only drawback is the apprehension of your too soon parting company, as is too often found to occur even at your very earliest salutations : still many a noble salmon has been caught with the ordinary trout tackle, a feat highly creditable when it can be accomplished, particularly with a high conditioned fish, fresh run from the sea.

But though the fly is decidedly the sporting lure for a salmon, they are sometimes taken with a well scoured lob worm ; and honest Izaak mentions an angling acquaintance of his who was remarkably fortunate in angling in this way for salmon, and that he made his baits the more enticing, by putting his worms for a half an hour or so in a small box, which was anointed with a drop, or two or three of the oil of ivyberries, which imparted a kind of smell that was irresistibly attractive ; enough indeed to force any fish within the smell of them to bite. But the most certain bait of all seems to be the preserved spawn of their own species, which if baited so as to cover a large sized hook and cast into a pool and allowed to lay ledger there, and there is a salmon in it, he will most probably ere long smell it out and feast on it without scruple.

Salmon are sometimes taken, and still oftener hooked in spinning the minnow for trout, though upon the whole it is not so attractive

a bait for them is the fly. They are also often taken by anglers when trolling for pike, but as this generally takes place in the winter months, it rarely occurs that salmon caught in this way are in a fit condition for the table ; and if it be true that the fish is then guarding its spawn, as many persons of experience in these matters have assured me is the case, and that it merely assails the trolling bait upon the supposition the latter is seeking to devour the eggs, it is still more to be regretted that salmon thus taken should ever be destroyed. Certain it is that the frequent runs a salmon will continue to make at these times, after being forcibly drawn along, and sometimes even hooked, as contrasted with his ordinary caution, shows he must be actuated by some stronger propensity than the mere impulse of hunger ; which in fact seems not to be his motive, as in the numberless instances I have known of salmon running in this manner, I never knew of his pouching the bait in any one single instance : the only apparent object being to destroy the intruder, whom having crushed between his powerful jaws, he instantly casts forth without attempting to swallow ; and yet he will run again as fiercely as ever at the next bait that is cast in before him. I remember once begging hard for a salmon's life that had been running in this manner ; in fact affording a brother angler a very good afternoon's amusement. As the angler was fishing with a gorge bait, which the salmon as usual refused to bolt, only giving it an angry shake and throwing it away, he had consumed his whole stock of bait to no purpose, when coming up with him, and he supposing it was a pike, stating what had occurred, I rigged him out some snap tackle, with which he was unprovided, and on the first cast the poor salmon made a rush at the bait, and this time was fastly hooked, and soon brought to land ; but before he reached it we found what manner of fish he was, though so thin and emaciated, as to be but a shadow of what he must have been when he quitted the salt water. It was I believe the longest salmon from nose to fork I ever saw, yet so thin that we could clasp it with our two hands in its thickest part, resembling much more as well in colour and condition a half starved hake, than the king of the fresh waters. Still it was a salmon, and on that account my friend was so desirous of exhibiting this trophy of his prowess, that it was not without some difficulty I persuaded him to re-commit the fish to the stream, though as an article of food it would have been utterly worthless.

Before going down to the salt water the young salmon are called smolts, and on their return they are called grilse, and are not styled salmon, till after they have spawned, and contributed their aid towards the increase of their species.

The Salmon Trout.

The salmon trout bears so strong a resemblance to the salmon, that many persons have supposed the latter to be merely the young of the latter fish; yet it is now clearly established that they are a distinct species. The salmon trout is a much smaller fish than a salmon, though Mr. Yarrell mentions that he had seen a female salmon trout that weighed 17 lbs.; but then salmon have been known to weigh upwards of 70 lbs., and salmon of 40 or 50 lbs. have often been taken, though it must be admitted they are now less frequently to be met with of that size than formerly, the days of so many being prematurely cut short by the unceasing war so constantly waged against them. The same remarks indeed are applicable to the salmon trout, which being even a more general fish than the salmon, striving to force his way up every brook and rivulet that discharges itself into the salt water; and here nets of every kind and description are ever at work, so that the only wonder seems to be how any can give their enemies the slip, and get into the fresh water at all: but which few have the fortune to do till the autumn floods have raised the waters above the bulk of the ordinary summer level. The first fish usually attempt to ascend such fresh waters as are large enough to receive them about the middle of May; these are generally the largest fish, being in fact those that having returned to the sea to recruit their health after spawning, are again desirous of visiting the fresh waters. The late arrivals which usually average about a pound each, are the fry that descended but a few months before, which have already attained that size, and which also will, unless their days are prematurely cut short, also deposit their spawn before the following spring.

The young usually make their first appearance about the latter end of February or the early part of March; increasing in bulk so very rapidly, that by the middle of April, under the title of salmon smolts, they are considered to afford by no means bad sport to the fly-fisher. I consider however that where fair play is used to sea-

ward, this should not be done, as the angler's forbearance would be amply repaid by allowing them to depart in peace, and await their return to the fresh water, when they would be a prize well worthy of his labours ; but where the monopolizing system of stake nets, and every impediment is thrown out to prevent the fish from coming within the angler's reach, I think he may then make free with the smolts ; but the salmon fry, which may be easily distinguished from them, by the strong black pectoral fin, (that of the smolt being smaller and of an orange colour,) should always be recommended to the stream.

The salmon trout is the same fish that Walton alludes to as the Fordidge trout, though he seems to have given him a credit for abstinence he does not in reality deserve ; for though like the salmon he is far from a greedy feeder, yet he will rise freely at a fly, and by that means great numbers of them may be taken. They will rise at the flies usually used for catching trout, though it has been found that they are more easily attracted by some gaudy artificial fly of very gay colour, and not made to imitate any known insect. One of the best flies I know for catching them is the golden spinner ; a fly I have before alluded to,* and a little black gnat with a slender dark body, having a black hackle or peawit top under the wing, the latter of the quill feather of a black bird, I have found a capital dropper fly. Some of the hackles ribbed with gold and silver twist are also found to answer very well.

The salmon trout is a very active fish and does not readily yield, generally springing out of the water the moment it is hooked, and then darting wildly about evidently very much astonished at the whole proceeding, will continue to resist for a considerable time. You must be very careful to prevent him from running under weeds, or the roots by the sides, and not try to land him too soon even if your tackle will bear the strain, as the mouth is tender, and if hooked in a fleshy part, if you pull too hard, the fish, by struggling violently at the top of the water, will very probably break the hold. In rivers that are slightly affected by the tide, just upon the rise is the best time. But where the tide runs with any force and discolours the water, then slack water is entitled to the preference. The best fish of this kind are usually taken just above the influence of the tide, where if you meet with a long

*See ante p. 56.

pool just below some rapid fall, you will often take a great many, either with an artificial fly or by baiting with preserved salmon spawn, which these fish are remarkably eager after. They will also bite at a worm or a gentle, and sometimes will run a minnow, though they do not take this bait so freely as a trout will.

For the table few fish stand in higher esteem than the salmon trout, being inferior only to the salmon: some indeed give it the preference. Like the salmon it loses its beautiful pink tint after it has been for some time in the fresh water, being always in the best condition upon its first arrival from the sea. After spawning the pink tint entirely vanishes which does not reappear again till the fish has had the benefit of a change of water in the sea.

Salmon smolts, and also parrs may be taken either with the worm or the fly, the former however seem to prefer a fly, and the latter a worm: indeed I have often caught a parr with a minnow when trolling for trout: and as for worms they never reject one on account of its size, and will bite again and again if missed, though actually pulled above water. In fact they sometimes hold on so tenaciously to the worm, that their teeth adhering to them they are thrown on shore without being hooked. They always resort to the swift gravelly scowers, and are rarely met with in the deep or quiet pools. Salmon smolts are found in all parts of the stream, and will take any small fly. The two best are a small red palmer ribbed with gold twist, and a little blue palmer with a dun body; but there are few small flies that they will not readily take. They rise best however just before sunset. Their mode of feeding seems to be influenced in a great measure by the locality they for the time being inhabit. When a lad I was in the habit of fishing for them in a large open pond, and here I never could prevail on one to take any bait but a fly, though in the streams that communicate with it they would take a worm very freely; so that I often caught three or four, and in one instance five and twenty out of the same pool, all which pools being in a small brook were all of very limited extent. A small worm is best adapted to these fish, and they seem to prefer the brandling to any other, though I have known them bite very eagerly at the small garden worm.

They will also take gentles, and one of these attached to the tail of an artificial fly when the weather is bright will generally

be found a good plan, especially when these fish are shy of rising.

Dr. Brookes in his treatise on angling mentions earwigs as a good bait for salmon smolts, but I myself have never tried the experiment,

The Bull Trout.

The bull trout rather resembles a trout than a salmon, having a larger head in proportion to its bulk than either the salmon or salmon trout, when the latter was in good order and condition; and in adult fish the tail of the bull trout becomes convex, the mouth is wider, and the teeth much larger and stronger than those of the salmon trout or salmon; he being in fact more of a fish of prey, and altogether much more like the great lake trout than any other of the salmon tribe.

The bull trout grows to a large size, instances having occurred of some attaining twenty pounds; but the greater part we meet with in most of our rivers do not reach more than half that weight.

It ascends the fresh waters in the same manner as the salmon and salmon trout, and the young fry of both description of fish are classed together indiscriminately under the appellation of salmon smolts. The second year the tail assumes a square form, at which time it is called a whitling: afterwards the central rays growing out increases with its age, and assuming by degrees a rounded or convex form, when it acquires the name of roundtail.

Although exceedingly plentiful in the Tweed, and some of the rivers in the Northern parts of the kingdom, it is not so general a fish as either the salmon or salmon trout, though there are few of our rivers in which it is not occasionally to be met with, and in some it is tolerably abundant.

They take the same baits as the trout, and are remarkably greedy after the spawn of the salmon, which is one of the best baits that can be used for catching them. Unlike the salmon trout they run eagerly at a minnow, and are so voracious as often to seize upon fish of considerable size, being often taken by persons when trolling for pike with the ordinary baits and tackling in common use for that purpose; and many fish that anglers have set down as trout, that they have taken in this manner, are in reality of the bull species, but which, after being a short time in

the fresh water, acquire so much the colour as well as the form of the common trout, that it requires a very practised eye to detect the difference.

There is no fish that affords better sport when hooked than the bull trout, being a remarkably powerful one, and a thorough game to boot, evincing evident proofs of his displeasure when hooked, and struggling most desperately to break free, though by his extreme violence he tires himself out the quicker, and if skilfully managed is much sooner subdued than a salmon of the same dimensions.

This fish is far less highly esteemed than the salmon trout, the flesh rarely if ever acquiring the beautiful pink hue that distinguishes the latter, being of a dull orange colour, growing gradually lighter the longer it remains in the fresh water. But though inferior to the salmon trout in flavour, it is a fish by no means to be despised as an article of food, being superior to most fish that are to be met with in our rivers; and were it not that their external resemblance to the salmon, induces persons to expect a fish of similar flavour, it would bear a much higher character than it at present obtains. If there was any species of perch, pike, or carp, that tasted like it, it would acquire a first rate reputation; all its ill fame is owing to its inferiority to the nobler members of the salmon family, with whom it is its fate to be connected.

SECTION IV.

OF THE GRAYLING AND INFERIOR SALMONIDÆ.

The Grayling.

The Charr.

The Gwyniad and Vendace.

The Smelt.

The Atherine.

The Grayling.

The grayling is easily distinguishable from any of the species of salmonidæ already noticed, by the larger size and texture of the scales, which bear a close resemblance to those of the dace and other cyprinidæ; but the two peculiar dorsal fins, mark plainly that it belongs to the salmon tribe. The true dorsal fin is particularly remarkable, as well as elegant in its form, being equal to half the height of the body, and beautifully marked and spotted with streaks and spots of dusky brown. In younger specimens the general colour is silvery, but as the fish increases in size it acquires more of a golden tinge, varying in colour when viewed in different lights, and growing more dusky as it advances in age: a dark colour in a grayling, according to Cotton, being the best proof of his high condition, in which he is seldom found except very early or late in the season; being, as Cotton very truly states, a winter fish; but such an one as would deceive any but such as know him very well indeed, for his flesh, even in his very worst season, is so firm, and will so easily calver, that in plain truth he

is very good meat at all times : but in his perfect season ; which by the way, he adds, ' none but an overgrown grayling ever will be, I think him to be as good a fish, as to be little inferior to the best trout that I ever tasted in my life.'

But notwithstanding the grayling is so good a fish, it is by no means a general one, though it seems to thrive well in every water in which I have known it introduced. In the Test in Hampshire which was stocked with this fish from the Avon, they thrived so well, that in the course of a few years many were found to have attained the weight of four or five pounds, and the same has also occurred in the Itchen, which was afterwards stocked with grayling transported from the Test. It is indeed to be desired that this fish could be introduced into all our rivers, as it would not only afford a pleasing variety to the angler's recreation, but would supply an excellent fish for the table when the trout are out of season ; and as the former fish will sport freely in moderate weather all through the autumn, winter, and spring, the angling rod need then never be laid aside.

As the spring advances the grayling begins to get out of season, spawning usually about the latter end of April or the beginning of May. His best season is about the latter end of the autumn ; his worst about the time the trout is in the highest perfection, though the grayling recovers his condition after spawning much more rapidly than the latter fish. To eat a grayling in perfection he ought to be dressed the same day on which he was caught, otherwise he loses much of that curdy firmness that renders him so superior a fish. Though active and swift in his motions, he does not migrate much from one part of the river to another ; and although these fishes have multiplied to a great degree both in the Test and the Itchen, they are as yet confined to certain limits which they do not seem inclined to extend ; and it has been remarked of them, by those who have had the greatest opportunities of watching their motions, that they are never like the rest of the salmon tribe, seen working their way over a fall or a rapid, but rather to descend the stream than to struggle against it, though as before remarked they are seldom found to wander far from their original locality.

The grayling is a very sportive fish, rising freely at a fly, and he may also be taken with the same baits as the trout, except the minnow, which from the smallness of his mouth he is not adapted to seize

upon; yet a large grayling will sometimes venture to run at a minnow, and some very fine ones have been taken by that means; but the best of all baits for him are the artificial fly, at which he rises even more boldly than the trout, and is not easily frightened away if you chance to miss the rise; but will rise again and again till you capture him, or he is alarmed by feeling the prick of the hook. Graylings however are often found to rise without taking the fly at all, merely knocking it under water as if to drown it in mere malice because the fly is not exactly to their taste; when this occurs, a gentle attached to the fly will often excite their avidity, and indeed in bright weather, when the glassy smoothness of the water renders it ill adapted for fly fishing, a gentle or a cadis attached to a small artificial fly will often be found to answer, when the artificial fly alone would be altogether rejected. A grayling rises in a much quieter manner than a trout, as he generally takes hold of the fly before he turns, so that you ought to have your eyes about you, and strike the moment you perceive him rise, otherwise you will probably be too late. When a grayling is hooked he does not often give a tearing struggle like the trout, and is rarely known to flounder about at the surface, but darts down at once for the bottom, endeavouring to rub out the hook against the ground; this you must take especial care to guard against, not using a longer line than is absolutely necessary, and having a rod of such a stiffness, that by keeping the butt well up you may have a good command over your fish, and this you can never have with a very limp rod, which however well it may cast a fly, is ever ill adapted in capturing a weighty fish. In playing a grayling the great object you must ever attend to, is to keep him from the bottom, and from running you under the weeds, for which reason, play him down the stream, and when he is exhausted, either grasp him in your hands, or use your landing net, and never attempt to lift him out by the rod and line, unless he be a small one, and his loss of little or no consequence; for though the grayling from the small square looking aperture like the grey mullet, appears to be a leather mouthed fish, he is not so in reality; for he has numerous small teeth in the jaws, though none on the tongue, and but a few on the anterior part of the vomer, and from the small flies that are used in fishing for him, if hooked only in a fleshy part, the hold may give way; though a grayling is not as is generally stated the most tender mouthed of all fishes: an opinion I cer-

tainly once entertained of him upon the authority of others, until a more intimate acquaintance with the subject has convinced me that such is not the fact.

The same flies may be used for the grayling as for the trout, only that from the formation of the mouth of the former fish, the smaller flies are the best adapted for the purpose.

Of baits the gentle in the early part of autumn is the best, and after that salmon roe, either preserved or fresh; in the spring they will take the cadis; and they will take a worm at all times, but the smaller worms are the best. They take a bait best about midwater, except salmon spawn, which is always taken best at the bottom.

In still deep pools a float may be used, but where there is a current, it is better to drift along the bait with just sufficient lead to keep it about midwater.

The Charr.

The charr is also of the salmon genus. Of this species there appears to be two varieties; one the Northern, and the other the Welsh charr; they are said sometimes to attain the length of two feet, but they are rarely met with of more than half that size. The position of the fins is like that of the trout, only that the Welsh charr is distinguishable from the Northern one, by the central fins being of a more rounded form; the eyes larger, the gape of the jaws wider, the teeth more powerful, and altogether it is a much stouter built fish, being in proportion to the other, as the bull is to the salmon trout. The upper part of the body is a deep brown, in both species, and the lower parts of a deep orange approaching to red, from which the Welsh charr is said to derive its name of *torgoch* or red belly; the pectoral, ventral, and anal fins also partake of this colour: the dorsal and caudal being of a dark brown, tinged with a darker colour, having a purple cast. The body, both above and below the lateral line, is marked with numerous red spots like those in the common trout. When out of condition the back becomes of a purplish brown, and the lower parts acquire a paler hue, whilst several white spots make their appearance above the lateral line.

The Northern charr is an inhabitant of the large lakes of the Northern part of the kingdom, and is also found in some of the lochs in Scotland and Ireland, but is never found to stray into any of the streams communicating with them, except for the purpose of spawning. It is a most delicious fish, but owing to its abstemious habits, it is rarely caught by the angler, though a few are sometimes taken with a minnow trolling from a boat; and sometimes a stray one may be caught with an artificial fly; but this does not frequently happen, and the idea of catching enough to make up a day's sport is wholly out of the question. In fact no sensible fisherman would think of wasting his time in fishing for them purposely, but when they do come to his hook then, from the extreme rarity of the circumstance, they are considered a prize well worth the capture. The fact is these fish inhabit the deepest part of the

lakes, where, finding sufficient food at the bottom, they do not approach the surface to look for it.

They are usually caught with nets, at the time they enter the streams communicating with the lakes for the purpose of depositing their spawn, which takes place about the months of November and December; but at this time they are out of season and very different from the splendid fish that sometimes falls to the angler's lot during the summer months, at which time these fish are in their highest state of perfection.

The Gwyniad and Vendace.

There are also two fishes somewhat resembling a herring, but having the dorsal fins peculiar to the salmonidæ, the former called a gwyniad, and the latter the vendace, both species found in some of our lakes; but it seems that neither kind is ever taken by anglers, nor are they held in very great esteem, so that any further notice of them in a work of this kind would be superfluous.

*The Smelt.*

Before taking my final leave of the salmonidæ, I cannot pass over the smelt, which, though last and least, is a truly delicious fish. Like the salmon it inhabits both the fresh and salt water, chiefly keeping within the influence of the tide. It will bite freely at small red worms, paste, preserved salmon spawn, soft crab, or a piece of boiled shrimp, and when the water is salt or brackish at the rag or hairy worm that inhabits the mud left by the receding tide. A long rod is advisable to give you a command over your line, which should be always fished with shorter than the rod. A gut foot line about a yard long, with four or five baited hooks looped on one above the another, called a paternoster line, should be used. The hooks should be very small, and the baits in proportion. You may fish either with or without a float. The plan I have generally found the most successful is to use no float, and

having a lead at the extreme end of the line sufficient to sink it to the bottom, then gently raising to the surface and sinking it again; striking almost the instant I felt a bite: though I have met with very lively sport by using a float, which is always preferable where there is any stream running.

The best spots are jetty heads or bridges, and in the quiet places sheltered from the stream of the tide. The great secret is to discover their place of resort, as they always swim in shoals, and where you meet with them one tide you may bargain for falling in with them again on the next day at the same time of tide. The flood is always the best, they rarely biting so boldly on the ebb.

The smelt, though plentiful on the Eastern and Western coasts of our Island, is by no means common in the British channel, though a fish something resembling it, and erroneously distinguished by the same appellation, is confounded with it. The latter fish is properly speaking the Atherine, and is easily distinguishable from the true smelt by the superior size of the second dorsal fin, which is even larger than the first, whilst that of the smelt is remarkably small, like the second dorsal fin in all the salmonidæ. The Atherine is also particularly remarkable for a bright silvery band that extends all along the side, giving it a very beautiful and attractive appearance. It is a very common fish all along the Southern coasts of the kingdom, and in its habits very much resembles the true smelt except that it does not advance quite so far up the fresh waters. It bites very freely, and great numbers may be taken in the course of a few hours with the paternoster line in the same way as the true smelt, and with the same baits, except the land worm, which the atherine will never take freely, if at all. Their places of resort are the same as the smelt, only that they rarely go beyond where the water is brackish. As they swim in shoals, the great thing is to keep with the multitude, as they are apt to shift their quarters, proceeding onwards with the tide as it rises, so that many places that are best adapted for the purpose at the first rise of the flood, become wholly deserted when it rises above a certain level.

The best plan to attract and keep these fish around you, is to collect a few of the common mud crabs, and pound these up with some pieces of chalk ground to powder, which throw in near your lines from time to time, and this compost, which the fishermen call

smother, will prove the most attractive means you can resort to. By this mode the fishermen generally manage to collect them together, and dip them out in dip nets suspended to a pole, and thus numbers are frequently taken in the course of a few hours. The spawning time of this fish is the latter end of May or the beginning of June; it is considered in best condition in the early part of April, but the best time for fishing for them is during the autumn months.

The true smelt it seems will thrive and multiply in a fresh water pond, as a proof of which Mr. Yarrell informs us that Colonel Meynill of Yarm, in Yorkshire, kept these fish for four years in a fresh water pond that had no communication whatever with the sea; where they continued to thrive and propagate abundantly, losing nothing of their flavour or quality; and that notwithstanding during the above period the water was several times frozen over, sufficiently hard in fact to admit of skating over its surface, the fish were in no way injured by it.

The true smelt is sometimes seen as large as nine or ten inches in length; but this rarely occurs, six or seven inches being the more common size, though Pennant mentions having seen one that measured thirteen inches, and weighed half a pound. The atherine seldom exceeds five or six inches in length. One remarkable property incidental to both species of fish, is a strong smell of cucumber, which is particularly remarkable when they are first taken out of water; which being much more agreeable than the effluvia emitted from most other fishes, in addition to a delicate flavour, causes both the smelt and atherine to be held in very high estimation.

CHAPTER III.

THE PERCH AND ITS VARIETIES.



The common Perch.

The Ruffe or Pope.

The Basse.



The common Perch.

The distinguishing characteristics of the common perch are a compressed body with a hog back rising suddenly behind the head till it reaches the first dorsal fin, when the rise and fall becomes gradual; the extreme height being about the centre of the fin, and then gradually decreasing towards the tail. The head is well proportioned, and armed with hard plates both on preoperculum and operculum, the former indented, and the latter terminating in a sharp edge, ending in a flattened point directed backwards. The body is covered with hard scales that adhere to it very firmly, and are not detached without difficulty. The upper part of the body is a greenish brown, marked with five or six dusky bands down the sides; the lower part of the body grows lighter by degrees, varying in tints of gold and silver, accompanied by blushes of pink and blue in different lights. The first dorsal fin is armed with about a dozen sharp spines, the membrane connecting them being of a transparent pale brown, tipped at the end next the tail with black, the second dorsal fin only contains two small spines on the first rays, the remainder being soft, and of the same pale

Spind and Staff





brown colour, as are also the pectoral fins. The ventral, anal, and caudal fins are of a bright red colour, each of the former two being armed with a sharp spine.

The perch is a very general fish not only in this country, but throughout the whole of the European continent, as also in Siberia and the Northern parts of Asia. Walton describes this fish as a very good, and a very bold biting fish; and with his usual judgment and accuracy, did he say so, there being few fresh water fish that equal him in flavour, whilst in courage he stands unrivalled; and unlike the wary trout and timid chub, that fly off to their hovers, on the approach of the slightest shadow of any thing in the shape of a human being, the perch will unhesitatingly seize on the bait even at the very feet of the most bungling practitioner of the art, who standing at the very water's edge has scared away the very gudgeons in terror to their hiding place. And bite away the perch will, one after another, each heedless of his companion's fate whom he sees carried forcibly away before his very eyes, and like the wicked of the world, each rushes madly onward, to meet destruction, till perhaps every one of the shoal are taken. I have myself caught as many as three dozen at one single standing, and doubtless an abler hand would have taken many more; for this I have observed as almost an invariable rule, that although the perch will continue to bite away as boldly as ever, heedless of the fate of their companions whom one after another they see disappear from their presence in so mysterious a manner, yet if you but chance to let one feel the smart of the hook, who afterwards effects his escape, the sport is all over at that station for the time. The manner in which a perch makes his comrades aware of the danger he has escaped from, as well as their own peril, is truly surprising; no sooner does the fish break away, than he rushes for a few seconds wildly about, as if overcome with surprize at the previous occurrence: and then he runs in among his companions, approaching first one, and then the other, till the whole company, as if by universal consent, draw themselves together and sheer off from the spot; or if they continue to remain there, can seldom or ever afterwards be prevailed upon to touch the bait.

The great voracity of the perch, added to his extreme boldness, has caused this fish to become exceedingly scarce in some waters that formerly abounded with them; and in the greater number of

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places that are much fished in, though some few may still remain, they are usually small, the greater part coming to an untimely end long ere they have time to arrive at maturity: and from the observations I have been enabled to make, I am inclined to think they increase in bulk but slowly, whilst in some waters, live as long as they may, they will never attain to any considerable size. I well recollect a pond where the water being partially let off all the perch died in consequence, and were for some time afterwards to be seen floating about on the surface. Of these by far the greater proportion were fish of about six ounces weight, which I do not believe any one exceeded, and this led me to conclude that this was the maximum of size they would have attained in those waters, which had not been left off before for several years. It is remarkable, that although every perch the pond contained had thus perished from a deficient supply of water, no other kind of fish appeared to be affected by it, although out of its native element few fish survive so long as the perch. We observed some trout apparently healthy still moving about in the diminished waters, though at a time when the stench from the dead perch was most abominable; we also noticed a shoal of small roach swimming about apparently unaffected by their loathsome situation. But it seems that salt or brackish water does not prove so fatal to perch as to most other fresh water fishes. When the sea a few years since broke into Slapton lea lake in Devonshire, though most of the pike died, yet the perch were apparently uninjured by the salt water; and in streams affected by the tides, I have frequently caught perch in a part of the river that at the time of high water was quite brackish; such I should imagine as no pike could exist in.

I have also remarked that perch are much more plentiful in the lower parts of rivers near the sea, than towards the spring head, though it is quite clear they never actually descend into the salt water. In the Itchen and Test rivers in Hampshire, very few perch are to be met with, except in the lower parts of those rivers; and I have also noticed that when perch have escaped from ponds into brooks running into the sea, they have been far more plentiful in the lower parts than near the pond they originally came from. This I attribute in a great measure to the roving disposition of this species of fish, and the inclination they have to inhabit extensive waters.

But although as I have before remarked the perch grows but slowly, and in some waters never attains to any considerable size, yet these remarks are not universally applicable; and were it not that these thoughtless fishes are generally caught by some means or other before they attained one half their full growth, far larger specimens than we are in the habit of seeing would often be met with. I myself never saw but one perch that reached the weight of three pounds, though several of my angling acquaintance tell me they have had the good fortune to capture some of much weightier dimensions. The perch indeed of three pounds I have just before alluded to I did not catch myself, but as it was taken in rather an unusual manner an account of it may not prove wholly uninteresting. An intimate and esteemed friend of mine, but a very bad fisherman, after fishing for several hours one bright summer's day without obtaining even a nibble, at last—as is the wont of very bad fishermen—amused himself by looking into the depth of the stream, and pleased doubtless at thus routing the enemy he was unable to capture. At length he espied an eel that boldly stood his ground, before whose nose he dropped a bait, which the latter seized upon without scruple, and was wriggling himself stern foremost off with his imaginary prize crosswise in his mouth, when a gallant perch hove in sight, sailing on as majestically as a three decker under studding sails, who catching a view of the worm darted forward and put in his claim, in the assertion of which my friend lent him every assistance, by pulling forcibly against the eel, who finding the long odds he had to contend against, let go the worm, (for he had never taken the hook into his mouth,) which the perch instantly seized upon. How the perch was eventually subdued I do not exactly remember, though I have heard the whole tale oftentimes repeated; at any rate the perch was caught, and I myself ate a portion of him afterwards, and he fully verified the old knight's proverb of

“ Old fish at table,” &c.

for the rest I must refer you to Pope's January and May.

But it won't do for an angler, even the most experienced, to which I have no pretensions, to speak only from the fish that may or may not have come within his own especial observation. Good old Walton mentions one taken in his time by Sir Abraham Williams, which was two feet long, and a deep bodied fish to boot; and if my memory deceives me not, I have seen a portrait of one

of nearly as large dimensions at the house of the late Oliver Colt, Esq. at Roundhams in Hampshire, that was taken in the river Test, near his residence. Mr. Donovan in his history of British fishes records one of five pounds weight taken in Bala lake. Mr. Hunt of Brades, near Dudley, Staffordshire, took a perch of six pounds from the Birmingham Canal. Montagu once saw a perch of [eight pounds weight taken out of the Wiltshire Avon : and Mr. Yarrell mentions that a perch of eight pounds was once taken in Dagenham breach. Pennant also records his having heard of one that was taken in the Serpentine that weighed upwards of nine pounds ; but as the latter authority rests only on hearsay, and the elaborate zoologist might have been misinformed, it is not entitled to much weight.

I myself have been informed of grayling that have attained the same size, but as fishermen occasionally see with magnifying eyes, and weigh their fish with no other scales, I have been fearful in consequence of reporting hearsays, except when coming from credible and competent witnesses.

Bloch, however, a pretty safe authority, assures us that the head of a perch is preserved at Luehlah, in Lapland, of a foot in length. Surely then if the men are insignificant in Lapland the fishes at least are mighty: a five foot Laplander being a very giant amongst his race, and yet this fish as compared to our perch must have been a monster indeed; as the proportionate length of a perch, as compared to his body in ordinary specimens, is as two to seven : so that this fish must have been nearly three feet and a half long ; what his probable weight must have been I leave wiser heads than mine to determine

Perch, as we have before observed, are remarkably tenacious of life, and Mr. Yarrell informs us that in Roman Catholic countries they are frequently transported alive over the land for forty or fifty miles, being watered occasionally : when if not sold the ill fated captives are again returned to the place from whence they came, to be reproduced on another day.

But notwithstanding the perch is of so hale and hardy a constitution, it frequently whilst young falls a victim to fishes of prey particularly to the pike, who, however he may stand in awe of the spines of the more mature of the species, cares little for the prickles of the juveniles, whom he crushes without pity or remorse between his jaws, and then swallows them head foremost; and

although instances must doubtless occur of the spines often proving inconvenient in the process of digestion, and sometimes producing even fatal results, yet they are insufficient to restrain the avidity of a hungry pike; which is not perhaps so much to be wondered at when we consider that reasoning creatures are so frequently to be met with, who, with a full conviction of the consequences, are found to "take an enemy into their mouths, to steal away their brains;" well knowing at the same time that by so doing they are shortening their days, and bringing themselves nearer to the awful account they thus make themselves the more unfit to render.

Water fowl also, of various kind, prey upon the roe of a perch before it is vivified, as the spawn of these fishes is not hidden in the ground like that of the trout or salmon, but exposed to open view like that of frogs or toads, four or five being enclosed in one common membrane.*

There is also a small crustaceous parasitical insect that insinuates itself into their gills, causing a great annoyance to the unfortunate fishes it infests, and often proving fatal to their existence. They are also subject when the waters are frozen to a disease in the mucous membrane, which covers the cavity of the mouth, as also that which covers the rectum, both of which become swollen and enlarged, and unless air be speedily admitted they die. So impatient indeed are they at the want of air when the waters are frozen over that it is stated, and upon pretty sound authority,† that if a hole be made in the ice they will repair to it with eagerness, and may be easily taken there even by the hand.

The perch prefer the gentle to the rapid stream, not delighting like the trout in the rippling shallows, but resorting chiefly to the eddies, and more tranquil parts of the river. An eddy in a deep round pool is the most likely place for a perch, or rather a shoal of them, as they are of a social disposition, and generally move about in troops.

In ponds they usually roam about from place to place in search of food, having some resorts they are pretty sure to visit one time or other in the course of the day. They are, either in pond

* Griffith sup. to Cuv., Vol. 10, p. 272.

† Griffith sup. to Cuv., Vol. 10, p. 272.

or river, very fond of playing about decayed timber, or old piles, and hatch or lock holes: such places being in fact worth half a mile of water elsewhere. Ditches communicating with the main stream are also most depending places.

A long and powerful rod should be used in perch fishing, as also a strong line, and a good foot line of salmon gut; the foot link a little slighter than the rest, though perch if inclined to bite are not fearful of tackle if neatly kept, and it must be remembered that a stout piece of silkworm gut, if kept clean, looks much finer in the water than a very fine link does, if allowed to get furred and dirty with use.

The baits for the perch, as honest Izaak observes, are not many, or rather we must take it that he is so little nice in his food, that if he will not bite at the three baits the worthy old angler enumerates, it is useless to try him with any other. The baits he alludes to are, the minnow, the worm, and a little frog. Of worms he says the brandling is the best: and of this experience convinces me, that however times and fashions may have changed since honest Izaak's days, the perch entertain the same opinion now, nor is it very probable their tastes have undergone any change in the interim; yet although they like brandlings the best, few worms come amiss to them when they are in the humour to bite, though a small worm rather than a large one, is generally to be preferred; and although not remarkably delicate in their appetites, clean, wholesome, well scoured worms will always answer the best.

If a minnow is used, a moderate sized one, that is a female with a white rounded belly, is always preferable to a lean gutted male, with a slender carcass, who can never stand the scrutiny of the quiet gaze to which he is exposed in remaining stationary in this kind of fishing, however disguised his less attractive personal appearance may seem, when exhibited under the more deceptive garb of minnow trolling. The minnow should be baited by running the hook either through the upper lip, or the fleshy part of the back fin.

In river fishing for perch a float will commonly be required, and the bait should be kept but a few inches from the bottom; for though these fish will take a bait at midwater, they seldom bite so boldly as when you fish deeper. If there is any current, the bait should be drifted down with it to the end of the pool, and then

drawn in and allowed to return back through the eddy. If the stream is powerful then fish the eddy only. When you perceive a bite allow the fish a little time to gorge, as the perch is a tender mouthed fish, and if hooked there, particularly in the upper lip, he will be very apt to break clear; and the larger he is the more likely will this be to occur. Walton indeed says, that too much time cannot be given to a perch when he bites, for that there was scarce any angler that has given him too much, and other writers copying his ideas have written in the same strain. But here there is a medium to be observed, and though, for the reasons already suggested, it is advisable to allow a perch sufficient time to swallow the bait, yet he commonly does this quicker than most other fish, and an angler of experience can easily judge by the manner he plays with the float, when it is the proper time to strike. As a general rule when a fish pauses after taking a bait, and then again moves off, it is most likely he has then pouched it, when you may venture to strike; but this you must never do with a slack line, and before you attempt to do so, first get it nearly tight with your float.

The float should be proportioned to the strength of the stream, and should have sufficient lead attached to the hook link to make it stand erect in the water. A small float is generally to be preferred when you fish with a worm, as less likely to check the fish when he bites; but when you use a minnow, then a larger one will be necessary; for if too small, the minnow itself, if a lively one, will be continually pulling it under. I have remarked that a perch generally takes a minnow more steadily than a worm, and the larger the fish the more quiet have his proceedings usually been.

The first indication of a bite is generally a quick dancing motion of the float, caused by the minnow's vainly attempting to escape his assailant's attack; then the float sinks slowly down and disappears, or can be just discerned moving slowly onwards under water; then is the time to raise the point of the rod, when having the line nearly tight, strike right upwards the contrary way to the movement of the fish, having your reel all clear and ready to give line if necessary, and necessary it surely will be if the fish is a good one, for no fish when first hooked struggles more desperately than the perch: but in so doing he the more speedily exhausts his strength, and may generally be subdued in less time than a trout

of the same dimensions, though he is the stronger fish of the two when first hooked.

I have often taken very fine perch when spinning the minnow for trout, and I remember on one occasion having excellent sport with the kill devil made with red wool, and ribbed with tinsel, and this in the Test where perch are by no means plentiful; yet strange to say, though I tried it several times afterwards in other waters much better supplied with this fish, I found it answer so badly that I altogether laid it aside as far as the perch were concerned: but the fact is, there are some days the fish will bite or run at almost any thing, whilst on others do what you will, and angle as skilfully as you may, the most tempting baits would fail to attract them.

If you fish with a minnow for perch in waters that contain pike also, a gimp hook is to be preferred, as it is very probable some of the latter fish may pay a visit to your baits, and perch are not very shy of the stoutness of tackle, though where no pike are to be expected, strong silkworm gut will always be preferable to gimp.

I have sometimes had good sport in trolling for perch with the dead gorge, having a gudgeon for a bait, fishing with it in the same manner as for pike, and in this way some of the largest fish may be taken.

When a frog is used the hook should be baited by running the point and barb of it through the skin of the leg. Sufficient lead should be used to keep little froggie from coming to the surface, and swimming to land, as he will otherwise be sure to do; to counterbalance which a good sized float will be requisite.

But besides the baits I have mentioned, the perch will bite freely at gentles, the cadis, or a grasshopper sunk beneath the surface: as also slugs and at preserved salmon spawn; and I was informed by an experienced angler now no more, that a boiled shrimp or prawn taken out of the shell is a most attractive bait for a perch.

I have also occasionally taken perch when dapping with the natural fly on the surface; and sometimes I have caught them when whipping with the artificial one, and generally with the red palmer; but the perch does not take the artificial fly freely, and it is by no means a successful mode of fishing for him.

The perch usually spawns about April, and during that and the following month, may be said to be out of season. The quantity of spawn the perch deposits is so great that if but one twentieth part of it were to come to perfection, in the course of a few years the largest waters would be insufficient to contain the numbers of perch it would produce. According to* Harmer, Bloch, and Gmelin, there are 300,000 eggs in a perch of half a pound weight, and Picot has counted 992,000 in a fish weighing about a pound.†

In large waters perch seldom take a bait well till the mild weather sets in, according to some, not until the mulberry tree buds; but this is the very worst time of the whole for fishing for them, it being about their spawning time: still from the effects of this they recover much quicker than the trout and many other fishes. In brooks and ditches I have found the perch bite freely enough in warm weather during the months of February and March, as also late in the autumn; and in such places they may be taken in the middle of a warm day all through the winter, at times it would be hopeless to expect a nibble in the more open and extended waters. The best times of the year however for perch fishing are the months of July, August, and September, just in fact at the time trout fishing begins to flag, during the whole of which period, either with a minnow or a worm, you will where the waters are well supplied with fish, rarely fail of obtaining sport.

And now I take my final leave of the perch; observing by the way that he is an excellent fish for the table; the flesh being firm; white, and of good flavour, bearing some resemblance to that of a John Dony: added to which he is remarkably wholesome, as well as easy of digestion.

Daniel, in his *Rural Sports*, mentions a singular kind of deformed perch taken in Llyn Kaithlyn in Merionethshire, having the back remarkably elevated and the tail distorted as if tightly compressed with a cord. A very well executed engraving of this fish together with that of a common perch, both kinds being found in the same water, is displayed in the work above alluded to.

* Griffith's *Cuv.* vol. p. 272.

† *Ib.* *ib.*

The Ruffe or Pope.

The ruffe very much resembles the perch both in appearance and habits, but is a much smaller fish, seldom exceeding six or seven inches in length. It may, however, be easily distinguished from a perch of the same size by having only one fin on the back, the first portion being spinous, and the remaining rays soft. The membrane between the spines is also marked with dark spots which appear also on the back, which is of a light brown, and is not marked with the dusky bands like the perch, though the dark spots assume somewhat that appearance. The lateral line is also very strongly marked.

Although a small fish, it is very highly esteemed for the table, and like the perch is an exceedingly bold biting fish; not only seizing with avidity on worms, but even having audacity to lay hold of a minnow nearly as big as himself. The best bait is a small worm; but they will bite well at the cadis, or gentles; and like the perch may be pulled out one after another whenever you have the luck to fall in with a shoal of them. If the water is clear a float may be dispensed with, as the preferable plan is to let the bait drop within their view, keeping it gently in motion just above the bottom. But in other cases a small float should be used.

The best plan to attract them, or to keep them together, is from time to time to cast a handful of fine earth or mould into the water, which sinking to the bottom will be sure to collect all the ruffes within a short distance to the spot, when you will be pretty sure to take a great many of them.

Their favorite haunts are a tranquil stream, with a clean gravelly bottom. They spawn at about the same time as the perch, viz. the latter end of April, or the early part of May, the eggs being deposited among roots or rushes at the side of the stream.

The ruffe is not so general a fish as the perch. It seems

it is unknown throughout the whole kingdom of Scotland, and is rarely if ever to be met with in any of our streams that empty themselves into the British Channel. It seems chiefly to prevail among the waters of the midland counties, and is very abundant in the Thames, the Isis, and the Cam.

The Basse.

The basse is something like a perch in form, (though not quite so hog backed,) as also in the position and form of the fins, whilst in colour he resembles the salmon; from which latter cause he is often styled in the fish markets, a "salmon basse," the connection to that noble family, to which he has not the slightest pretensions, being merely used as a pretext for screwing up the price. The basse is however a very well tasted and wholesome fish, and may be eaten to advantage either boiled, baked, fried, stewed, or when put into a pie; the latter being his inevitable fate whenever he falls into the hands of a Cornishman.

Like the salmon, when the fish is in the highest condition, the upper part of the back is of a dusky hue, which assumes a grey tint as the fish declines in health. The fry till they attain two ounces weight, are marked with dusky spots on the upper part of the body and sides, but which wholly disappear as the fish increases in size, and are rarely if ever seen in one of a quarter of a pound weight.

The basse grows to a large size, sometimes exceeding twenty pounds. The largest that ever came under my observation was taken on a bolter* I laid down baited with cuttle fish; it weighed nearly eighteen pounds; but the more common weight is eight or nine; and though I have taken several fine fish of the kind in the course of a season, I seldom met with one that reached twelve pounds weight.

The basse is a very general fish on all parts of our coast, wandering also up most of our creeks and rivers as far as the water continues salt, or only becomes slightly brackish. They will

* A bolter is a long line of stout cord, with hooks attached to it by sneads at intervals of about six feet distance from each other. These being baited the line is sunk by means of heavy weights to the bottom, a buoy being fixed to the line to mark the spot.

however live in water that is entirely fresh, and I knew an instance where a shoal being detained in a canal near Southampton, that communicated with the sea, which communication was afterwards cut off by the canal ceasing to work and an embankment thrown across its entrance which effectually excluded the salt water, and yet the basse continued apparently healthy, as did also some grey mullet that were also detained captive there: but I do not think that either species bred in these strange waters, so that what with fair fishing and what with foul; lines, and nets; the whole race became nearly extinct in the course of a couple of summers. Mr. Yarrell also informs us that basse and mullet have been retained with success in Mr. Arnould's fresh water lake in Guernsey, and Dr. M'Culloch has vouched for the superiority of the flavour obtained by the change.

The basse was known to the Romans who called it the wolf from its extensive voracity, though at the same time it was esteemed among them as an article of delicacy. I have not however found the basse an extremely voracious fish, being more particular in his food than the generality of salt water fishes, the larger ones seldom taking a bait freely unless when alive or in motion.

All through the summer months, and until late in the autumn, basse of all sorts and sizes ascend rivers and creeks communicating with the sea, advancing with the flood and returning again with the ebb. In the latter places I have often met with excellent sport, by beginning at the lower end, and following up the course of the tide, using a rag worm for a bait, which should be kept just clear of the ground. A long stout rod, a strong line, with a foot-line of the strongest salmon gut should be used; a float proportioned to the current; and two hooks may be used one about two feet above the other, if the water is deep, and about half that distance if shallow. In this manner I have taken several dozen basse averaging from one ounce to a couple of pounds in the course of two or three hours, getting bites in fact as fast as I could cast my lines into the water. Sometimes indeed I got hold of the some of the larger basse by this mode of fishing, but generally speaking after they attain two pounds weight they prey almost solely on small fishes.

The way in which I have caught the largest basse has been by laying a bolter at the extreme low water mark, on an open sandy beach whilst a violent surf was raging on the shore. The line was

prevented from being washed in by a flat stone of some fifteen pounds weight, being attached to the outer extremity, and the hooks being baited with sand lance, the tide was allowed to flow over the line which was kept tight with the stone towards the land; and when the water had reached the inner extremity, then a spare line was added; the latter having no hooks, and being unwound as the tide continued to advance. In this way perhaps a hundred and fifty fathoms or more of spare line was unwound, after which the stone is drawn inwards, which notwithstanding its weight may be easily done whilst it is under water, though you would be unable to stir it one inch when dry on the sand. The end of the stray line being held in the hand tight with the stone, a bite of a basse can easily be felt even at that great distance; as a basse when he does lay hold of a bait tugs away like a dray horse. In general however I have allowed my line to remain down till I have supposed two or three of these fish were hooked, as it is frequently difficult, and sometimes impossible, to get out the line again sufficiently far to expect any success till the next low water, as this kind of fishing can only be carried on during the flood tide. When you have the fortune to get three or four lusty basse on your line tugging, and plunging, and floundering about as you haul them ashore, you can imagine no sport that is more exciting.

The chief point to be attended to is to use your best judgement to keep the hooks as much as possible amongst the breakers, as outside them you will rarely prevail upon a basse to bite. The baits being tossed about in the disturbed motion of the foaming waters, not only gives the baits the appearance of being alive, but also to a considerable degree conceals the tackle, which must be strong, otherwise the fish will be sure to break it. I have found strong whipcord the best adapted for the purpose. In fine weather I have seldom been successful in this kind of fishing, except about the twilight of an evening, or after sunset, when most fish are inclined to feed most boldly; on this account I have often moored my lines on the beach by attaching stones to both ends, allowing the tide to flow over them, and visiting them again as the ebbing tide again leaves them dry on the beach. Nor were basse the only fish I have taken by this means, as I used frequently to catch small turbot, rays of all kinds, flounders and other flat fish, whiting, pollacks, and tamin cod, and a far greater number of small conger eels than I either sought or desired, as they gave me

great trouble, by twisting up the sneads and entangling the line. Neither was my captures restrained to fish alone, for sometimes I found a gull, a mur, or a cormorant had gotten himself into trouble by meddling with what did not belong to him; but these I always restored to liberty again, though I generally made a levy on the feathers of the tails of all the gulls I caught, in order that I might recognize my new acquaintance should I chance to meet him again, as indeed I often did flying about the beach, though I never remember catching the same gull twice over.

Another very good way of catching basse, is by trolling from a boat, either with a small fish bait—a sand lance is the best—or a kill devil. You must have out a good scope of line, and the boat should proceed at the rate of about two miles and a half or three miles an hour through the water. You must have good stout tackle, and must take heed of the first struggle; for a basse the moment he is hooked presents at once his broadside to the enemy; plunging and tearing with great fury; and in this position he is enabled to offer so powerful a resistance, that it requires greater strength than most tackle will bear to turn him by main force. The boat therefore should be instantly stopped and backed carefully towards the fish, and a little line veered away, which should be reeled up as you approach him, when he probably will dart quickly off, and then fresh line must be given him, and your boatman must be careful in the management of the boat, pulling a head when the fish approaches it, and above all things you must take especial care to prevent him from running your tackling under it. I lost the strongest basse I ever hooked by that means, after playing him for a considerable time, but during the whole of which I was unable to bring him sufficiently near the surface to catch a view of his proportions. When the fish begins to tire, don't be in too great a hurry to get him aboard, and whenever you get him alongside, be prepared for his making a fresh start, in which you must let him have his way, at the same time making him labour hard for every inch of line he takes with him. If you have a gaff you must strike it pretty smartly just behind the pectoral fin on the under side of the fish, and your hook ought to be very sharp in the point, otherwise it may not easily penetrate through his hard scales. A gaff is always preferable in boat fishing to a landing net, but one or the other you ought to have when fishing for large basse, as they are very awkward fish to handle

on account of their sharp spines, whilst their gill covers will cut like a razor, as I from experience can testify.

If you are compelled to land him by hand, you must take care first to tire him thoroughly out, and then as he lies on his side exhausted on the surface, he should be grasped between the caudal and anal fin with one hand, and by the muzzle with the other, pressing the two hands towards each other, and so throwing the fish abroad; but this is not an infallible mode of proceeding, as the fish sometimes by a violent effort contrives to shake himself free, and therefore it should never be attempted until he is completely subdued.

The brass kill devil I have not yet had opportunity of trying for basse, but I apprehend it would succeed admirably. I have indeed heard that the cork or floating minnow is a very certain bait, but as I never tried it myself, or saw its merits put to the test, I can offer no further opinion on it.

In addition to the baits above-mentioned, basse are sometimes taken with the father lasher, bull head, sprats, smelts, pieces of herring and pilchard. They also feed on shrimps, small crabs, and lug worms.

A shrimp or rather a prawn is indeed one of the best baits that can be used for catching basse in rocky ground, particularly such as are covered with the kelp weed, amongst which shrimps and prawns are found to resort.

The prawn should be baited by sticking the hook through the last joint of the tail, and in this way it will live apparently little the worse, hopping about very actively for a considerable time. The places best adapted for it, are the shallow parts of sheltered bays, where with a long rod you may fish from the shore. The only time of tide adapted for it is the flood, and you should shift your quarters as the tide rises, following the course of the tide, and not fishing in too deep water.


When fishing from rocks in the open sea, it is often a successful plan to have a good stout and strong line, and as long a rod as you can well manage; and to the end of the line, have fixed a lead plummet of about a quarter of a pound weight, above which you must fix a couple or three hooks, tied to strong sneads one above another. The lead must be cast out, and the line kept tight with it, when a bite will easily be discovered, and you should strike as soon as you feel it.

The best baits are sand lance, a small common eel, a prawn, or soft crab. If the ground is rocky, you should use a stone in lieu of the plummet, and attached to the line by a piece of waxed packthread, so that should the stone become fixed in any of the crevices of the rock, you can by a strong pull break asunder the packthread, without endangering the more valuable portion of your tackle.

Very good sport may also sometimes be obtained, by whipping for basse with the artificial fly, and of these the red palmer seems to be the chief favorite: and they always show a marked preference for gaudily dressed flies.


CHAPTER IV.

FISHES OF THE CARP KIND.



SECTION I.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE CARP, AND HOW TO FISH FOR HIM.




The Golden Carp.

The Bream.

The Barbel.

The Gudgeon.

The Loach.



Observations on the Carp, and how to catch him.

Amongst all the fishes that ever put the patience of the angler to the test, the carp may fairly bear away the palm; for his extremely abstemious habits, coupled with exceeding craftiness, often prove more than a match for the skill and ingenuity of the most experienced angler. Hour after hour, and day after day, has some persevering lover of the angle planted himself by the water side watching his tranquil float, still fishing on through heat and cold, rain, wind, calm and sunshine, not only without landing a

single fish, but without even obtaining a nibble, to keep alive his hopes. But endurance like this cannot last for ever, so that at length even the value of the prize, enhanced as it doubtless is by the difficulty of obtaining it, proves insufficient to counterbalance the heavy tax that is thus laid upon the patience, and the attempt in consequence is relinquished in despair. But for all this the carp may be prevailed upon to bite, and when hooked there is no fish that shows more game, or maintains the contest for life and liberty for a longer time.

The carp is more of a pond than a river fish, although in some of the quieter parts of the latter I have found them tolerably abundant. In clay bottoms they rarely if ever take a bait freely. Walton expresses an opinion that it is more difficult to entice a carp to bite in a river than a pond; but during my practice I have experienced the exact reverse. In a small brook in Hampshire, which I had occasionally the good fortune to fish in when a boy, I seldom fished throughout the day without getting hold of a carp—my catching him was quite another matter—whilst in the lower pond at Shirley near Southampton, and which was well stored with these fishes who were constantly tantalizing us by jumping some feet above water, and exhibiting their mighty dimensions, I never once got a bite from any one, though I fished in it repeatedly for several seasons, nor did I ever meet with a brother angler who in this respect had been more successful there than myself.

Before proceeding further it may not be improper to remark that there are two distinct species of fish, perfectly distinguishable from each other, both passing under the appellation of carp: a name, strictly speaking, only applicable to the larger species, the *cyprinus carpio* of Linnæus. The proper name of the smaller species is the gibile, or the crucian; in Warwickshire it is known by the name of crowger: and is the same fish as the *cyprinus gebelio* of Bloch. This fish is of a much smaller size than the common carp, as it rarely arrives at the weight of two pounds; and a half a pound being the usual average; whilst the common carp has been known to exceed thirty pounds, and four or five may be considered a fair average size. Daniel, in his *Rural Sports*, notices a brace sent by a Mr. Ladbroke from his park at Gatton to the then Lord Egremont that weighed thirty five pounds. Mr. Yarrell also states that in the fishing of the large piece of water at Stourhead,

where a thousand brace of killing carp were taken, the largest was thirty inches long, upwards of twenty-two broad, and weighed eighteen pounds. The same writer also mentions that there is a painting of a carp at Weston Hall, in Staffordshire, which weighed eighteen pounds and a half; and according to Jovius in lake Lurian, in Italy, carps have thriven to be more than fifty pounds weight. Bloch speaks of one that was caught near Frankfort that was nearly nine feet long, and that weighed seventy pounds. Germany, indeed, is famed for the size of its carps, thirty or forty pounds being by no means an uncommon weight for one of these fish in many of the waters of that country: but the carps of Italy even exceed these in bulk; instances having occurred of their being taken in the lake of Como of so large a size as to weigh two hundred pounds.* But it is not the size alone that constitutes the difference between the crucian and the common carp: the former being a deeper bodied fish approaching nearer to the proportions of the roach; the head shorter, and the barbules smaller in proportion, as also the ventral and anal fins. The color also is much paler, the sides being of a very light olive brown, with a slight golden cast, becoming paler towards the belly, which is white, whilst in the common carp the general color is a deep golden olive brown, inclining to a yellower cast towards the belly. The head of the common carp is also of a much darker hue than that of the crucian, whilst the dorsal fin in the former sinks soon after its commencement, which does not occur in the latter fish.

But notwithstanding the crucian is in every respect inferior to the

* The superiority in the size of the carps of Germany and Italy to those produced in our own islands, is said to be owing to the pains that are taken in those countries to select the largest fish only for breeders, whilst we, generally speaking, breed indiscriminately from all. It is however to be hoped that as so much light has lately been thrown on the reproduction of fishes, and that when the adult fish are in a sufficiently advanced state the spawn may be produced, and also fecundated by the milt, by mere pressure against the sides, as has been so effectually accomplished in the instance of the salmon by Mr. Shaw, we shall find greater attention paid to the breeding of fish, and proper ponds and breeding fish selected for the purpose, which might be so easily put in practice with so hardy a fish as the carp, which, if the matter were only properly attended to, there seems no reason why our carps should not attain as large a bulk as those of our neighbours on the continent.

common carp, it often affords the angler some amusement without much trying his patience, making up in some degree by numbers for what they are individually deficient in weight.

The best bait is a moderate sized red worm without a knot, but any worm that is not too large and is well scoured will generally answer the purpose. Yet in some ponds they bite far less freely than in others; and like most other fishes they are often so capricious as to abstain from biting altogether, for several days successively, without any assignable cause. No fish indeed are so remarkably capricious in this respect as both species of the carp.

A singular instance of this occurred a few years since to two young friends of mine. They knew little of the art of angling, but hearing there was a good trout stream in the neighbourhood they bent their footsteps thither, and continued to fish away for several hours with most praiseworthy assiduity under a hot July sun, without getting even a bite, the waters having been so diminished by a long drought, as merely to trickle from pool to pool, so that no trout would venture to shew out from his hiding place. At last these two anglers chanced to light upon a deep pool, the waters of which were somewhat discoloured, either by cattle or some other cause, and here casting in their lines baited with worms of some kind or other, each of them had a bite instantly, and both succeeded in hooking a fish; which, attempting to throw out right over their heads, one broke first his rod and then his hook, whilst the other, though for that time he saved his rod, yet it was only at the expense of losing one half his line. But as both these young gentlemen were possessed of spare line and other tackle, the broken rod was mended after a manner, and new lines and hooks fitted, which were carried off one after another in a truly wonderful manner, till at last by some accident or other one of them did manage to lug out a carp of between four or five pounds weight. But this was all they caught, though the fish continued to bite away as freely as ever, till at last the whole stock was exhausted, and that amidst such a splashing both in casting in and pulling out, as I suppose no pretenders to the science of angling were ever before or since guilty of. The carp they did catch I myself saw on the same evening it was taken, and well do I remember the expression of countenance of a shrewd and skilful angler as also his peculiar kind of short dry cough, so like that of

cousin Dick at the mention of my trout in days long since passed away,* whilst as he gazed intently upon the fish, and heard an account of the previous adventures,

“ He looked, and coughed, and blew his nose,
Then looked and coughed again.”

An early hour on the following day found him by the side of this self-same pool, the whereabouts of which he had contrived to elicit from the two young anglers, and which if he had entertained any doubt about, the footmarks around the brink, and disturbed state of the loose gravel, coupled with the circumstance of his finding a silk handkerchief belonging to one of the parties, would have proved the identity of the spot, yet not a bite could this most cunning angler obtain there throughout the day, the whole of which he spent by the side of this self-same pool, buoyed up with the constant hope that within a minute or two the sport would begin. The carp could not have moved out of this pool in the interim, as from the extreme lowness of the waters all communication was cut off from the neighbouring pools. A willow bush that grew partly in the water precluded any one from effectually netting the place; and even if this had been attempted, the poachers would never have left the silk handkerchief behind them, which was in far too conspicuous a place to have escaped their notice.

During the winter months carps bury themselves in the mud or weeds, where it is probable they remain embedded in a state of torpor and without food during the whole of that period. In that truly interesting work, White's Natural History of Selborne, it is stated, that “in the gardens of the Black Bear, in the town of Reading, is a stream or canal running under the stables, and out into the fields on the other side of the road; in this water are many carps which lie rolling about in sight, being fed by travellers who amuse themselves by tossing them bread; but as soon as the weather grows at all severe, these fishes are no longer seen, because they retire under the stables, where they remain till the return of spring.”

* For a particular account of which see ante page 6.

Certain it is that carps rarely take a bait till the warm weather has set in; though Walton observes, some have been so curious as to say the 10th of April is a fatal day for carps; but this I am inclined to think is far too early in the season, unless the spring be an unusually mild one, though if there is any truth in the assertion we so often hear made by old people that the seasons are much later than they used to be, the elapse of a couple of centuries which has taken place since honest Izaak's time, may have effected this difference. We find the poets of not more than a century since speaking of the rose, "as the glory of April and May," though now, "the rose in June," fills up the burden of their song. Still poets are not always the best authorities, being notorious for the licenses they take; too frequently sacrificing truth for the sake of language, and reason for the sake of rhyme.

This by the way brings to my recollection two lines extracted from Baker's Chronicle, which worthy Izaak offers in evidence to show that no carps were in existence in this country above a hundred or a few more years before his time, having been first introduced by one Mr. Mascall, a gentleman who then lived at Plumsted, in Sussex: a county that abounds more with this fish than any other in the nation. The lines are as follows,—

" Hops and turkies, carps and beer,
Came into England all in a year."

Mr Yarrell, however, to whose deep researches into this, as well as every other branch of Natural History every lover of science must stand indebted, shows beyond all doubt that carps were in existence in this country nearly a hundred years before Mascall could have been born, as appears by the "boke of St. Albans," by Dame Juliana Berners, or Barnes, Prioress of the nunnery of Sopewell near St. Albans, entitled "The Treatyse of Fysshinge with an angle,"* enprinted at Westminster by Wynkyn de Worde

*An extract of this work to show the style in which it was written may not be displeasing to my readers. Treating of the pleasures an angler enjoys in pursuing his recreation she proceeds—"Atte the leest his holsom walke, and mery at his ease, a swete ayre of the swete savoure of the meede

in 1496; in which work the carp is spoken of as, "a deyntous fische," whilst Mascall's time was about the year 1660. Mr. Yarrell also mentions that in the privy purse expenses of King Henry the eighth, various entries are made of rewards made to persons for bringing carps to the King.

Nor is Baker's couplet one jot more correct as to the hops, beer, and turkies. An excise on beer existed as far back as the reign of king Edward the First, which was in those days preserved by means of wormwood and other bitter plants, hops, being unknown till about the year 1534; and so little favour did they then find in the eyes of this nation, that about four years afterwards we find them petitioning the parliament against hops as a wicked weed; with about as much justice and foresight, as a narrow minded set of ignorant tee-totallers might present a similar petition at the present day. Turkies it seems were first known in this country about the year 1528.

Aristotle and Pliny say that the carp spawns six times in a year; but in this country it seems that it occurs but once during that period, and takes place about the months of May and June, some spawning earlier, and others later, as is the case with the salmon and many other fishes; some of whom deposit their spawn months earlier than others, so that some carps being to be met with in roe all through the summer, affords no criterion whatever that they spawn more than once in the year. At the time of spawning the female is usually attended by two or three males, and the ova being cast on the flags and weeds is there impregnated by the males, and in the course of about ten days it is enlivened, unless destroyed by other fish, waterfowl, or other animals, that are pretty certain if they come across it, to devour the greater portion if not the whole. But for this, and the young being exposed to many dangers in their infant state, the increase would exceed all bounds. Bloch found 237,000 ova in a female of a pound and a half, and

floures that makyth him hungry; he hereth the melodyous armony of fowles; he seeth the yonge swannes, heerons, duckes, cotes, and many other foules, wyth their brodes; whyche me semyth better than alle the noyse of houndys, the blastes of hornys, and the scrye of foulis, that hunters, fawkeners, and foulers can make. And if the angler take fische, surely then there is noo man merier than he is in his spyryte."

621,600 in one of nine pounds. Petit also found 342,144 in one of a pound and half; and Schnieder 700,000 in one of ten pounds, the roe alone weighing three pounds ten ounces*.

In waters that agree with them, carps usually attain the weight of three pounds at about their sixth year, which doubles by about the time they reach their tenth year, that being, according to Sir Francis Bacon, the limit of their existence, though Dubravius extends this period to thirty years, whilst more modern authorities contend that he lives for upwards of a century, and sometimes attains to even double that age. When the infirmities of old age begin to creep upon them, their scales assume a greyish cast, which as they grow older become still paler, and at these times they are subject to a disease that often terminates fatally, the head and back becoming overspread with a moss like excessance; (a disorder indeed with which young carps are sometimes affected,) as also to eruptions under the scales. They also suffer occasionally from intestinal worms. But to whatever age a carp may live in his own element, it seems perfectly clear that no kind of fish whatever will live so long out of it. In Holland it is a very common practice not only to keep them alive out of their proper element for a month or more, but even to fatten them, by inclosing them in wet moss suspended in a net, and feeding them with bread and milk, taking especial care to refresh them from time to time by throwing water over the moss. In winter they are transported alive to a considerable distance packed in moistened moss, linen, or snow, with a piece of bread steeped in brandy in their mouths, to keep up their spirits during the journey. In our own country it is a very common practice to keep carp in clear run of water before they are killed for the table, in order to get rid of the rank flavour they are apt to imbibe from the weeds and muddy bottom of the waters they usually inhabit.

The merits of the carp as an article of food, are too well known to require any comment, and well stewed either in port wine or claret, can be equalled by few, and exceeded by none. Caviar is sometimes made of the roe of the female fish, which is considered equal to that of the sturgeon, and is in high repute amongst the Jews, as the sturgeon being a fish without scales is unclean by their law, and therefore an abomination to all true Israelites.

*Griffith supp. to Cuv. Vol. 10, p. 454.

Carp^s may also be improved in their edible qualities by being deprived of their generative organs; a discovery first made by one Samuel Fuller, who opening the ovary of the carps, and taking out the eggs from the females, and the milts from the males, supplied their deficiency by a piece of old hat, taking especial care at the same time not to injure either the urethra or rectum, and uniting the wound by a suture.* It has indeed for many years been the common practice to prick the air bladders of fishes of the cod kind with a needle, in order to allow the air to escape, when fishes of this kind are kept alive in well boats; otherwise the bladders would become so inflated that the fish would be unable to sink his nose beneath the surface, in which situation he would soon die; whereas, after the above-mentioned operation, the fish will live for weeks, apparently uninjured by it, except that their movements are less active, and they are ever afterwards unable to rise to the surface.

And now for the baits wherewith to inveigle this crafty fish.

The bait I have ever found the most successful is a well scoured red worm of moderate size, or a couple of brandlings baited as before directed † for catching trout. I have tried pastes of various kinds, but have rarely succeeded well with any of them; though I have known persons who when fishing with paste for roach have unexpectedly hooked a lusty carp; and many there are who give a decided preference to paste in carp fishing to any other kind of bait whatever.

The following is a good receipt for making paste—Take the flesh of a rabbit cut small and some flour, (bean flour is the best;) mix these together with a little honey, and pound them in a mortar; white wool may also be mixed up with it to cause it to adhere the more toughly together. Another sort of paste is also recommended made of bean's flour, rabbit's flic, bees wax, and mutton suet, beat up together in a mortar, with a little clarified honey tempered before the fire, and stained with vermilion. Baiting the ground you intend to fish over a day or two previously, and keeping it constantly baited in the interval will greatly enhance your chance

* Griff. sup. to Cuv. Vol. 5, p. 455.

† See sup. p. 214.

of success. Grains and bullocks blood, mixed with cow dung and grains, are considered to make an excellent ground bait; as do also grains mixed with graves. Some pellets of the kind of paste you intend to angle with should also be thrown in upon the ground bait, in order to enable the carp duly to appreciate their edible qualities.

Carp will also bite at gentles, cadis, and most kind of grubs; they will often bite at a whitish coloured grub that is usually found under cowdung, but as these are very tender, a bristle should be tied to the arming wire of the hook, which standing out upward will keep the bait from sliding down, and so presenting an untempting appearance. A carp it is also said will take green peas, and cherries, with the stones taken out, currants, gooseberries, and other fruit, none of which I have ever tried; but from the partiality of the carp to a vegetable diet, it is very probable some of these might prove successful, as it is well known they are extremely fond of lettuce leaves; whilst Bloch assures us that the leaves and seeds of salad particularly agree with them, and that they fatten upon them more speedily than upon any other kind of food whatever.

From the extreme wariness of the carp, every angler who wishes to catch him must be careful at all times to keep well back from the water's edge, and never to take a stand on high ground. The most certain plan is to lay down the rod, and standing back watch it from a short distance. Few indeed are aware of the number of fishes they scare away from their baits by standing close to the water side and holding their rods in their hands; for although the water may be too foul to enable the angler to descry the fishes, they may nevertheless be able to descry the angler. Carp too when roving about in foraging parties, keep moving up and down often rising to the very surface to look around them, as well as to seize upon some of the gnats that are playing about there, when, if they detect any object that excites their fears, off they dart, and do not probably return again to the same spot for the rest of the day. No fish that inhabits the fresh water is so suspicious as the carp, so much so indeed that it is rarely they can be prevailed to approach sufficiently near a boat to be angled for from it with any chance of success, though the wary trout does not seem to have any such fears; in fact more of the latter fish are commonly taken from a boat in lake fishing, than by angling from the shore.

I also consider that in angling for carp, many valuable chances have been thrown away by adopting a prettily painted float, which, when standing proudly erect in the water, attached to a line set off with three or four round leaden pellets within a few inches of the bait, which hangs suspended about midwater presents altogether a truly traplike appearance. The instinct in most animals that enables them to detect a trap is truly wonderful, and some degree of ingenuity is absolutely necessary to empower you to outwit so subtle a fish as a carp. As for myself I have ever found it the most successful plan whenever I have used a worm, always to let the bait rest on the bottom, and either to use no float at all, or a small piece of common cork with a mere slit in it to fix it to the line, and this I invariably keep at least a yard or two from the bait. By adopting this mode, the gut to which the hook is fastened, as well as the whole line affair, is more likely to escape the attention of the fishes, who are not so likely to notice it, when lying quietly along the ground, as if hanging suspended from the float in the water, consequently they then seize upon the bait with less hesitation; which, having once tasted the sweets of, they will not afterwards so readily abandon. Nor is there any great difficulty in detecting a bite when fishing in this manner, for the slightest agitation of the line will be communicated to the float, which as the fish moves off, as a carp almost invariably does, will be put either in active motion, or disappear at once under water. As soon therefore as the slightest movement is discovered, advance quick but cautiously, and seizing hold of the rod raise it gently till you get all the stray line out of the water, reeling up some portion of it if the fish shapes his course towards you, and getting the line nearly tight,—

“ Then fix with gentle twitch the barbed hook : ”

which you may rest assured the fish no sooner feels, than he will at once make a desperate rush off, and then probably leap to some considerable distance out of water. The effects of the first rush of the carp is what you must be particularly prepared for, as his progress is often so rapid as to cause a dead strain on the line before the rod can be sufficiently elevated to bring it into proper play, and if a carp of any size succeeds in doing this, your hook or line are sure to give way. He will also not unfrequently contrive, af-

ter leaping out of water to fall back upon the line in such a manner as to snap it right off. At such a time the line should be suddenly slackened; for being a leather mouth fish there is no danger of his getting unhooked, as there would be in the instance of a trout or a salmon under such circumstances. Every carp angler should also be careful to provide himself with a good scope of line, as a strong carp is very apt to make right off for the middle or some distant part of the pond to which the former is unable to follow him: but still an unnecessary quantity of line should not be allowed, and the fish should be followed up as closely as can be well managed: and never for one moment must an angler allow his attention to be diverted from the business he is engaged in: for the better the fish is worth capturing, the more likely will he be to try all sorts of plans and manœuvres to effect his escape; particularly by turning suddenly and bringing the line across his back so as to cut it asunder with the sawlike spine on his dorsal fin, when he attempts this, take care to slack away; keeping it constantly in mind that a carp of all fish is the most difficult, and takes a longer time than any fish, the salmon only excepted, to tire out to a dead stand still.

It also sometimes occurs, that in spite of all you can do to prevent it—but prevent it you must if possible—that a carp will run in amongst the weeds, in doing this he very often gets you foul, and so breaks the tackle; but instead of this it often occurs that he detaches some portion of the weeds which adhere to the line, in which case let him lug about his burden to his heart's content, and never attempt to relieve him of it, as by this means it is probable he will tire himself out much quicker than you could affect by any contrivance of your own; and above all things don't attempt to land him till he is thoroughly beaten, otherwise the event is not very likely to occur at all.

Although carps are very fond of sporting about on the surface, frequently leaping several feet out of water, yet they are rarely taken either with a natural or artificial fly, though sometimes a grasshopper sunk beneath the surface proves an attractive bait. The best time for fishing for carp is just before sunrise in the morning, and during the twilight of an evening. More may be done in half an hour at those times, than during an entire summer's day, as both early and late they approach the shore in search of food. The best places to angle in at such times, are in the

clear shallow edges of the pond, particularly outside rushes if any should chance to grow there, or upon a gravel bottom, if there is any such in the pond; particularly such spots as cattle are in the habit of frequenting. In the day time open spaces between the weeds are the most likely spots, though it is exceedingly difficult to get a weighty fish out of such places when you have succeeded in hooking him.

The Golden Carp.

This species is perhaps more familiarly known than any one of the carp tribe, though it has not been long naturalized in this country. It was formerly an inhabitant of China, from whence it was introduced into Europe, first it seems into Portugal, and from thence into other countries. With us, however, it is as yet treated rather as an exotic than a naturalized inhabitant of our waters, being commonly kept pent up in small vivaries, or in glass globes, and is rarely to be found in large open waters; though without doubt they would increase and prosper in the greater part of them if unexposed to the ravages of the pike or other predaceous animals; nor are instances wanting to shew that they have increased prodigiously both in bulk and numbers, when left entirely to themselves in protected situations. The danger to be apprehended would be the severity of our winters, which by freezing over the surface has in some instances, as already noticed,* proved fatal to the common carp. The waters best adapted to them would be those that are rarely if ever frozen entirely over, and it certainly seems that the warmer the waters are the better they are suited to this fish, and that this is equally the case even when the waters are artificially heated, unless the temperature be carried to too high a degree. Mr. Jesse informs us that it is a common practice to keep fishes of this kind in the engine dams belonging to factories, where the water is always at a high temperature—generally eighty degrees—in consequence of the water from the steam engines being thrown in there from time to time for the purpose of being cooled; and he then proceeds to state, that three of these fish being put into one of these dams multiplied so exceedingly, that in the course of three years, the whole tribe, (being at the expiration of that period accidentally poisoned by the verdigris mixed from the refuse tallow from the engine), were actually taken out by wheelbarrowsfull.

* See sup. p. 179.

The heated waters in which fishes will exist unharmed is truly miraculous. Desfontaines found the Sparus of Lacepede in the hot waters of Cafsa, in Barbary, in a temperature equal to eighty-six degrees of Fahrenheit;* and it appears that Shaw observed fishes of the mullet and perch kinds, in the same springs.† Bruce also mentions that in certain hot baths near Feriana there were a number of small fish in such heated waters, that his wonder was how they could possibly exist there without being boiled outright. Humbolt and Bonpland also saw a wonderful eruption of fishes that were cast up alive and unmutulated from a volcano in South America in a state of irruption; and with them was also ejected hot water and vapour only two degrees below the boiling point. How these fish can live in such a heated element, he “whose name is wonderful,” and “who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb” can alone tell. The mucous secretion with which their bodies are covered, seems to afford them an external protection, yet how they are to inhale so hot an element without its destroying them is altogether incomprehensible. The power of resisting heat by a mucous external covering, or a fluid exuding from the skin, is known to prevail to a considerable extent in the instance of the salamander; which, although not so formidable a reptile as is vulgarly believed, (being in reality but a mere crawling lizard of a few inches long,) is not altogether a fabulous creature: neither are the wonderful properties attributed to it wholly unbased on truth, though not quite to the extent laid down by Aristotle and Pliny, both of whom state that this insignificant little reptile by merely going through a fire utterly extinguishes it; whilst Du Bartas observes,

“So the cold humour, breeds the salamander,
 Who, in effect, like to her birth's commander,
 With child with hundred winters, with her touch,
 Quencheth the fire though glowing ne'er so much.”

Thus much has however been satisfactorily proved, viz. that the reptile when annoyed exudates from its skin a milky and acrid fluid, which it spirts out to the distance of some inches, and which

* Yarrell Vol. 1, p. 317.

† Shaw's Travels, fol. edit. Oxon., 1738, p. 231.

even proves destructive when it comes in contact with small animals; and although this fluid is insufficient actually to put a large fire out, it so far extinguishes it immediately around the creature itself, as to enable it to escape uninjured from the consuming element. A curious instance of both these properties in the salamander is mentioned by Kirby, in his elaborate treatise on Animals, vol. 2, page 424, which he gives us on the authority of two ladies, acquaintances of his, who witnessed the fact, and upon whose accuracy he informs us he can place implicit reliance. These ladies, who resided at Newbury in a house that was in a very damp situation, were much annoyed by frogs and a species of newt, (which in fact turned out to be the salamander), that infested their cellars. Being desirous to exterminate such unpleasant inmates, open war was forthwith declared against them all, and several frogs were in consequence shortly after captured and put into a pail to await their final doom; when to the great wonder of the ladies, to whom the captives were exhibited, the frogs one after another turned upon their backs, extended their legs quite stiff, and died almost instantaneously. The cause of this upon a closer inspection they found to proceed from the baneful contact of a little newt or salamander, that they detected running actively around amongst the frogs, every one of whom the moment the reptile touched it instantly expired in the manner just before stated, whilst their destroyer, amidst the confusion he had thus created, managed to creep out of the pail and escape. A few nights afterwards one of these little newts—of whom by this time the domestics stood in no small dread—intruded himself into their company in the kitchen, when one of them bolder than the rest mustered sufficient courage to seize it with the tongs and cast it into the midst of the burning cinders of a powerful fire that was blazing away in the grate, doubtless with the intention of at once reducing it to ashes, when, to the utter amazement of all present, the reptile, instead of being consumed, dodged with remarkable activity through the burning coals, and finally emerging from the bottom of the grate ran off apparently uninjured!

But to return to our subject—The golden carp is so well known that a particular description of it seems needless. In form it differs but little from the crucian carp, the chief distinction being in the colour, and the golden carp wanting the barbules which the crucian has. Golden fish however occasionally exhibit those

singular varieties, that are so often found to occur in domesticated animals, though rarely among such as roam at large in a state of nature. Some gold and silver fish are found with double anal fins: others with a triple tail; in some the dorsal fin extends some way down the back like the common carp, in others it is of a more contracted form like that of a roach or dace; and in some it is altogether wanting; whilst the different shades of gold and silver are sometimes interspersed with dusky blotches, and are almost as varied as the marks in dogs, cats, rabbits, ducks, pigeons and other tame animals, so that to attempt to describe all the varieties would be an endless task, though it seems Mr. de Sauvigny, in his *Histoire naturelle des Dorades de la Chine*, has made the attempt, giving no less than eighty nine coloured varieties of this fish. The specimens usually seen are of a small size, the largest I have noticed were in the small ponds in the gardens at Mount Edgecumbe, some of which I fancied must have been at least of a pound weight; and in the supplement to that part of Cuvier's *Animal Kingdom* which treats of fishes, it is stated that in spacious ponds fishes of this kind may sometimes attain the length of fifteen inches. If these fishes were but sufficiently plentiful there can be little doubt they would take a bait well, as may easily be perceived by the eagerness with which they seize upon almost any small substance that is cast into the water, whether eatable or not; though they have sufficient discrimination to cast out again whatever is disagreeable to their taste, or worthless for food, just as speedily as they first laid hold of it.

Their spawning time is in the spring, and if proper care was taken of them they would multiply exceedingly. In the small open ponds in which they are sometimes kept, the ducks are the greatest enemies to the spawn, devouring all they come across in a very short space of time. With us as yet they have not proved sufficiently plentiful to form an ordinary article of food, yet I have heard from those who have eaten them by way of experiment, that they are but an indifferent fish; being both watery and insipid, as is the case with the greater part of the cyprinidæ; the carp and tench being always honorably excepted. In the Isle of France however, where these fish are very abundant and very frequently brought to table, they are very highly esteemed, though I have not been able to learn the particular manner in which they are there cooked.

The sense of hearing in these fish is remarkably acute, and the Chinese are in the constant habit by means of a whistle of calling them to receive their food ; and it is well known that Sir Joseph Banks was in the habit of collecting together some of these he kept, by ringing a bell. A sudden noise alarms them exceedingly : as a proof of which a friend of mine a very short time since nearly lost several that jumped out in alarm from a glass bowl and fell on the floor, on hearing a door slam loudly in another part of the house ; and there they doubtless would have perished, had not my friend's sister,—a very pretty and interesting young lady,—kindly stepped forward to their aid and restored them to their proper element, where I believe they are still performing their endless rounds. Gold and silver fish are also much frightened at thunder, exhibiting great alarm and uneasiness whilst the storm continues, which in general does them much mischief, and sometimes even causes them to perish.

The Bream.

There are two species of bream; the carp bream, and the white bream. The former is the larger kind of the two, sometimes attaining the weight of eight pounds, whilst the latter rarely exceeds one pound. Both species are of a remarkably deep body, rising much higher in the back and deeper in the belly than the common carp, the body being flat and compressed; the head is also remarkably small, and the back fin short, but considerably elevated, whilst the anal fin is unusually large.

The two kinds of bream differ but little from each other in general form, except that in the white bream the dorsal fin commences rather nearer the head, and is altogether placed farther forward; the head and also the eyes are larger, and the sides are of a white colour, which in the common bream are yellow. The general colour of the white bream is a bluish silvery hue, whereas the carp bream is distinguished by the golden cast like the common carp, which acquires a deeper tint as the fish increases in bulk.

The common or carp bream is usually found in large ponds or lakes, though it is occasionally to be met with in some of our rivers; but they prosper best in ponds where, according to Walton, if they like the water, they will not only grow to be very large, but will become as fat as hogs. It is not, however, a fish that has ever been held in very high estimation for its edible qualities, amongst our own countrymen, though it seems to have borne a far better character with our French neighbours, or at any rate it did so in honest Izaak's time, who quoted the French proverb, "He who has breams in his pond may bid his friends welcome." And he adds, that "it is noted the best part of a bream is his belly and head."

The white bream, which is also known as the bream flat, is it appears restricted to a very limited locality. Both species are found in the Trent, and it seems it was by comparing specimens of the two kinds together, the difference was first detected, and which is but a very recent discovery. This species is also found

in the Cam, and in some of the broads and rivers in Norfolk; but it is a very indifferent fish for the table, though it affords an admirable bait for a trimmer for pike, being remarkably tenacious of life. It is taken with the same baits as the common bream, consequently the following observations will be equally applicable to both kinds of fish.

In fishing for bream, or rather before you commence it, if you want to make sure of sport, you ought previously to bait the ground. There are several sorts of ground baits that are recommended, but the best that I know of is a mixture of grains and tallow melters greaves, in which a few rank over-grown garden worms chopped up may be mixed, as also snails and bullock's brains chopped up fine. The ground bait should be squeezed hard between your hands, and being made up in balls, should be cast in in that form, in order that it may sink the more readily, when it will very soon become properly dispersed about the bottom. It is considered the better plan to bait the ground over night, and visit it betimes the next morning; but as this cannot always be carried into effect, the better plan in the latter instance is to bait such parts of the pond as you purpose visiting in the course of the day: commencing the operation as soon as you reach the pond side, and this will generally be found before long to attract some fish to those spots which they will not readily desert. I have also heard that it is a good plan of baiting the ground to cut a few turves of grass of about six or eight inches in diameter, and attaching a number of worms to them by means of a needle and thread, casting these turves into those parts of the pond you intend fishing in. The plan seems to be a plausible one, but having never given it a trial, I can offer no further opinion upon the matter.

The lines should be cast over the baited ground, and in this kind of fishing a float should be used, and as a bream is of a far less suspicious disposition than the carp, even a gaudily painted float may be indulged in, if gazing on so pretty an object will at all add to the angler's satisfaction; although at the same time, if there are carps in the pond, he had better content himself with a plain unvarnished cork, which if he wishes to catch any of the latter fish, is the very utmost that can be permitted.

Bream generally feed at the bottom, though they swim at all depths; frequently rising to the surface and rolling about, and then descending again, and in this way the approach of a shoal of

them may often be perceived and profited by accordingly ; for if at such times the bait be but cast in quietly amongst them, a bite at least may be bargained for ; unless the chance is thrown away, as it not unfrequently is, by floundering in bait, float, and all overhand ; a most clumsy mode of proceeding, and never to be resorted to except when such a lengthened cast is required as to render an underhand throw impracticable. More fish than bunglers are aware of are scared off by the splash the former so often make in casting in their lines, which should ever be done with the greatest nicety : first letting the bait gently touch the water, and as it sinks down gradually with its own weight, so lower down the point of your rod, till the float rests on the surface. This precaution is perhaps more necessary in shallow than in deeper waters, but should be equally practised in either instance.

The best bait I can recommend for catching the largest breams is a moderate sized red worm without a knot, and well cleansed from its original earthy rankness, otherwise it will prove far less attractive. If you are obliged to collect these on a short notice, then putting them in fennel for a day or two will cleanse them tolerably for your purpose ; but it will not preserve them long, so that, unless pressed for time, good clean moss will always be found to answer the best. Breams will also bite freely at most kind of grubs, brood of wasps, gentles, cadis, and grasshoppers, and indeed most other baits that are taken by the carp or tench ; as also pastes of all kinds and descriptions, and most probably with preserved salmon roe ; but the merits of the latter bait, as far as the bream are concerned, I have not as yet had an opportunity of putting to the test.

When worms are used I consider it the better plan to let them lie at the bottom ; other baits should be fished within an inch or two above it ; the depth being previously ascertained by the sounding plumb ; for when the bait is permitted to remain still, a bream takes it more readily at the bottom than when hung suspended by the float some distance above it ; though very frequently the fish as soon as he seizes on the bait rises upwards with it, which, depriving the float of the benefit of the leaden pellets that kept it previously erect, falls flat on its side upon the surface, instead of being drawn under water, as occurs in most other instances. I have sometimes known perch take in precisely the same manner. When a fish bites in this way, if, after allowing a

little time the float continues in the same position, raise the point of the rod gently so as to lift the line and float just clear of the water till the former begins to tighten with the fish before you venture to strike, otherwise you will strike with a slack line, the disadvantages of which have been already pointed out.* If the fish goes quite off with the float and draws it under water, you must not be too hasty to strike, but allow him line lifting it gently out of the water, and advancing the point of the rod in the direction he is taking in order that the fish may not be checked, taking especial care however at the same time not to let the rod drop so low, but that you may have the fish fairly within the bent when you strike; then, having your reel all clear to run off, get your line nearly tight with the fish strike gently, and don't pull away too violently in order that you may the more quickly land your fish; for though a bream does not struggle so hard as a carp, or in fact offer very great resistance, he has yet from his very peculiar formation a firm hold in the water, and cannot readily be drawn through it; consequently, if both yourself and the fish exert your full strength, something or other between you, must inevitably give way. This is a consequence that should be particularly guarded against in bream angling, as this fish, like the perch and other gregarious fishes, if he escapes after being once hooked, will so alarm his brethren, that not one of them will bite afterwards. The proper way when you have hooked a lusty bream is to keep him firmly within the bent of your rod, when he will soon give up the contest, and turning on his flat side you may drag him easily along on the surface to the land. In so doing you should however keep his head above water, as he will not then be able so distinctly to discern surrounding objects, for he is apt to be alarmed if he catches a full view of your person, and will often make a fresh struggle just as he reaches the pond side.

Daniel in his *Rural Sports* refers to a very pleasant day he once enjoyed at New Hull pond, in Essex. The weather, he informs us was cloudy, and the wind brisk; there were seven rods used by the party, and there were frequently bites at all of them at the same time. When a fish was taken and played on the top or near the surface of the water great numbers were seen to follow him, and as

* See sup. p. 128.

soon as the hooks were fresh baited they were alike greedily taken. Some few perch and tench were caught, but the fish principally taken were bream, which averaged at least two pounds a fish; and of these, from six in the morning till dark in the evening, some hundred weight were taken. The bait used was a large red worm; the spot had been baited on the morning and evening previous to the day of fishing with boiled wheat and tallow melters graves mixed together. Mr. Yarrell also states, that in some of the lakes in Ireland abundance of these fish are taken, many of so large a size as to weigh upwards of twelve or fourteen pounds each. The ground being for a fortnight previously baited with graves and other coarse food, after which it was by no means uncommon to catch several hundred weight, which are distributed among the poorer classes of the neighbourhood who split and dry them with great care, afterwards eating them with their potatoes.

But although baiting the ground adds much to an angler's sport in bream fishing, thereby diminishing a very heavy tax on his patience, as when properly baited he generally finds the fish assembled, in a company on the spot, instead of having to wait an hour or more for the arrival of a scattered few, and even such few may possibly not arrive till his patience being fairly worn out he has shifted his quarters to some other part of the pond, probably only to act the same scene over again: yet in spite of all this, if he be acquainted with the best stands, or from a thorough scientific knowledge can form a pretty accurate judgment as to the most likely localities, he will be pretty sure somewhere or other to manage to fall in with sport before the day is over, if the waters are well stocked, and the weather favorable for his purpose. When angling under these circumstances two rods at least should be used, for having to wait till the fish in roving about shall chance to light upon his bait, one may perhaps be passed unheeded by, whilst the other might not escape notice; and should the fish bite so keenly that one rod is quite as much as can be properly attended to, nothing can be easier than to lay the others aside, till its services may be again required.

Be careful in bream as in carp fishing, to keep well back from the brink, and above all things never permit your shadows to fall upon the water. The best plan is that laid down by Walton for fishing with these rods, which I will transcribe in his own words.

“Gently take one of your rods, and bait your hook, casting it over your ground bait, and gently and secretly draw it to you till the lead rests about the middle of the ground bait.”

“Then take a second rod, and cast in about a yard above, and your third a yard below your first rod, and stay the rods in the ground, but go yourself so far from the water side, that you perceive nothing but the tops of the floats which you must watch most diligently; then, when you have a bite, you shall perceive the top of your float to sink suddenly into the water; yet nevertheless be not too hasty to run to your rods until you see that the line goes clear away, then creep to the water side, and give as much line as possibly you can: if it be a good carp or bream he will go to the farther side of the river, then strike gently, and hold your rod at the bent a little while; but if both pull together, you are sure to lose your game, for either your line or hold will break. And after you have overcome them, they will make noble sport, and are very shy to be landed.”

In treating on the golden carp just now, I alluded to the great degree of heat some fishes are capable of enduring without suffering any apparent inconvenience, and it remains now for me to remark, that the bream will sustain in a most wonderful degree an opposite degree of temperature.

Walton, on the authority of Gesner, states, that a certain and great number of breams were put into a pond in Poland, which in the next following winter were frozen up into one entire ice, and not one drop of water remaining, nor one of these fishes to be found, though they were diligently searched for; and yet the next spring, when the ice thawed, and the weather became warm, and fresh water got into the pond, they all appeared again. Izaak, honest worthy old fellow, says, he quoted his author, because it seemed almost as incredible as the resurrection to an atheist. But wonderful as it may appear, it is now established beyond all controversy that many species of fish are capable of existing in a state of torpor, although frozen into a solid block of ice, so as to be split with a hatchet, or broken up with a hammer, as often occurs in the Artic regions.

Bushnan, in his introduction to the study of nature, states, that perch have been transported for several miles in a frozen state. “If when in this state, (he says,) fishes are placed in water near a fire, they soon begin to exhibit symptoms of reanimation; the

fins quiver, the gills open, the fish gradually turns itself on its belly, and moves slowly round the vessel, till at length, completely revived, it swims briskly about."

The bream spawns about the month of May, in the same manner as the carp, the female at such times being attended with three or four males. One remarkable peculiarity incidental to all the carp tribe, from the barbel to the minnow, during the spawning time, is the appearance of a number of minute white watery excrescences about the head, and also on the scales, making the latter appear rough to the touch, but which disappear when the season of reproduction is past.

SECTION II.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE BARBEL, GUDGEON, AND LOACH, AND DIRECTIONS
HOW TO ANGLE FOR THEM.

The Barbel.

The barbel presents a pleasing appearance to the eye, being of slender form ; the back and upper part of the body are of an olive green colour, gradually assuming a lighter tint towards the belly which is white, whilst the sides have a beautiful bronze cast. The scales are smaller than those of most of the carp tribe, and are very neatly arranged. The head is rather long from the extremity of the gill cover to the muzzle, which is remarkable as well for its overhanging upper jaw as the flesh-coloured upper lip ornamented with four barbules, two in front, and one on each corner of the mouth, giving the fish altogether a very peculiar appearance.

Of the barbel, Walton remarks, that he is not accounted the best fish to eat either for his wholesomeness or his taste, and it seems [that the spawn produces very injurious effects, causing both purging and vomiting to a most painful and alarming degree, quite sufficient indeed to prevent the boldest feeder from venturing upon it a second time, in which respect he may be said to differ widely from the chub, the spawn of the latter fish being considered the best part of him. Still as the barbel is a crafty fish to deceive and a lusty one to subdue, he affords no mean amusement to those who fish for sport alone, without attaching much importance to the potvalue of the catch ; the main object of the enterprize being to capture or kill the enemy, without the slightest design of feasting

on him afterwards ; a feeling quite sufficient to actuate an ardent sportsman. Whoever, indeed, heard of a fox hunter of so omnivorous an appetite as to dream of eating the slightest portion of the animal he so ardently pursues ? The utmost that I am aware a sportsman's appetite has ever attained to, in this respect, has been to partake of some delicate portion of the smoked carcass of a badger cured in sweet pickle ; a feat which no disciple of Nimrod, unless he be as hungry as Esau, can ever be expected to achieve.

According to Walton, the spawning time of the barbel is in April, but more recent authorities have stated the time to be May or June, and the latter seems to be a correct opinion as to the barbels of the present day, however they may have managed these matters a couple of centuries previously. After spawning they soon recover their wonted health and spirits, and become as good as they ever are a month or so afterwards—for good to eat they never can become—the utmost that can be said of them being that they are not utterly worthless as an article of food, without the slightest pretensions to excellence. In fact Walton himself, who would never have spoken ill of any thing if he could have helped it, admits of the barbel “that he may rather be said not to be ill than good meat.” Immediately after spawning the barbel of both sexes shelter themselves for a short period from the strong force of the current amongst the weeds, or return to the more tranquil parts of the river, which, as they increase in strength, they again desert for the gravelly rapids, keeping always close to the ground and swine-like rooting up the loose gravel with their callous noses ; some may however be found in all parts of the river. They are also very fond of playing about the old piles of bridges, feeding upon the larvæ of the insects that infest the mossy weeds that grow upon them. When the weeds of the river begin to rot and decay, these fish retire into the deeper waters, and as winter approaches they become lazy, and in fact nearly torpid, crowding and huddling together in large masses. In this state they are easily taken by nets, as also by jigging with the tormentor, which is effected by having three or four stout hooks tied back to back, attached to a strong rod and line, the hooks being sunk to the bottom by means of a plumb of lead, the tackling is guided amongst the thickest of them, or directed just under one particular fish, and then being drawn up rapidly, one or other of the hooks will, if properly managed, run into and stick fast in the fish. The same plan is

indeed sometimes practised in the summer months when, by baiting the ground plentifully, the barbels are induced to feed so heartily as to become as lethargic as an overfed Esquimaux, and allow the tormentor to be drawn stealthily towards them. To carry on this kind of fishing the tackle ought to be remarkably strong, as the strain upon it is infinitely greater than when a fish is only hooked in the ordinary manner. And if the fish being hooked near the middle, turns a broadside to the current, no ordinary tackle can possibly hold him, unless you can follow the course of the stream, or he will kindly make for the land.

Walton, who quotes Rondeletius, states, that "there be such store of this fish in the Danube, that they may in some places of it, and in some months of the years, be taken by those who dwell near to the river with their hands, eight or ten load at a time;" and Mr. Yarrell says, that so numerous are these fish about Shepperton and Walton, that 150 lbs. weight have been taken in five hours; and on one occasion 280lbs. of large sized barbel were taken in one day.* The learned zoologist does not indeed state in precise terms that these fish were taken by angling, but there can be little doubt he intended to convey that meaning, as he alludes to the subject in the midst of some quotations he had taken from Mr. Jesse's observations on angling for this fish; added to which, a catch like those above mentioned, if effected merely by a net, would have been wholly unworthy of notice.

The barbel is both a sly and a shy fish; much more so indeed than a slight acquaintance of his habits would induce a casual observer to imagine. It is true you may see him muzzling away at the bottom heedless of your presence, when, if he makes any use at all of his eyes, he must have detected it, and when a trout or a salmon would most assuredly have made a bolt of it; but though he sees you plain enough, he knows he may rely upon the current for his safety; whilst he has fully made up his mind not to put himself in your power, or to accept the slightest gift at your hands. If you wish to be convinced to the contrary, only drift the very morsel he is in search of just before his nose, and see how decidedly he will decline the invitation. Mr. Jesse indeed, whose elaborate remarks on the habits of fishes must ever be read with the greatest interest, when describing the habits of those he

* Yarrell's British Fishes, Vol. 1, p. 322.

kept in a vivarium states, that "the barbel were the shyest and seemed the most impatient of observation, although, in the spring when they could not perceive any one watching them, they would roll about and rub themselves against the brickwork, and show considerable playfulness." He also adds, "there were some large stones, round which they would wind their spawn in considerable quantities." It may therefore be said of them, that if owing to their groundgrubbing propensities they are not possessed of high intellectual powers they are abundantly supplied with caution combined with an ample portion of low cunning, which increases with their age; a sly old barbel having a very cunning method of sucking the baits off by means of his protuberant fleshy lips, without letting the hook into his mouth, whilst the angler, congratulating himself that he has at last got a bite, in order to make sure gives the fish time enough to secure all that is profitable, which the latter having availed himself of, leaves the bare hook for the angler to rebait at his leisure,—just a crafty usurer cozens away the property of an expectant heir, who is weak enough to expect any solid pecuniary supplies from so tainted a source.

In angling for this crafty fish a long rod will be indispensable, as also a due portion of line, which must be as fine as possible, consistent with the strength that will be required in the management of so powerful a fish: there must also be a gut footline, the upper links of which may be of three strands twisted, for three do not make a greater show in the water than two, and must of course be one third the stronger; the two lower links next the hook should be only of single gut, but sound and clean, and should be shifted before they become over worn with use. A double swivel should be fastened to some portion of the footline, and as these fish generally feed on the swift gravelly scowers, the line must be somewhat heavily leaded. Some of the barley corn shaped leads placed at intervals, if the force of the current is not too great, will be the best for the purpose; but if the stream is so powerful that these are insufficient to sink the bait to the bottom, then a bullet with a hole drilled so that the line may be drawn through it when a fish bites, but which by a shot, firmly fixed about a yard and a half or more from the bait, must be kept from approaching nearer to bait; in addition to which, a pellet or two on the footline beyond will generally be required. The bait should always be cast in some distance above where the fish is supposed

to be that you are trying for, and in such a manner that he may see nothing of that part of the transaction, which would most probably arouse his suspicions and cause him to reject a bait he would otherwise have taken. The bait must be allowed to drift onwards as if merely impelled by the force of the current, and kept just clear of the bottom, taking care at the same time that it does not come in contact with any weeds, stumps, and other impediments, always letting the bait be carried on foremost and ahead of the leaded part of the line. When a bite is perceived, you must gather in the slack, but in such a manner as not in the slightest degree to increase the strain upon the fish; and having your reel all free, strike dexterously with a twitch, for a pull would endanger your tackle, as unless a barbel is a very small one, you will not move him from the bottom, and with the sudden dead strain of a continued pull something or other must give way. You must also, as far you can with safety, use sufficient force to keep the fish well under command, keeping your butt well up; and do your utmost to prevent him from running under the weeds, as among piles, stumps, or the like, which if there are any at hand he will most probably make for; and, if your way is clear, take the first opportunity you can of leading him down stream, keeping him going at it, not allowing him to turn and bolt under the weeds, which if he once gets well under, and the weeds are strong, your chance of getting him out again is a very small one. On this account it requires great art and skill to overcome a lusty barbel in weedy waters, as unluckily most are in which those fishes are found.

Where the bottom is clear a barbel is not a difficult fish to conquer, if you are not too hasty with him: the great danger is the first struggle and rush, though frequently he will try to hold his own at the bottom; yet a continued steady pull, keeping the rod in play, will sooner or later tire him out, and you need never be in any apprehension about the hold giving way, if the hook has once fixed itself in his leather mouth. In the more tranquil pools the bait may be allowed to remain stationary, in which case you must keep a watchful eye on your line or float if you use one, being ready to advance and lay hold of the rod the moment you see a bite, proceeding in the same manner as when angling for carp or bream.

The best of all baits for the barbel is a well scoured lob worm,

though there are many others he will bite at if he be in the humour. He is however rather nice and particular about his baits, and therefore an unscoured worm, or one that has been scoured till it becomes sickly, will generally be rejected; he being known by all experienced fishermen who have angled for him to be very fastidious about the sweetness of his food, and is as Walton says, a curious feeder; yet he is said to prefer a gentle fresh from the stinking offal it feeds upon, to one that has been duly cleansed in bran and meal; but as the latter are more tough, I am certain the angler's chance would always be improved by using them. These should not be placed singly on the hook, but strung on in the same manner as before directed for trout.* If a cadis is used four or five of them should be run in like manner through the head. It is also said a slug is a good bait for a barbel, and so says Walton, "is cheese, which is not to be too hard, but to be kept a day or two in a wet linen cloth, to make it tough; and if the cheese were laid in clarified honey a short time before, as namely one hour or two, you were still the likelier to catch fish; some (he continues,) have directed to cut the cheese into thick pieces, and toast and tie it to the hook with fine silk; and some advise to fish for the barbel with sheep's tallow and soft cheese, beaten or worked into a soft paste;" but he concludes with observing, that "doubtless the lob worm not too much scoured, and cheese ordered as I have directed are baits enough."

Since preserved salmon roe has been used as a bait, it has been found a very good one for catching barbels during the autumn months, and is perhaps at all times the most attractive bait that can be employed in the deep and tranquil parts of the river. Instances sometimes occur of barbel being taken when trolling for trout, but these are rather rare occurrences, and by no means happen often enough to make it worth the fisherman's while to angle for them purposely in this way.

The barbel is by no means a general fish, though until recently they were very plentiful in many parts of the river Thames; but their numbers are now sadly reduced by the poaching arts of the numerous foes to whose ravages they are exposed; and the same I have also reason to fear is



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the case in the river Lea, though I am informed some very fine ones are still to be found in the neighbourhood of the Rye House fishery.

The Gudgeon.

The Gudgeon resembles the barbel in its habits, never rising at flies on the surface, but feeding entirely at the bottom, searching amongst the gravel for food; but being of a diminutive form, the gudgeon is unable to endure the force of the current the barbel so much delights in, and is therefore generally to be found in the shallows at the sides of the river, as well to avoid the full force of the stream, as to escape the merciless enemies he would be exposed to, were he to venture into the deeper waters; being far too highly esteemed by perch, trout, and pike, to venture without danger near any of their haunts. Nor is this fish lightly esteemed on land, being a sweet flavoured little fellow, and very wholesome wherewithal, and is consequently recommended to invalids, as being remarkably easy of digestion.

There is something particularly elegant in the form of these little fishes. Their slender yet rounded proportions, and bright pearly sides, ornamented with minute black spots, which are interspersed with those of lighter colour, and produce altogether a very pleasing effect; the fins also, particularly the dorsal and caudal which are of a pale brown ground, are also very prettily set off with dark spots. The tail fin is neatly formed and deeply forked; the head, like the barbel, is of a long form with a projecting upper jaw, which is ornamented with a couple of barbules, the eyes are remarkably bright, the irides being of an orange red, and the pupils large and black, and are placed high up on the side of the head. The gudgeon however is only entitled to rank among the little fishes, as he seldom attains the length of eight inches; the more common size being about five or six.

Like most of the cyprinidæ gudgeons are gregarious, swimming and feeding in shoals; and being greedy feeders as well as bold biters, and not easily frightened away by the presence of the angler, great numbers may be taken at the same standing. In fact if you bait the ground, or even disturb it with a rake or pole

you will often find the candidates for capture increase, rather than diminish, the longer you remain fishing there ; for so far are these fish from being frightened away by this proceeding, that it not unfrequently happens, that do what you will to drive them from the spot,—like pigs chased out of an orchard when the gate is left open,—they will return again in spite of you. Catching so many without the necessity of shifting a standing has a greater degree of fascination about it than some anglers who practice it are willing to admit,—who only requiring a few for bait are often found to remain longer in the pursuit, and killing many more than they can possibly require for their ostensible purpose. “But one gudgeon more,” so the old story goes, once caused a more ardent lover of the angle than of his ladye love to be too late for his wedding ; a neglect the injured fair one never forgave, and even carried her sentiment so far as to break off the engagement. Rumour says the angling swain was no less a personage than the celebrated Sir Isaac Newton ; but more probably some enemy fastened the tale upon him, and with no more foundation in real truth, than the tale that Rumour also spread of this great philosopher’s having in a fit of absence stopped his tobacco pipe with the finger of a fair young lady, the latter of whom, from the air of tender silence with which he took the hand to which the finger appertained, must have expected a very different mode of proceeding on his part. Yet we must bear in mind—

That Rumour is at best a lying jade ;
 “Upon whose tongues continual slanders ride,
 Stuffing the ears of men with false reports,”
 Enlarging such slight foibles as may mark
 The boundless path of intellect to fame,
 Which, though but very molehills in such space,
 She makes appear as mountains to the eyes
 Of folk of narrow minds ; who gladly seize—
 Gloating like maggots o’er their nauseous feast—
 Each tale degrading to the gifted man,
 As if the casting his great genius down
 Could raise their mean capacities one jot.

As gudgeons feed entirely on the bottom, they must be angled for there only. The best bait is a small red worm, or the tail end of a middle sized brandling, or of a garden worm ; but they will bite very freely at gentles or the cadis, or at white paste, though

they often contrive to suck off the latter bait without taking the hook into their mouths. If they appear indifferent about taking the bait, keep it gently in motion within their view—drawing it a slight distance away from them, raising it a few inches from the ground, and letting it fall again; by which means you will most likely entice them to lay hold of the morsel they previously slighted, though if any one had made a start after it, the rest would have been certain to have done the same; so that by pursuing the tantalizing system, like Sam Slick's "soft sawder and human natur," you may catch at least double the number you would do, if you were to let the bait remain quietly at the bottom. If there is any current the bait may be drifted gently along into their company, keeping it just clear of the ground. When the water is clear and shallow, it is the better plan to dispense with a float; but when you are unable to see the fish distinctly, then a small float must be used: but you must take care to fish sufficiently deep to allow the bait to drag the bottom. Give a little time when the fish bites, and don't strike with a slack line: for if you do you'll miss the fish, when it's ten to one if you catch another for the rest of the day at that standing.

Gudgeons spawn among the stones in the shallows, and generally during the month of May; the operation in fact lasting all the month through: but they are in good season again by the latter end of June. Their eggs are smaller than even those of the minnow, from which they are easily distinguishable by being of a bluish colour, whilst those of the minnow are of a deep orange hue. It is considered by the learned in these matters, that old mother Shipton's prophecy of seven women to a man has been nearly fulfilled amongst the gudgeons; the number of females as amongst them being as six to one to the males. In this respect the gudgeon differs from most of the carp tribe, the proportion of males being in general greater than that of the females.

The Loach.

The loach, which rarely exceeds four or five inches in length, can scarcely be said to be an angler's fish, except so far as he furnishes a bait for some of the larger kinds. It shelters itself among loose gravelly stones in small limpid streams; and in such places it may be caught either with a small worm or with the cadis.

Loaches though of so diminutive a size, are yet held in very high estimation, being considered very wholesome food where they can be obtained in a sufficient quantity, and the flavour is said to be very superior. Mr. Yarrell states, that in some parts of Europe they are thought so highly of as to be often transported with considerable trouble from the streams they naturally inhabit to the waters of the wealthy; and Linnæus informs us that Frederick the First, king of Sweden was at the pains of having them brought from Germany to be naturalized in his own country. Dr. Brookes also states that loaches, like oysters, are often swallowed raw and alive by way of a restorative, being more efficacious in that state than after undergoing the more agreeable process of cookery.

Though very prolific, the loach is far from plentiful; and as it usually inhabits the same waters as the trout, the latter are very destructive to them. They spawn early in the spring. They are particularly remarkable for having no less than six barbules, four on the upper lip, and two under the chin. They are sometimes kept in glass globes, where they soon become remarkably tame, but they seldom do well unless the bottom is strewed with sand. I once kept several in some small tubs sunk in the ground, together with minnows and sticklebacks. The latter soon grew so bold, that they would take such fast hold of a worm tied by the middle to a single horsehair as to allow themselves to be lifted from one tub to another without relaxing their hold, which they would retain as tenaciously when thus transported as before. The loaches, as well as the minnows, I could also, when they had taken firm hold of the worms, throw from one pool to another, though

the latter often dropped off midway; but whether they arrived safe or otherwise, not a minnow could I prevail upon to bite again for some time after he had been previously caught. The loaches were less cautious, and I frequently caught them three or four times over in the same day, till at length they became to understand the proceeding almost as well as the sticklebacks; but it was otherwise with the minnows, who were just as wild after being kept a considerable time, as when they were first put in, and would hide themselves from view whenever we approached them. They were also particularly alarmed at any sudden noise, which neither the loaches or sticklebacks took the slightest notice of.

In such restricted limits I had also frequent opportunities of observing the habits of the sticklebacks, and particularly remarking the pugnacious disposition of the males, and the tenacity with which one individual retained possession of some portion of the tub he was pleased to call his own, fiercely driving away all others who presumed to intrude there. In support of these assertions of right desperate battles frequently occurred; the conqueror always retaining possession of the disputed territory. These battles most frequently occurred when I transported one of these fish as he was holding fast on the worm from one tub to the other, when a contest was invariably the result; the sight of the worm either exciting the cupidity of some or other of these tyrants of the tub, to wrest it from the intruder, or he, having taken leave of his own domain in the old tub, was then compelled to attempt by conquest to acquire a fresh one in the new.

But it is only the more powerful of the males that are so pugnaciously inclined, the weaker ones giving way, and conducting themselves in a far more peaceable manner; nor are the latter distinguished by the flaming red colour on the sides, which mark the more mighty of their species; and which it is said will disappear, if when one of them is overcome by a more powerful opponent, he is unable to dispossess some weaker neighbour; just as the defeated general, who is either dismissed the service for his misconduct, or placed on half pay, is compelled to lay aside his red coat, and wear nothing but plain clothes for the rest of his days.

I, however, observed that these fish confined their acts of arbitrary tyranny solely to their own species; the minnows

that inhabited the same tub were unmolested by them, whilst the loaches moved in far too low a grade in the tub to be noticed by them in the slightest degree.

SECTION III.

ON THE ROACH AND DACE, RUDD AND CHUB, AND OTHER FISHES CLOSELY RESEMBLING THEM IN FORM AND HABITS.



Roach and Dace.

Roach and dace, from the similarity of their habits and some resemblance they bear to each other in appearance—though about in the proportions of Daniel Lambert to a modern exquisite—have been usually classed together, and so will we treat of them here.

The dace is a fish of a very elegant make, with bright silvery sides; the back and caudal fins of a pale brown, and the pectoral, ventral, and anal of a clear white. The roach is a much deeper bodied fish than the dace, though the sides are more compressed; all the fins are of a deeper colour than the dace; the pectorals being of a deep orange colour, and the ventral and anal in most specimens of a bright red, though in some, the latter as well as the pectorals are of a pale orange cast.

The dace is a very active fish, from which he is said to owe his names of dace, dare, or dart; the roach is an equally sluggish one, being altogether the laziest fish in the fresh water: even the prick of a hook in his mouth seems scarcely sufficient to arouse his energies. Both these fish swim in shoals, and feed on the same kind of food, only that the dace will take a fly freely on the surface, which a roach will not so readily do, though he is not unfrequently taken in that manner.

Those anglers who care more about filling their panniers than supplying pot or pan, may generally obtain the summit of their

wishes in roach and dace fishing, as both fish bite very freely, and are easily captured.

They will bite at worms—the smallest are the best—gentles, the cadis, grubs of all kinds, grasshoppers, small beetles, and ant's eggs, particularly those of the great wood emmet. Their favorite haunt, particularly that of the roach, is about decayed timber, hatch or lock holes, or the piles or posts of bridges; and in these places the cadis is the best bait you can possibly employ, as long as they can be met with; and after their changing into flies, the grasshopper will prove equally attractive; and after the grasshopper, and indeed about the same time, the ant fly is a most sure bait. The latter may be preserved alive for some time in a covered vessel filled with dry earth; but in which punctures must be made so as to admit the air, otherwise they will all soon die. The blue bottle fly is also highly esteemed both by roach and dace.

With the worm, cadis, gentle, or ant eggs, a small float will be necessary, and the tackle should be very fine; stout gear being unnecessary for this kind of fishing, if conducted in a skilful manner. Some indeed fish only with the single hair next the hook, but as silkworm gut can be procured almost equally fine, and five times as strong: this, if kept clean, will generally be found to answer the purpose much better. The hook should be very small, and the cadis should be baited by running it into the head, and bringing the point down towards the tail, and gentles should be baited in the same manner. The bait should be sunk and kept as near the timber as possible, and if the current prevents its remaining stationary in one spot, it should be drifted closely past. A bite may be perceived by the float being drawn under, when, giving a little time, strike gently, and either play your fish ashore, or, if he should prove a small one, pull him right out at once.

If the grasshopper or ant fly is used, the float should be dispensed with, and sufficient lead being fixed to the line to sink it to the bottom, the bait should be cast in as before, and having sunk it to the ground, should be slowly raised to the surface; if a bite is felt in drawing up, yield to the fish a little, in order that he get it well into his mouth, and then strike and play him as above directed. It, however, often happens that a roach will follow the bait to the surface, and there take it, though sometimes he will only gaze at and turn back again, in which case sink again,

and draw it a little more rapidly, which will most probably induce him to seize upon it.

Next to the places above mentioned; the quieter parts of the river, and a moderate depth of water, is most favourable for roach fishing, and dace may be taken there too, though the latter are often found playing about in the shallows, where they rise freely at a small artificial fly, and when they rise shyly their cupidity may generally be aroused by sticking a gentle to the hook of the fly.

In the deeper waters it is a good plan to bait the ground in the same manner as for bream, and angling over the baited ground, which you may do either with the worm, gentle, cadis or ant eggs, as also with paste made according to the directions before laid down; or with a common piece of dough, as also with salmon spawn either raw or preserved. When you fish with a worm, which should be a small one, and of these perhaps a brandling is the best, you must give time when the fish bites, in order to let him get the whole bait, or at any rate the hook well into his mouth, which for its extreme smallness he cannot very readily do. If missed he will sound the alarm among his brethren, and so for the time at least mar your sport. When you angle with paste you must pursue a different plan, and strike the instant you perceive a bite, otherwise the fish will have eaten off the bait from the hook, and very probably detecting the snare will not be prevailed upon again to bite.

Both the roach and dace are found in ponds and lakes, though the former seems more adapted to still waters than the dace, who seems to thrive best in gentle running waters: or sluggish brooks with a clay soil which seems to agree very well with them, as they do not like the trout delight in a clear gravelly bottom, preferring a softer ground that abounds with the larvæ of the insects on which they principally feed. The dace is considered very destructive to the spawn of the trout, and on this account great pains have been taken to extirpate the race from some of our rivers, though from their rapid increase, keeping down their numbers, so as partially to remedy the mischief they perpetrate, is all that is likely ever to be accomplished. The best means of doing this is to make a paste of bread, moistened with honey and cocculus indicus, which being made up in small pellets, and cast into the water, the dace feeding eagerly upon, it will soon become intoxicated, and float helplessly

on the surface, when they may be easily hooked on shore, by attaching a hook to the end of a long fishing rod; though if the dose be strong enough, the greater part of them will perish merely from its effects.

This mode of proceeding is of course only justifiable when resorted to for the purpose of destroying dace, as we would any other vermin, and should never be adopted as an angling pursuit.

Roach attain to a much larger size than dace, the former sometimes reaching to as much as three pounds, whilst two is by no means an uncommon size. But dace are seldom known to reach the weight of one pound, whilst half that size may be taken as the usual average. Neither of these fish are considered worth much for the table, though the dace is generally considered the better fish of the two. By the pike, however, their edible qualities are held in far higher esteem, there being no more attractive baits to lure him to destruction; the dace from his form and silvery appearance being admirably adapted for trolling, and the roach from his superior tenacity of life for a trimmer.

According to Mr. Yarrell the dace spawns in June, but with all due deference to so respectable an authority, if this occurs at all in that month, it is by no means universally the case in all waters. In every one of the rivers and brooks in which I have found them, their spawning time has been March and April, just about which time, in common with the rest of the carp tribe, they are distinguished by the white warty excrescences, and roughness on the scales; both of which disappear as the fish begins to improve in condition; still this may not be the case in all rivers, in some of which they may spawn a month or two earlier or later than in others, as so frequently occurs in the instance of the salmon, and may possibly with many other fishes, though the fact may hitherto have escaped notice. Roach I have always found to spawn about the early part of June, just about the time of the May fly, when swarms of these fishes may be seen playing about old timber, all huddled together in a mass like a swarm of bees.

At such times they are so intent upon the business in hand, that it is in vain you offer them the most tempting bait, yet they may be taken by jigging with the tormentor in the manner

before alluded to; but it is needless to say that such is a most unsportsman-like mode of proceeding, and at such a time and season is most decidedly to be condemned.



The Graining

There is a fish in the Mersey very much resembling the dace, which it seems was first noticed by Mr. Pennant, that proves to be entirely a distinct species, and which it appears is not found elsewhere in the kingdom. The fish alluded to is called the graining, which from a similarity in sounds has sometimes been confounded with the grayling or *salmo thymallus* of Linnæus, I have already treated on. It is a fish I am informed that affords good sport to the angler, rising freely at the fly, and taking the same baits as the dace. It is of about the same size as the latter fish, but is said to be much better eating; further I am unable to say, having never had the fortune to fall into the company of one of these fishes, being wholly indebted to other writers on the subject for the information I have been thus enabled to lay before my readers. There is an excellent engraving of the graining in the first volume of Mr. Yarrell's history of British Fishes.

The Blue Roach.

Mr. Yarrell mentions another species of roach ; a specimen of which he was furnished with by the late Lord Derby. It is provincially, he informs us, styled the blue roach, and sometimes attains a pound weight. It takes the same baits as the common roach, biting very freely, and is said to be by no means a bad fish resembling very much the perch in flavour. The spawning time is in May. The form and position of the fins resembles the common roach, but the latter instead of being of a red or orange hue, as in the former fish, are perfectly white. The upper part of the body is of a slaty blue colour (from which the fish derives its name,) changing gradually on the sides to a silvery brightness ; the belly is white. A good representation of this, may also be found in the first volume of Mr. Yarrell's work.

The Rudd.

The rudd, or it is termed in Norfolk the Finscale, is a fish of very respectable size, bearing a strong resemblance to the roach, but from which it is distinguishable by a golden tint with a reddish cast that gives it a very brilliant appearance. It is taken with the same baits as the roach and dace, but it is far better eating than either of those fishes. Its spawning time is towards the latter end of the spring, at which time it is out of condition ; but it soon recovers, and is again fit for the table by the latter end of May.

This fish is remarkable for the peculiar colour of the eyes, which are remarkably large, and the irides of a bright orange, inclining to red, from which circumstance it has acquired the name of, "Red eye." By some it is also called the "Shallow." The rudd is by no means a general fish, yet it abounds in the broads of Norfolk, and in most of the waters of that county; as also in those of Cambridgeshire and Warwickshire. It is also found in the Isis, and is sometimes to be met with in the Thames.



The Forked Tail Roach.

Walton speaks of a small species of roach with very red fins, and a very forked tail, which he considers to be a bastard breed between the true roach and the bream; but as instances of hybrids amongst fishes are extremely rare, there is every reason to believe them a distinct species. They increase very rapidly; some waters fairly swarming with them, yet I have never met with any that exceeded four or five inches in length, and the greater part of them have been much less. Some five and twenty years ago, they were very plentiful in the mill ponds on Weston commons, in the neighbourhood of Southampton, near the residence of the late Mr. Chamberlayne: but those ponds having been since let dry the whole race perished. Walton also adds that these fish are also scattered about in many rivers, but he thinks not in the Thames. He says that men knowing the difference between them and the true roach, call them ruds, and Mr. Yarrell seems to consider it probable these fish were the true rudd already treated on; but this can hardly be the case; as the true rudd sometimes exceeds two pounds in weight whilst the fork-tails rarely attain more than two or three ounces at the very utmost, bearing about the same proportion to the common rudd, as a bleak does to a chub, or a ruffe to a perch. The fork-tails bite very freely

at paste baited on a very small hook, but they are very difficult to catch, as they carry off the bait very quickly, merely nibbling at it without taking the hook into their mouth ; yet in my younger days I have taken some dozens of them on a mild summer's evening.

They were easily distinguishable from the common roach which I have met with occasionally in the same ponds, by the body of the former being much deeper ; the sides much more compressed ; the anal and caudal fins larger, and the latter much more deeply forked, and of a very deep red colour.

The Chub or Cheven.

The chub in appearance resembles an overgrown dace, but the logger head of the former renders him easily distinguishable ; the gape of the mouth is also much wider in proportion, and the anal fin, which in the latter fish is small, in the chub is very large and of a dusky cast. The head is also of a much darker colour in the chub, being of a dingy brown ; that of the dace a very light brown : the outer edges of the gill covers of the former, are also distinguished by a dusky streak that reaches down to the pectoral fin ; the cheeks, instead of being pale like those of the dace, are of a golden cast ; the upper part of the body is also of a bluish brown, growing gradually paler, but retaining the blue tint to the lateral line, the belly being silvery. The chub spawns in April.

The best baits for the chub are the cock-chafer when those insects are in season, and afterwards a grasshopper, both of which he will take best at the surface. He will also take the green drake, the caperer, and the common blue bottle. The mode of dapping for a chub with a grasshopper, is admirably pointed out by Walton, and the same plan may be equally resorted to when either of the other baits above alluded to are employed for the purpose. As I

cannot possibly excel honest Izaak's description, it will I trust afford a sufficient pretext for expressing myself in the same terms.

After recommending his scholar to go to the same hole out of which the latter had shortly before caught a fine chub, on which they had just made a hearty meal, he continues,—“ In most hot days you will find a dozen or twenty chubs floating near the top of the water; get two or three grasshoppers as you get over the meadow, and get secretly behind the tree, and stand as free from motion as possible; then put a grasshopper on your hook, and let your hook hang a quarter of a yard short of the water, to which end you must rest your rod on some bough of a tree, but it is likely the chubs will sink down towards the bottom on the first shadow of your rod, for the chub is the fearfulest of fishes, and will do so if but a bird fly over him, and makes the least shadow on the water; but they will presently rise up to the top again, and there lie soaring till some shadow affrights them again. I say, when they lie upon the top of the water, look out the best cheven you see, which you, setting yourself in a fit place, may very easily see, and move your rod as softly as a snail moves, to that chub you intend to catch; let your bait fall gently upon the water three or four inches before him, and he will infallibly take the bait, and you will be as sure to catch him; for he is one of the leather mouthed fishes, of which a hook does scarcely ever lose its hold; and therefore give him play enough before you offer to take him out of the water.”

The chub may also be taken with the same baits, and in the same manner as before pointed out for taking roach and dace. He will also bite at slugs, grubs of all kinds, and most kinds of beetles; preserved salmon roe is also an excellent bait for him. He also rises at an artificial fly, and is often taken by that means by persons whipping for trout. If angled for purposely, gaudily dressed flies, like the red palmer, with the peacock herl body, and ribbed with gold twist, are found the most attractive. In wide waters, that are free of timber over-head, the long cane May fly rod is to be preferred, particularly in those streams whose sides are fringed with willows, as the extreme length of the rod will enable you to reach over them in many parts, and the bushes will keep you concealed from the view of the fish. Many streams however that abound with chubs have a great deal of over-head timber,

and the favorite resort of these fishes in a deep tranquil pool, partially shadowed by some wide spreading tree that overhangs the steep banks, and whose roots afford them hover, and a place to fly to for protection when alarmed. It is in the deep and quiet holes in the more woody parts of a river, that chubs most frequently abound, and there are certain localities they are never known to forsake. "Once a chub hole always so," is a proverb most anglers are familiar with. Spots of this kind should be fished in the mode above described by Walton; but it is not always necessary that you should see the chubs on the surface, as in cold and windy weather they may swim deeper, and yet a tempting bait may coax them to the top.

In dapping it is a good plan when these fish do not show themselves to float the bait very gently all down the pool, trying first the deep sides near the bank, and allowing the fish to turn when he bites before you strike, which honest Izaak forgot to mention, but it is doubtless a plan he always pursued. One great object you must never lose sight of in chub fishing, which is to keep yourself well concealed from the fish, and not only to keep yourself, but also as much of your rod as you can out of sight; therefore some greater length of line will be required than is usually used; or at any rate sufficient to allow the rod to be elevated some height above the water: few indeed of the uninitiated are aware of the number of fish they deter from rising by using too short a line, and holding the rod in a horizontal position, only three or four feet above the surface of the water, particularly where a yellow bamboo top, with the black splices and ringties is employed, which has a very traplike appearance. Properly speaking for dapping the top should be of one uniform colour with the rod; for though it will not look half so pretty, depend upon it you will kill many more fish with it. A good length of gut foot line will be desirable, and at least one double swivel should be used. The rod ought to be a powerful one—in the lesser streams one of fifteen or sixteen feet long will be sufficient—and when you have hooked a fish you must take care to keep him in good play, and do your best to prevent him from running towards the banks, and entangling your tackling among the roots or weeds, which if he be a lusty one he will very probably attempt, and which if he succeeds in, it is ten to one but you lose both him and a considerable portion of your tackle into the bargain.

Where a stream floats through the hole, and you use a bait, the better plan is to lead the line very lightly, so that the bait may drift through at about midwater; and if the main current runs strong, you should then fish only the deep water in the eddy under the banks. Where the stream runs sluggish, then a small float may be used.

The larger chubs very frequently run at a minnow, and are sometimes taken by that bait by persons trolling for trout; but few persons troll for a chub purposely. Towards the autumn and winter a yellow paste, made of the strongest cheese and pounded in a mortar, with a little butter and saffron, so much of it as, being beaten small, will turn it to a lemon colour; but a far better bait than this is preserved salmon spawn, which will be taken by him better than any other throughout the fall of the year, at which time the chub is considered in the highest perfection, though he continues in good condition all through the winter; but he is it must be confessed at best but a very poor fish, though Walton seems to consider that he and the barbel have lost part of their credit by ill cookery, and by his account if dressed soon after it is caught, and in the manner pointed out by him, it will not only look lovely, but be most excellent meat: but if not dressed soon after it is taken it is not worth a rush.

For the benefit of such of my readers as may not possess "The Complete Angler," I will give honest Izaak's recipes, (for he points out two ways of dressing a chub) in the precise terms laid down by him.

"First scale him, and then wash him clean, and then take out his guts; and to that end make the hole as little and as near his gills as you may conveniently, and especially make clean his throat from the grass and weeds that are usually in it, for if that be not very clean, it will make him to taste very sour; and having so done put some sweet herbs into his belly, and then tie him with two or three splinters to a spit, and roast him, basting often with vinegar, or rather verjuice and butter, with good store of salt mixed with it. Being dressed thus you will find him a better dish of meat than you, or most folk, even than anglers themselves do imagine; for this dries up the fluid watry humour with which all chubs do abound."

The other plan is as follows:—

"When you have scaled him (the chub) and cut off his tail and

fins, and washed him very clean, then chine or split him through the middle as a salt fish is usually cut, then give him three or four scotches on the back with your knife, and broil him on charcoal or wood-coal that are free from smoke, and all the time he is broiling baste him with the best sweet butter, and a good store of salt mixed with it ; and to this add a little tyme cut exceedingly small, or bruised into butter. The cheven thus dressed has the watry taste taken away for which so many except against him."

The Ide.

There is a species of carp somewhat resembling the chub, an excellent engraving of which may be found in the first volume of Mr. Yarrell's work on British Fishes, under the name of "the Ide," being the *Leuciscus idus* of Cuvier. It is found chiefly in the large rocky lakes of the Northern parts of the European continent, though, according to Mr. Stewart, one of these fish was taken at the mouth of the river Nith, by the late Dr. Walker. It is said to be a well flavoured fish ; its food the same as most other of the carp species, the head resembles that of the chub, with a remarkably blunt muzzle, the gape of the mouth wide for one of the carp tribe, the irides of a straw colour, the pupils black. The body is of a round bulky form like that of a grey mullet ; the scales are very large. The upper part of the body and the head are of a dull bluish black, assuming a grey tint at the sides, growing gradually paler as it descends towards the belly, which is white. The laterel line is curved in its descent from the upper edge of the gill cover to the centre of the body, from whence it runs straight to the tail.

SECTION IV.

THE BLEAK AND THE MINNOW.

The Bleak and the Minnow.

These two little fish are chiefly used as bait for other fish, though they will bite very freely in their own proper persons, and are frequently taken in that way to be again angled with to entrap their betters.

The bleak is a pretty little fish resembling a dace, but the colours are much more brilliant being of a bluish cast on the back, and the cheeks and sides of the most shining silvery white. It is very lively in its motions, rising eagerly at the small gnats that are playing on the surface, and may be taken with any small artificial fly, as also with a paternoster line, like that used in catching smelts.

Its general haunts are gravelly shallows in a moderate stream. The usual spawning time is May. These fish are infested with a kind of intestinal worm that causes them great suffering, occasioning them to swim about in an agitated manner, sometimes coming to the surface, and darting onwards apparently quivering with agony, on their sides, which has obtained them the name of mad bleak. The scales of the bleak are, with those of the roach and dace and other white fish, used in the manufacture of artificial pearls, and of these the scales of the bleak are esteemed more highly than those of any other fishes, that they are fished for the value of their scales alone; the fishermen after stripping off their scales recommitting them to the stream, though it seems doubtful whether many can survive this rough usage.

The bleak is by no means a general fish, being found chiefly in the Thames and its tributaries, nor is it in much repute as an article of food, except in the estimation of the large Thames trout; a well spun bleak under the management of a skilful hand being the most tempting bait that can be offered to them.

Minnows are too well known to need any particular description. They may be taken very easily with a small piece of red worm baited on a moderately sized hook in the same manner as before pointed out for catching gudgeons, and keeping the bait in motion if they do not at once seize hold of it. Although chiefly used as a bait for catching other fish, they make an excellent fry in their own proper persons, few fresh water fish affording a more delicious dish; but they must be carefully gutted, otherwise they will have a bitter taste that is far from agreeable: you may however eat them bones heads and all. The greater number of these fish spawn sometime in the month of June, but some cast their roes much later; some females full of spawn being to be taken all through the summer. Whilst the act of spawning is going on the males assume a dark colour on the back and a dull reddish cast under the belly, which is then very lank and thin, and renders the large ventral fins, which distinguish the males, very conspicuous; the warty excrescences on the head are also very perceptible in the males, but very slightly visible in the females, who become much less altered in appearance at these times. The spawn is deposited chiefly in the very shallow water among the gravel, and becomes vivified in the course of a very few days afterwards.

When minnows are required for bait only, they may be taken with a small dip net, having a few minute pieces of red cloth or worsted attached to it to represent a worm; and anything white and shining, as an oyster shell or a piece of broken crockeryware, often proves a powerful attraction. Great numbers may also be taken with a casting net.

SECTION V.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE TENCH, AND HOW TO ANGLE FOR HIM.

The Tench.

Although, as I stated in my commencement, I began my angling career at a very early age, I was someway advanced in my teens before I had the fortune to angle for a tench. In the neighbourhood in which I then resided, and to which my fishing excursions were limited, there was but one pond that contained this species of fish, which belonged to one of the most selfish men in existence; it is therefore needless to say, that all hopes of obtaining a few hours' fishing there was wholly out of the question: and as the desire of capturing a few of these fishes was considerably enhanced by the difficulty of being enabled even to make the attempt, it was with no small delight that I received an invitation to spend a few days of my Midsummer holidays with a schoolfellow for the express purpose of angling in a pond within a few miles of his residence, and famed for being most plentifully supplied with this much wished for fish. No opposition being offered at home to my accepting the invitation, I lost no time in availing myself of it, and arrived at my young friend's house just as the evening was closing in, where I found a good substantial supper, accompanied with tarts, fruit, and other niceties, in which schoolboys so much delight; yet scarcely one morsel could I swallow, though possessing in general by no means a bad appetite: but which the excitement, caused by the anticipation of the excursion of the

morrow, had for the time completely taken away, though Desdemona herself never devoured the discourse of her swarthy lover with more eager delight than I did that of my young friend's papa—a kind hearted and chatty old gentleman, who wore powder; sported shorts, silk stockings and pumps: but it was not because he was dressed like a gentleman that I was so eager a listener—the subject that so much engrossed my attention was an account of the pond I was to visit on the following day, and of what fish my worthy host had himself caught there; and what weighty fish had been taken out there by other persons at sundry times and in divers manners; as well as what immense ones the pond was still supposed to contain; which at length worked me up to that pitch of eager excitement an ardent sportsman may form some idea of, but which none but a really half mad lover of the angle can actually feel.

At length having retired to rest, I tried to compose myself at once to sleep, in order to pass away as unconsciously as I could the weary hours that must necessarily elapse before I could commence my labours; and so earnestly did I strive to accomplish this, that the bare attempt kept me wide awake the greater part of the night; and when at last I did fall into a kind of restless slumber, it was only to dream of the all engrossing subjects of my waking thoughts. There in imagination was I standing by the pond side, in whose clear waters I could discern perfect giants of the finny tribe, swimming eagerly around in every direction: all apparently so fiercely hungry as to be contesting amongst each other for the very pebbles at the bottom, which they greedily seized upon and bolted with a voracity truly miraculous.

But I, from some unaccountable cause or other, was continually baffled in my attempts. First, though anxious beyond measure to accomplish it, I was unable to put my rod together: as I either found the ferrules too tight to admit the joints, or the next moment they would become so enlarged as to cause the rod to separate every time I attempted to cast in; then again the pond would become all of a sudden so overspread with weeds, that it was in vain I sought an aperture; or it would change to a mere mossy bog, or a dry ditch by the way side; then my line would get entangled in the trees, or in the rushes by the water side, or the hook would come off I know not how, or why, and do all I could I found myself unable to fix on another, and when I did, after immense labour

and difficulty, get my bait into the midst of a very multitude of fishes, they would suddenly rush away from it, or pass it by unheeded; or if one did bite, I was sure to miss him, or if hooked he would run off with half my line, and all this time though burning with anxious haste, my every motion seemed impeded by some power I strove in vain to controul; and at last though I did actually hook one that seemed a very Goliath both for strength and bigness, yet he diminished away by the time I landed him to a little disgusting reptile of a water-newt utterly worthless and unprofitable. How long these visions might have continued I can't pretend to say, for I was aroused in the midst of them by my schoolfellow, and almost before he could inform me it was time to rise, I was out of bed; when not having arrived at a shaving age, my toilet was very soon completed.

It is seldom indeed that the reality equals the anticipation, and so it proved here; for to our no small chagrin we found on arriving at the pond side, that the whole surface was so completely covered with the plant of the water lily as scarcely to present a single open space; and where one occurred, we generally found the water beneath choked up with the stems and branches of the plant: so that it was not without extreme difficulty we could find a single spot in which we could get in our lines. At length, after searching around, we discovered two small open spaces, both perfectly clear to the very bottom, and within a few yards of each other into which we threw, and most patiently did we watch our floats for a considerable time, and all to no purpose, till eventually mine sunk gradually down and disappeared, when in my eagerness to secure the fish, I struck so violently as to break asunder the line just above the float, and I saw it no more. This caused me to feel just as an angler, possessing all honest Izaak's ardour and none of his patience, will always feel under such circumstances; added to which this was the only float I possessed, nor had my companion a spare one with which he could supply me. I contrived however to make a piece of common bottle cork answer the purpose, and putting on a fresh hook again ventured my fortune in the self-same spot. After this an hour or so expired before we had either of us another bite, till at last my companion's float sunk leisurely under, and he had the good luck to pull out a little tench, when for the first time in my life I was enabled to examine a specimen of the kind; for till then I had only seen a represen-

tation of one in an old edition of Walton, which as much resembles any other fish as a tench. Whilst so occupied I had fixed my rod in the ground, and very shortly my companion drew my attention to it, my float having totally disappeared, when it is almost needless to say I lost no time in laying hold of the rod, and being more careful on this occasion I eventually captured a noble tench, notwithstanding the difficulties I had to encounter to accomplish it, on account of the place being so incumbered with weeds: but having at length surmounted every obstacle, I felt fully compensated for all my previous trouble and disappointment, though this, if I remember right, concluded our sport for the day.

And now having said thus much about myself, I will next make a few remarks upon the description and habits of the tench itself.

The tench is a stout thick bodied fish: the head proportioned to the body, rather rounded about the eyes, and blunt at the nose; the muzzle is ornamented with two very small barbules at the corners of the mouth; the eyes are small and the irides yellow. The dorsal fin, which is placed about the middle of the body, does not extend far down the back but is considerably elevated; the ventral fins are large and rounded, and the male is easily distinguishable from the female by the superior size of his ventral fins; all the fins are of a dark brown colour. When the fish is young the tail is forked, but as in the trout it becomes less so as the fish advances in age, and in old fishes assume a convex form. The scales are remarkably small. One remarkable character of the tench is the thick slime with which its body is coated, resembling that of the eel, and which in like manner will adhere to anything it comes in contact with, yet giving a most resplendent cast to the scales, rendering it as beautiful to look upon as disagreeable to handle. To this slime honest Izaak attributes many medicinal properties; this fish being, as he says, styled the physician of the whole finny tribe; and that if a pike be wounded, he has only to rub himself against the slimy sides of the tench to insure a certain cure. Out of gratitude for such services, as well as perhaps to secure them for a future emergency, the pike forbears to devour his physician though never so hungry; and as I have every reason to suppose the worthy old angler would not have said so if he did not believe it to be true, I offer it to my readers for what it is worth. Tench vary much in colour, according to the nature of the

waters they inhabit; in clear waters they are generally of a brownish olive green cast on the back, growing lighter and assuming a most resplendent golden cast on the sides, becoming still lighter towards the belly; but in muddy waters the colours are generally darker and less brilliant.

But it seems that the colour is not always the criterion of their goodness, nor will the clearest waters always procure those of the finest flavour. In a pond at Leigh Priory, a quantity of fine tench were caught presenting a beautiful exterior, yet they tasted so strong of a particular weed as not to be eatable: whilst others, that were taken out of a pond at Munden Hall fleet in Essex, that was choked up with weeds and black stinking mud, were exceedingly well tasted; although the mud had imparted its colour to every fish, which in fact were as black as the very mud itself. But tench will lose their rank muddy taste if removed to more healthy waters, which from their tenacity of life can generally be accomplished without much difficulty; as these fish will live for several hours out of water, and may with safety be transported for several miles, over land, or sea either, if necessary. The best plan I know of curing a rank taste either in this or any other fish, is to sew up a piece of bread in the belly of the fish while dressing, which must be removed before it is sent to table, which will generally then be found to have totally absorbed the muddy flavour.

Tench will grow to a very large size, and that too in waters of very limited dimensions. Thus we read in Daniel's Rural Sports, that in a pond at Thornville Royal, which was almost choked up with mud, weeds, and rubbish, so that very little water remained, several tench and also perch were found, and amongst others a perfect monster of a tench weighing more than eleven pounds.

After the pond was thought to be quite free, under some roots there seemed to be an animal which was conjectured to be an otter. The place was surrounded, and on opening an entrance among the roots, a tench was found of a most singular form, having literally assumed the shape of the hole in which he had been for so many years confined; the colour on the belly was also singular, being of a perfect vermilion. It seemed otherwise to be in a healthy state; but how it contrived to obtain a supply of food in its contracted prison, is a matter of some surprise, as we can scarcely suppose him indebted for his sustenance to the charity of his neighbours. A physician in prison is rarely visited or supported by his patients;

nor can we expect more virtue among fishes, or that they would exhibit more charity towards their imprisoned doctor, however skilfully he may have physicked them, than mankind would have done under similar circumstances? This enormous tench was afterwards restored to liberty, and allowed to roam at large in an open pond, and twelve months afterwards, when the account was written, was perfectly well.

The spawning time of tench is the month of June, and according to Willoughby at the time the wheat is in blossom. The eggs like those of the carp are deposited in weeds or flags; and until the spawn is vivified, every precaution should be taken that no ducks or other water fowl are allowed to visit the waters, as they will devour the greater part if not the whole, if permitted to come near it. And it may be as well at the same time to keep a look out that no suspicious characters approach the pond side; for whilst the spawning process is going on, the parties engaged in it are so intent upon the important business they are then engaged in, that they may easily be dipped out with a landing net, or struck with a barbed spike at the end of a stick, or noosed with a wire like a pike. As the female is generally during the time of spawning attended by three males, when a pond is intended to be stocked with these fishes, it would be the better plan to put in that number of males to a female, and by selecting the largest fish you can procure, you will be the more likely to insure a breed of the finest fish in the shortest space of time.

As to the waters best adapted for tench, Walton observes that they love ponds better than rivers, and pits than either: and this opinion has been fully corroborated by all who are conversant on the subject. Yet in some large waters they are found to thrive exceedingly, particularly in the broads in Norfolk, but they rarely do well in rivers. Those best adapted to them are a slow sluggish streams, having a muddy bottom; and where in the quieter parts the surface is coated with the plant of the water lily. Mr. Yarrell mentions that the tench appears to decline in proportion as we advance Northward, and although a few may be said to exist in some of the preserved waters in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, they nowhere thrive or breed in any abundance. In the South of England, tench are generally found to do well in most waters that are not too hard, or tainted with mineral springs. A peaty soil seems well adapted to them; and they are often found to suc-

ceed very well in abandoned marl pits, which have become filled with water. In winter they ooze or bury themselves in the mud.

The tench is a very bold biter, and being commonly to be taken of a pound weight and upwards, affords excellent diversion to the angler. In tench fishing the great art seems to be to discover the particular part of the waters they are in the habit of resorting to in search of food; for when this is discovered your sport is certain, as a nicely scoured red worm is seldom rejected, and as they swim and feed in companies, great numbers may be often taken at the same standing.

A few years since I was staying at the house of a friend in Cornwall, when it was arranged that a party of us should repair to a pond within a short distance of the house, and commence an attack upon the tench. On starting I was surprised to find that I was the only one of the company, consisting of four persons, who was provided with a fishing pannier, though there was certainly no lack of them in the house; and I was even still more so, when informed that if every one of us were to carry one, they would not contain one half the fish we should most probably that day catch; which were to be brought home in a large garden wheelbarrow I had just before seen start off; but as this barrow contained the wherewithal to cheer the inner man by the pond side, I very naturally supposed was dispatched there for no other purpose. In this instance at least the success exceeded my anticipations, for never did I know fish to bite away so eagerly, or continue so long to do so as on that memorable day; one of the most delightful indeed I ever remember to have passed by the water side, and if the wheelbarrow was not absolutely overrunning with fish, it was no slight load to drive home again. But the most remarkable part of the affair was, that there was only one limited space in this pond, not exceeding four or five yards, and which had nothing remarkable about it, in which we could obtain a bite: and though some of our party wandered away and tried other parts of the pond apparently equally inviting, they never moved a single fish in any one of them. The same occurred on one or two other occasions I had the good fortune to fish these waters, in every one of which I met with the greatest success; but still could catch nothing except in this one identical spot. Another proof of the advantage of knowing the exact spot to place the bait was shown

me in a small pond in the grounds adjoining my friend's house I have just before alluded to. Having been detained within doors the greater part of the day by a heavy fall of rain, but which partially clearing off towards the afternoon, I ventured out accompanied by a regular cunning angler to try which of us could catch the most tench out of this pond; which was in fact a mere moat in the pleasure grounds adjoining the house. As my opponent was known to possess great skill and knew the pond well, I considered it my best plan to keep near him and do exactly as he did. The water we found, as we both of us expected, exceedingly puddled by the recent heavy rains. I observed that my opponent cast in near a willow bush that drooped over the water, and very near to the brink, and I did the same, fishing as near him as I thought an angler could conscientiously do. He however very soon pulled out a tench, not a very large one certainly, then another, and another, and so he continued to do till a perfect torrent of rain, and the half hour dinner bell put us to the rout, whilst I, though all the time fishing within a few feet of him, did not even obtain a nibble. A very short time after this I chanced to walk past the scene of my former defeat, when the water in the moat being perfectly clear, I could then distinctly see the bottom, and then I saw at a glance how it came to pass that my antagonist had managed to keep all the sport to himself. The bottom of this pond was completely covered with a small kind of green weed, except one small space which was occupied by a flat paving stone, about a foot square; this my opponent well knowing the whereabouts of, had managed every time he threw in to let his bait rest upon it, where it was exposed most temptingly to the view of the fishes; whilst mine was completely obscured by being buried amongst the weeds.

In tench fishing, where the waters are so clear as to render the fish shy, it is a good plan to foul the part of the pond you purpose angling in with a long pole or a rake, in the same manner as for gudgeons; by this process I have often known sport to be obtained on the self-same spot that had been angled in for several tedious hours previously without moving or obtaining a single fish. I recollect, particularly on one occasion, getting capital sport by adopting this manœuvre, in a pond that was so matted with weeds, that it was only in a few places round the edges a bait could by any possibility be cast in; and in all these, the water was very shallow

and perfectly clear ; added to which, I was one of a party of five, the majority of whom certainly were the clumsiest fishermen that ever cast a line into the water, who were not long whilst the waters remained clear in putting every fish to the rout : but no sooner did we disturb the bottom, so as to thicken the water around our fishing ground, than the tench began to resort there from all quarters, so that in spite of all the splashing made by our party, both in casting in and pulling out, by keeping the water constantly puddled a great number of tench were hooked, and several of them safely landed ; and although many of them not only walked of with hooks almost without number, and several yards of line, floats, and all to boot—and, if my memory deceives me not, one of mine was among the number—still their companions continued to bite away as merrily as ever, which is rarely the case with gregarious fishes, who, as I have before had occasion to remark, when one of them happens to be hooked and escapes, so alarms his fellows that they either desert the spot or leave off biting.

I have also found it to be an excellent plan to fish in the interstices or small open spaces, which are sometimes to be met with between thick weeds, or the plant of the water lily. Where a pond is thickly overspread with the latter plant, a float may be dispensed with, and the following plan resorted to, which though laid down generally as a certain mode of catching carps, I have ever found it better adapted to tench fishing. The plan is as follows:—Fix a good sized cleft shot on your line, so far from your hook as that when you raise the shot to the surface, your bait shall rest on the bottom, or not very far above it. Having cast into some convenient aperture, let the bait sink down, and then rest the shot on one of the broad leaves of the lily, upon which you must constantly keep your eye, till you see the shot drawn gradually away, which will disclose a bite as well as any float will do, and in a very clear water is less apt to scare the fish.

In my ordinary fishing for tench, I have found it the best plan when I have fished with a worm, to allow the bait to rest on the ground, unless where the bottom was foul with weeds or the like, when I have altered the depth so as to let the bait hang just clear of the foul part of the bottom. I have commonly used a small float as being less likely to check the fish when he bites. When the ground has been clear so that I could safely let my bait go to

bottom, I have so shotted my line that my float shall stand erect when all the shots are off the bottom, but I place one lower than the rest which I manage shall touch ground, so that my float only stands half erect, yet becomes bolt upright the moment a fish dares to meddle with the bait, and sinks under water the moment the rogue walks off with it. It is better to give a tench a little time when he bites in order that he may get the bait well into his mouth, when, being a leather mouthed fish, the hold will be sure not to give way.

The bait I have almost invariably used in this kind of fishing has been a moderate sized red worm well scoured, or a large brandling; but these fish will bite at the cadis, gentles, and grubs^s of all kinds, the brood of wasps, grasshoppers, small slugs, and at every kind of paste. According to Walton a tench inclines very much to any paste in which tar is mixed, and also to a paste made of brown bread and honey; but as I have never tried any of these, I will venture no opinion upon their respective merits.

In addition to the tench being the physician of fishes, Walton also mentions that, "in every tench's head are two little stones which foreign physicians make great use of;" whilst Rondeletius says "that at his being at Rome he saw a great cure done by applying a tench to the feet of a very sick man." This he says was done after an unusual manner by certain Jews. But Rondeletius lived in a far more gullible age than now; in times indeed when impostures were daily allowed to pass current for miracles, and when learned men could be induced to entertain the idea that hares changed sexes every year, or that the barnacles bred on old floating timber would turn to geese; though it seems that no lesser persons than Camden, Dr. Bartas, Lobel, and Gerard expressed this opinion; whilst it appears that the assertion of Dr. Mer, Casaubon, and Gasper Peucerus, that there were a people that once a year turned to wolves, partly in shape and partly in condition, obtained full credit among many learned men. In the present age men are inclined to run rather into a contrary extreme: doubting every theory they have not the wit to comprehend, as well as the existence of every fact they themselves have never before seen or heard of; yet I must confess the tench's medicinal virtues are supported by evidence far too weak for us to suppose that the facts are really so; all I shall therefore advocate on his behalf is the

sport he affords in the catching, and the excellent fare he supplies for the table afterwards. Stewed tench, particularly if associated with a few large eels, forms one of the most luxurious dishes that the skill of cookery can be exercised upon. And so now following the example of honest Izaak, I bid adieu to the tench; and to use his own words wish my readers may ever be fortunate when they angle for him: and by way of adding a word or two of my own, may eat him afterwards, whether boiled, fried, or stewed, with as hearty a relish as he who has now the honour to address them has so often had the good fortune to experience.

CHAPTER V.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE PIKE, AND HOW TO ANGLE FOR HIM.



The Pike.

The pike is most deservedly styled the tyrant, as the salmon is the king of the fresh waters, whom he is often found to equal, if not to exceed in bulk; whilst like many others whose deaths would be highly beneficial to the community, his life, if unexposed to violence, is an unusually long one. Thus we read of an immense pike that was taken at Kaiserslautern, near Manhiem, in Swabia, sometime in the year 1497; the weight of which was nearly 350 lbs, and its age was supposed to be 267 years, as appeared from an inscription on a brazen ring round its neck, declaring that it was the fish which was first of all put into the lake by the hands of the governor of the universe, Frederick the Second, the 5th day of October, 1230, which inscription, being in Greek, was translated by the then Bishop of Worms. Its skeleton which was long preserved at Manhiem, as a great natural curiosity, was 19 feet long—a size far exceeding the most exaggerated accounts of any salmon that as yet has appeared on record. A painting of this remarkable fish is also said to be still preserved in the castle of Lautern. The ancients, indeed, seem to have supposed the pike capable of attaining the most incredible magnitude; and Pliny even goes so far as to express an opinion that it might attain the weight of 1000 lbs.

In our own country, however, it seems that no fish of the kind has ever approached to any thing like the gigantic dimensions of the mighty pike above alluded to, fifty pounds weight being with us considered a very unusual size, though instances have occurred of some pike having been taken that exceeded it. Some of the Irish waters produce pike of a very large size: one immense one was caught about two and twenty years ago, in a small creek running into the river Shannon, into which the tyrant of the stream having followed a shoal of perch that had there sought refuge in the shallow water; like a man of war pursuing a chance of a small craft, with more eagerness than judgment, had managed to run himself hard and fast aground, in which state, unable to flounder back again into deep water, he was discovered by two gentlemen who were walking on the bank of the river, and who were attracted to the spot by the noise the pike made in splashing about the water in his vain attempts to get himself afloat again. The gentlemen forthwith opened their battery upon him, and by means of an oar that by accident was lying near, soon effectually silenced him. Out of curiosity at his extraordinary magnitude his captors had him weighed, when he was found to exceed ninety two pounds.

When carried across the oar by the two gentlemen, neither of whom were short, the head and tail actually touched the ground.

This enormous pike was presented by the captors to the then Marquis of Clanricarde, at Portumna castle, with whom they were then visiting.

A very large pike was taken in trolling by that renowned sportsman the late Colonel Thornton, in Loch Patuliche, in Scotland, which only wanted two ounces of 50 lbs. From eye to fork this fish was four feet one inch, extreme length four feet nine inches; depth eleven inches and a half. An excellent engraving of this noble fish may be found in Daniel's Rural Sports, where an account of his capture is related, by which it appears that he was an hour and a half upon the line before he submitted to his fate: nor would the tackle have held him although purposely prepared for large fish, had not the colonel been in a boat and so enabled to humour the pike's struggles to escape. Upon the belly was a mark from a wound, from whence was taken a hook he had broken away with ten years before (from a person who ascertained the fact,) and which had then worked itself through the skin. Daniel states in a note that in the "Sporting Tour," this fish is said to

have been caught in Loch Alva, but that the colonel informed him that Loch Patuliche was the water from whence it was taken. But this pike of Colonel Thornton's, large as he was, has been exceeded in size by one mentioned by Dr. Grierson, as having been taken out of Loch Ken in Galloway, which weighed 61 pounds; and which is also alluded to by professor Wilson in his interesting treatise on the rod.

Pike are a species of fish that would multiply rapidly, were it not for the numerous dangers to which the young are exposed till they arrive at a sufficient size to enable them to fight their own battles. The spawn as soon as it is cast becomes the prey of waterfowl of all kinds; and no sooner do the young come forth, than they are exposed to the attacks of fishes of prey, not excepting even those of their own species; who like the old Time have an extraordinary predeliction for devouring their own offspring, and that sometimes even when the latter have arrived at a somewhat mature age. A curious instance of this is stated to have occurred at a pond at Toddington in Bedfordshire, about thirty years since. A hook was baited with a live roach, and the next morning a large pike was caught on it, weighing upwards of 13 lbs, when it was discovered that a pike of upwards of 3lbs weight was first caught, and afterwards devoured by this unconsonable cannibal. Professor Wilson, in his talented and interesting treatise on "The Rod," relates a singular instance of the voracity of this fish, having once killed a small pike about seven pounds weight in whose interior was found a promising young pike, above a pound weight (probably his own eldest son,) the tail sticking out of his mouth like a quid of tobacco; and the learned writer humourously continues. "The beauty of the thing was, that the heir apparent had previously swallowed a perch, and this would have been well enough in its way, had not the perch had a hook in its mouth, and another curving from its tail, the result of which unforeseen fact was an additional piece of gluttony on our own part, both parent and child being stewed in milk that same evening, and eaten by ourself, and a few quiet members of the society of friends."

In addition to their more formidable enemies, pike are also subject to internal foes in the shape of small worms, which attaching themselves to the parietes of the intestines, often produce the most fatal results, with serious inconvenience to the sufferer in the interim.

But a most unexpected assailant is mentioned by Dubravius Bishop of Olmutz in Moravia, who relates what he saw with his own eyes of the antipathy of the frog to the pike, as well the courage of the former, in venturing to attack an enemy of such superior force: "As he and Bishop Thurzo were walking by the side of a large pond in Bohemia, they saw a frog when the pike lay very sleepily and quiet by the shore side, leap upon his head, and the frog, having express malice or anger by his swoln cheeks and staring eyes, did stretch out his legs and embrace the pike's head, and presently reached his (the pike's) eyes tearing with his teeth those tender parts: the pike moved with anguish up and down the water, and rubs himself against weeds, and whatever else he thought might quit him of his enemy, but all in vain for the frog did continue to ride triumphantly, and to bite and torment the pike, till his strength failed, and then the frog sunk with the pike to the bottom of the water; then presently the frog appeared at the top and croaked and seemed to rejoice like a conqueror, after which he presently retired to his secret hole. The Bishop that had beheld the battle, called his fishermen to fetch his nets, and by that means to get the pike that they might declare what had happened; and the pike was drawn out with both his eyes eaten out, at which they began to wonder; the fishermen wished them to forbear, and assured them that pikes were often so served."

Walton also informs us that he was told by a gentleman of tried honesty, "that happening one day in a hot summer to see a large carp swim near the top of the water with a frog upon his head, he caused the pond to be let dry, when, out of seventy or eighty carps that had been placed there a short time previously, he found but five or six, and those very sick and lean, and with every one a frog sticking so fast on the head of the said carps, that the frog would not be got off without extreme force or killing." He also states that a person of honour then living in Worcestershire, assured him that he had seen a necklace or collar of tadpoles hang like a chain or necklace of beads about a pike's neck, and to kill him: but whether for meat or malice was to him a question.

But supposing a very moderate portion of the spawn of the pike were to come to maturity, they would not only speedily produce a famine in the waters, but the latter element would in a very short time,—assuming they could find sufficient food to main-

tain themselves—be incapable of holding them ; more than one hundred and forty eight thousand eggs having been counted in one female of moderate size. The spawning time commences with some as early as the middle of February, whilst others delay casting their spawn till May. The young ones are the first to commence, and the old ones to finish. During the spawning season some degree of attachment seems to exist between the two sexes, and instances have occurred where a female having been wired whilst in the act of spawning (an infamous mode of proceeding to which the disorderly among the lower classes are much addicted) the male would not be driven from the spot from which his mate had disappeared. In Germany there is a very proper regulation by which persons are rendered liable to punishment for taking pikes when they are depositing their eggs—a proceeding that nothing can excuse, unless where it is desirable to exterminate the race altogether, in order to preserve some more favorite kind of fish.

In the first year the young pikes, or rather jack as they are termed till they arrive at the weight of four pounds, have a greenish cast over their scales, which assume a greyer tint with pale spots as the fish increases in age. During the winter and early part of the spring these spots assume a golden cast, and the grey colour is changed to an olive green; at such times the fish is in highest season and presents the most beautiful appearance. The pike, like the grayling, is strictly a winter fish, being in best condition from October to February, and, unlike the trout, is always in best order when full of roe. But the roe itself is considered unwholesome, causing sickness attended with violent purging ; and in some places it is said to be used as a cathartic.* A pike is sometimes seen of a beautiful golden cast with black spots, when he is called the king of the pikes ; but the only difference between this and other pikes is in the colour ; nor does it appear that there are any varieties of the species to be met with, either in our own country or in the waters of the European continent. In the fresh waters of North America it seems there are two species, both differing from the pikes of Europe—one with brownish lines upon the flanks, the other sprinkled with brown and blackish spots.

* Griffith's Sup. to Cuv., Vol, 10, p. 164.

There is also a species of pike peculiar to New Holland, an excellent engraving of which may be seen in Griffith's supplement to that part of Cuvier's Animal Kingdom which treats of fishes.

The pike presents a different aspect from most fishes, from the peculiar formation of the head caused by the great depression of the muzzle, which gives it something the appearance of the beak of an aquatic bird, whilst the low jaw projecting considerably beyond the upper, and its bright yet sunken eyes, gives it a very fierce and savage expression of countenance, fully indicative of its cannibal propensities. The teeth are unusually strong, of great size, sharp as needles, and bending downwards towards the throat, resembling very much in form the thorns on a bramble bush, from which peculiar formation the fish is easily enabled to retain its prey within its grasp; and even when the hand is inserted for the purpose of detaching a hook, when the fish is in a perfectly quiescent state, the greatest caution is requisite in withdrawing it; for if drawn out hastily, a severe laceration is the inevitable consequence. These formidable teeth are placed not only in the front of the upper jaw, and in the sides of the lower, but the roof of the mouth is completely studded with them, whilst it has often three rows upon the tongue, and even down to the orifice of the stomach. The gape of the jaws is remarkably wide, which is caused by its having on each side of them an additional bone, like the jaw of a viper.

The pike is a rapid growing fish, though his increase in bulk will depend in a great measure upon the supply of food it can obtain. Instances have occurred of their growing at the rate of 4 lbs a year for several years; in proof of which Mr. Jesse states that he saw three pikes taken out of a pond in Staffordshire belonging to Sir Jervoise Clark Jervoise, two of which weighed thirty six pounds. The pond was fished every seven years; so that supposing store pike of six or seven pounds weight were left in it, the growth of the pike in question must have been at least to the extent above stated. Still I apprehend that it can only be under very favorable circumstances that such a rapid increase in growth will take place; and from the result of my own observations in the different waters I have fished in, I am inclined to think that an annual increase of about two pounds is nearer the usual average; and in small hungry waters I am certain the growth is much less. According to Bloch the young reach the length of

eight or ten inches the first year, twelve or fourteen the second, and eighteen or twenty inches the third; whilst Griffiths states that in its first year it is often eleven or twelve inches long; in the sixth it has been known to measure six feet, and in the twelfth about seven or eight. Still from what I have seen of the rate of the growth of these fish in different waters it seems perfectly absurd to lay down any fixed scale as to the rate of their growth or increase of bulk within a given time, as it must with them, as it does with trout and most other fishes, depend in a great measure on the nature and extent of the waters they inhabit, and the kind of food they are there supplied with; and very probably, as is known to be the case with the tench and carp, and the same is also believed with respect to the trout, the progeny are inclined to grow large or small in proportion to the parent stock from which the race is propagated. Hence in first stocking waters with pike, fish of at least a respectable size should be selected as breeders, and when they have deposited their spawn, the sooner the parent stock are removed, the more likely will their offspring be to arrive at maturity.

The precise time at which pikes were first introduced into this country does not appear to be clearly ascertained. The assertion that they were brought over in the same year with carp, hops, turkeys and beer, which we may see unauthorized stuck into Baker's couplet, is wholly without foundation; for the period at which all these good things is there stated to have been introduced is fixed sometime or other in the reign of Henry the eighth; whereas it appears that pikes were a marketable commodity even as far back as the time of king Edward the first, though it was then so rare a fish that it was fixed at a higher value than salmon, and more than ten times higher than that of the best turbot or cod. Pike are also mentioned in the Act of the 6, Ric. 2, relating to the forestalling of fish. They also formed part of the great feast given by Nevil, archbishop of York, and are also mentioned by Dame Juliana Berners, in the "Boke of St. Albans." Even as late as the reign of Henry the eighth they were esteemed so dainty a rarity, that a large one sold for double the price of a house lamb in February, and a jack for more than a fine capon. But as these fish became more plentiful, they were more lightly esteemed, and at the present day they are not thought very highly of; yet upon the whole they eat agreeably enough, particularly when stewed or baked in good sauce with a forcemeat pudding in the

belly; the forked bones in the nether parts are however somewhat troublesome; by far the best parts are the cuts over the ribs where these do not occur. The moderate sized fish, from four to eight pounds are by far the best tasted; those taken in clear waters are usually the best flavoured, and the females are considered superior to the males. After spawning both male and female are thin and ill-flavoured; and in many waters during the summer months they acquire a rank and disagreeable taste as well as smell, from a particular kind of weed somewhat resembling fennel that Walton terms the pickerel weed, which, when they think proper to adopt a vegetable diet, it seems they feed upon.

Mr. Yarrell mentions that some old pikes have the back green, and the flesh near the vertebral column of the same colour, and that these possess a very high reputation for their edible merits; none of these fish have ever come to my hook or even sight, so I conclude, like the fox when he found the grapes to be beyond his reach and perhaps like him, that they owe their reputation solely to their extreme rarity.

Some difference of opinion prevails with respect to ordinary duration of a pike's existence. According to Bacon his life does not exceed forty years, though he considers him the longest liver of all fresh water fishes; which also accords with the opinion of Pliny, though the latter does not mark out any precise limit. Rzaczynsky, and also Pennant mentions a pike attaining to the age of ninety years; but which is a mere death in infancy as compared to the aquatic Methuselah of Kaiserslautern before alluded to.* Certain however it is, that to whatever age a pike's existence may extend, it can only be prolonged by sacrificing the lives of a great many other fishes; and the immense number of fish that these voracious tyrants will consume at a single meal if they have the fortune to catch them is truly wonderful: those therefore who think of introducing these fishes into waters not already supplied with them would do well to ponder first, whether they will in their own proper persons counterbalance for the numbers of fish they will most certainly destroy. Where these fishes have been introduced into trout streams in Ireland, that were formerly stocked to abundance

* See sup. p. 235.

with the latter fish, they have all but extirpated them; so that many formerly well known and celebrated trout streams are totally spoilt as such by the almost total annihilation of the race through the rapacity of the new settlers; although the latter have increased in immense quantities. But the Irish fishermen are by no means pleased with the change. In the river Wandle also, in which honest Izaak used to catch his lusty trouts, such indeed as would fill six reasonable bellies, the pike have now obtained almost the sole dominion, very few trouts being now to be found there.

Perch appear to be the best fish for inhabiting the same waters with the pike, being better able to stand on the defensive on account of their numerous spines, which must render them by no means an agreeable morsel to swallow, and must most assuredly prove very uneasy of digestion afterwards. But when hungry a pike will not scruple to lay hold of a perch, which indeed is often successfully used as a bait for trimmers, and yet pickerels or jack are sometimes killed by swallowing the stickleback; but this it seems is caused by these greedy juveniles bolting them alive as then their prickles stand erect, for if little they are desperate and game to the last; whilst the perch, being previously killed and swallowed head foremost, the spines are smoothed down even with the body, and so prove comparatively harmless.

But notwithstanding the chief food of the pike consists of such fishes as he can manage to capture or subdue, yet he is sometimes so ravenous as to seize upon any thing that will come in his way; devouring with avidity frogs, rats, mice, young ducks, and other water fowl; and many young kittens and puppies that are prematurely doomed to a watery grave, often find a sepulchre in the maw of a hungry pike. Gesner indeed affirms that a Polonian gentleman did once faithfully assure him that he had seen two geese at one time in the belly of a pike. The same writer also states that a pike once seized upon the lip of a mule, while the owner was watering it, and held on so tenaciously, that the mule lugged him out of the water, and by that means his master possessed himself of the pike. Daniel relates a similar occurrence when a dog was lapping the water in a pond near Warnham in Sussex, in which two gentlemen were angling at the time, to whose no small wonder the pike kept his hold so firmly, and the dog resisted so stoutly that the fish, weighing upwards of seven pounds, was eventually

fairly landed and secured. Daniel also mentions an instance of a yearling calf pulling ashore a pike that weighed thirty five pounds, which had fastened on its lip, whilst in the act of drinking in the Blackwater river near Youghall. It could scarcely have seized on the calf for mere hunger, as an entire perch and a water rat were found in the fish's stomach : food surely sufficient for one meal at least.

An instance also occurred at Lord Gower's canal at Trentham, of a pike seizing the head of a swan when feeding under the water, but which proved an unlucky adventure for fish as well as fowl ; the former strangling the swan, and the head of the latter choking the pike, and so terminating fatally to both.

Gesner also mentions that a pike seized a maid by the foot as she was washing clothes in a pond in Poland, and Walton relates the like of a woman in Killingworth pond, not far from Coventry. He also mentions that a friend of his, Mr. Seagrave, (who kept tame otters, which he had trained to catch fish, and do many other things of much pleasure,) informed him that he had known a pike in extreme hunger, fight with one of his otters for a carp the otter had caught, and was bringing out of the water. Mr. Yarrell also states that the head keeper of Richmond pond was once washing his hands over the side of a boat in the great pond in that park, when a pike made a dash at it, and he had but just time to withdraw it. Mr. Jesse too, relates that a gentleman (Major Payne) who resided in Weybridge in Surrey, walking one day by the side of the river Wey, near that town, saw a large pike in a shallow creek, he immediately pulled off his coat, tucked up his shirt sleeves and went into the water to intercept the return of the fish to the river, and to endeavour to throw it upon the bank by getting his hands under it. During this attempt the fish, finding he could not make his escape, seized on one of the arms of his assailant, and lacerated it so much that the marks of the wound were then still visible.

A singular instance of a pike not being over nice in his fare occurred a few years since to my elder brother, whom I have already brought before the notice of my readers.* He was fishing in the river Itchen near the paper mill at Westend. He had put to-

* See ante, p. 2, 3, 6.

gether his tackle, and was awaiting the return of a person he had dispatched to procure him some baits, when, for want of something better to do, he put on a small fragment of dirty rag that chanced to be lying near, and swam it down the rapid of a mill tail close by, never of course for a moment suspecting a fish would touch so unsavoury a morsel, when, to his utter amazement, a pike laid hold of it. Not being prepared for such an occurrence, the fish carried off his hook as well as some portion of his tackle, by rushing violently down stream before he had time to veer away line. But the loss proved only a temporary one, for the person shortly after arriving with some live minnows, the voracious fish, by no means satisfied with his previous fare, soon seized hold of the minnow, and being this time more scientifically dealt with, was eventually secured ; when the rag was still found adhering to the hook that had taken a firm hold in his jaws.

Daniel also mentions an instance of a pike being by no means scrupulous as to the nutritious quality of his food : one being taken in the river Ouse, that weighed upwards of 28 lbs, which, when opened, was found to contain in his stomach a watch with two seals annexed to it by a black ribbon. These, it was afterwards discovered, belonged to a gentleman's servant, who had been drowned about six months before, between Little Pool and South Ferry.

But this insatiable voracity of the pike only occurs at stated intervals : like many other cold blood animals he gorges to repletion, and does not again require food for a considerable time, remaining for a period in a state of torpid inactivity from which the most tempting bait is insufficient to arouse him. When in this state he is frequently seen floating motionless near the surface, where he is often caught by slipping a wire loose over his head ; and many instances have occurred of their being so stupified by the effects of their gluttony, as even to allow themselves to be taken by the hand. I myself indeed once saw a pike that weighed nearly thirty pounds, that was taken in that way from the lower pond at Shirley Mills, near Southampton, when in almost insensible from repletion ; an immense carp he had swallowed, being found partially digested in his stomach. But it seems that the stupifying effects of gluttony are not confined merely to fishes and reptiles : hogs and vultures when a favourable opportunity has occurred have so overloaded their stomachs as to become almost insensible ; and according to the accounts of travellers who have

visited the Esquimaux countries, such occurrences are by no means unfrequent among those people, when a chance offers of gratifying their enormous appetites, for to satisfy them seems impossible.

Captain Lyon, in his interesting account of this extraordinary race, states that he has seen several of them when provisions have been sufficiently abundant, after gorging themselves to the very throat, lying about like men dead drunk amongst heaps of blubber, seal's entrails, and filth, with what they were unable to swallow actually hanging out of their mouths; outdoing the very hogs in gluttony, and exhibiting human nature in its most degrading form. Then it was that he was forcibly struck with the fact, that men may even make greater beasts of themselves by immoderate eating than by drinking to any excess; the latter of which is disgusting enough in all conscience.

But a pike, though so gluttonous a fish, is generally found to discriminate between such food as is suitable to him or otherwise; having been observed to reject a toad, though he would greedily seize upon every frog that was cast towards him; so that their indiscriminate mode of feeding must be attributed rather to necessity than choice.

In those countries in which eagles abound, we frequently hear of deadly encounters taking place between the monarchs of the air and those of the fresh waters, which often terminate fatally to both parties. The eagle is always the aggressor, pouncing on the pike as the latter lies basking near the surface, and fixing his sharp talons firmly in the fish, often succeeds in lifting him into the air; but the weight of the fish aided by his struggles, soon carries them both back to the water, when the eagle becoming exhausted, and unable to disengage his talons, so long as the fish continues to move onwards, is drawn under water and drowned, and thus the pike eventually comes off the conqueror: when the fierce hold of the enemy relaxing with death, the body floats off, and the fish soon recovers from the wounds of the previous encounter, though the scars may still remain as honorable evidence of his prowess.

But the event terminates otherwise where the fish is but a small one; for even should the latter by the violence of its struggles prevent the eagle from bearing it away, yet by keeping a fast hold on it, unless the fish can manage to pull the bird under water, the eagle by continuing to strike with stunning force with its powerful wings, and driving its beak into the fish's scull, all the

time lacerating its body with its sharp talons, will very soon kill it; after which the eagle is said "to float with it to the shore, towing it in the air, or occasionally on the surface of the water with its wings."*

The pike is truly styled by Walton, "a solitary, melancholy, and a bold fish: melancholy, because he always swims and rests alone, and never in shoals as roach and dace and most other fishes do; and bold, because he fears not a shadow, or to see or to be seen of any body, as the trout and chub and most other fish do." But notwithstanding that the selfish and unsocial habits of the pike would from choice cause him to shun the society of his fellows, yet self interest and the hope of gain, which so often brings men nearer together than they mutually desire, in like manner causes pikes to take up their stations very near to each other, where such situations are favorably situated for pouncing on their prey; but this they do from no neighbourly love they bear to one another, but each for his own individual advantage.

In localities therefore that are adapted to the above purposes, I have often taken two or three pikes, and sometimes more out of the same pool, whilst I have toiled over a considerable portion of land and water, elsewhere without moving a fish. This however I have remarked; that when I have taken many pikes out of the same pool they have rarely been large fish; and have usually been of a corresponding size with each other; so as to be nearly even matched as to force; bearing out the principle that the even balance of power is conducive to peace; as these fishes, like neighbouring states of equal strength, who knowing that the result of a contest must be a doubtful one, and even a conquest hardly won, are from a fear of the consequences checked from commencing acts of aggression which no sense of justice would have restrained them from, could such acts have been successfully carried into effect, and persevered in with impunity. This appears from the circumstance of a large pike being generally found alone; he being strong enough to drive all his weaker brethren from his neighbourhood; each of whom in proportion to the relative strength they bear to one another retaliates in like manner upon

* See British Naturalist, Vol. 1, p. 119.

his weaker brother, and so on *ad infinitum*, as Blackstone so frequently and learnedly remarks.

As a pike requires a great quantity of food, the occupation of a locality where this can be procured is a very important matter to him, and like an experienced sportsman he evinces great tact in selecting such spots as are best adapted to the purpose: and no sooner does the occupancy of one of these become vacant, either by the death or resignation of the former tenant, than another instantly enters upon the vacant possession, which perhaps he had his eye upon some time previously; nothing but the superior strength of the former tenant having before restrained him from making a forcible entry there. As a striking instance of this, in a pond I was in the habit of fishing some years ago, there was a small aperture amongst the weeds, apparently not more than five or six feet across, (for being as well as I can recollect some five and twenty yards from the shore, it was difficult to determine the dimensions with accuracy,) and into this hole I scarcely ever threw my bait properly without getting a run, though my obtaining one in any other part of the pond, the greater part of which was sufficiently clear of weeds to admit of trolling, was far from certain.

But notwithstanding I was tolerably certain of getting a run in this favorite spot both of myself and the pikes, if I could cast my bait cleverly in there, yet in the latter I was not always successful; for not being at that time a very skilful troller, and my own anxiety, only adding still more to my clumsiness, it not unfrequently happened that I overthrew my mark, and pitched in my bait amongst the weeds on the further side, which, after being obliged to tug away with some force to clear, was pretty sure to terminate in my detaching such a regular bundle, that when drawn across the aperture,—and there was no other means of bringing them to land—was generally sufficient to mar my chance there for that day at least. Sometimes from not employing force enough I threw short, and so got foul of the weeds on the near side, which produced a similar result. But when I did manage to hit the exact spot, how well do I recollect the boiling whirlpool that succeeded, and the electrical tug of the fish, as he fiercely seized upon the bait almost the instant that it touched the water.

But the place I have just alluded to was by no means the only one that I have known these fish select as a favorite feeding place, there being scarcely a water in which I have fished for them that

the same thing has not occurred either in a greater or a less degree. One instance more is all I shall now mention. This was a space of about half a dozen yards in a navigable canal, by the towing path of which I was in the habit of returning home from trout fishing in a stream that flowed close by its side. Whilst walking along this bank, over which my route lay for about a mile, I used to fix on a short top to my fly rod, and a set of snap tackle, baited with some small fish or other I had caught in the course of the day, which having cast into the stream, I walked leisurely on dragging my bait after me. This water was but ill supplied with pike, being frequently netted, yet in the small distance I before alluded to, which had nothing remarkable about it, or any obstacles to prevent its being dragged like the rest, I rarely if ever fished over without obtaining a run, and on one occasion I remember landing no less than four pikes there, one after another, as fast almost as I could cast in, although in other parts of the same waters, which that day I trolled over very carefully, I only caught one very small fish which I immediately threw in again.

Daniel observes, and as I perfectly agree with him, I may perhaps be excused in expressing myself in his own words. "Pike" he says, "love a still, shady, unfrequented water, with a sandy, clayey, or chalkey bottom, and from May to the beginning of October, they usually place themselves amongst or near flags, bullrushes or water docks, and particularly under the *ranunculus aquaticus* when in flower, and which floats upon the surface." I myself have however found the most depending spots of the whole to be where reeds spring up from under the water, particularly where there are any openings between them, or small ditches near at hand—such places as minnows and small fry are usually found in. In fact reeds and bullrushes to the pike, are as the holly bush to the woodcock; the cover affording a kind of hiding place to the pike, amongst which he lurks concealed, and springs out unexpectedly upon his unwary prey as it swims heedlessly past, wholly unapprehensive of danger. The way indeed in which a pike manages by the motionless attitude he assumes to conceal himself from observation, even in a clear open pool, is truly wonderful; and often have I been startled at the sudden manner, in which like a spectre he has dashed forth from a space apparently void, revealing at once his mighty proportions, which seem instantaneously to form themselves into substance, as with a countenance expressive of wrath, and with

extended jaws he seizes on his prey. A young angling acquaintance of mine was so taken aback by an apparition of this kind, that he actually dropped his rod from sheer fright, which but for the timely aid of a more steady companion, the pike would probably have dragged off into the pond; the affair however terminated very differently, as the fish—a fine fellow of upwards of twelve pounds—was after a stout but ineffectual resistance, himself drawn to shore and safely landed on the grass.

Another favorite resort of the pikes is the back waters communicating with the main stream; particularly if such waters are deep and still; as are also hatch and lock holes, and piles of bridges. They are also frequently met with in shallow fords in search of the small fry that may generally be found playing about there. As winter approaches, pikes retire into the deeps, under clay banks and bushes overhanging the water, and near stumps and roots, which indeed are at all times their favorite haunts. We also read that in the extensive lakes, in the interior of the country at Hudson's Bay, pikes and perches are taken in those lakes only that are surrounded with woods, and into which trees have fallen, and numbers of the roots of others are protruded into the water; nor do any of these fishes, ever in the summer season, go down the rivers issuing from the lakes, and which run into what is called the barren ground, where the lakes are not sheltered by trees and bushes.

In the warmer months, pikes prowl silently about from place to place, resorting to the haunts of the smaller fishes, who, whilst in search of food for themselves, frequently in their own proper persons, afford that necessary commodity to their rapacious consumer. This it is, that so frequently causes the smaller kinds of fishes to leave off biting suddenly, we know not why, but which is generally owing to an intrusion of this kind. In waters therefore, in which pike are likely to be met with, no angler should ever fish in, without providing himself with pike tackle. A short top of whalebone, with a ring of wire at the end, to be fitted in the place of the ordinary top, is often quite sufficient as far as the rod is concerned, and every person who calls himself an angler, ought always to be provided with a line of sufficient length and strength to hold a moderate sized pike, if skilfully played. By adopting the above plan, an angler would not only obtain a pleasing variety to his day's sport, but often a prize worth more than all the rest of his captures

put together ; added to which, if he catches the interloper, he will have removed a very troublesome personage from his fishing ground, near which, as long as he chooses to remain, you may even whistle for anything else you will stand the slightest chance of catching there.

Another important requisite to success in pike fishing, is a knowledge of the kind of weather best adapted for it, as well as what the height and condition of the water ought to be ; for though, as before stated, the pike is a bold fish, and not easily to be scared by a shadow, yet he cannot readily be prevailed upon to bite in hot sultry weather, or at times when the waters are unusually low, and although you continue casting your bait right before his eyes, he will remain motionless as a log, till annoyed by the repetition, he will sheer sulkily off to some place of concealment. It is not often indeed, when a pike is seen basking near the surface, that he can be tempted by a bait, for at such times, he has generally gorged himself with food, whilst at the same time, the situation in which he is placed, enables him to see enough of the trick, to arouse his suspicions, when feeling no inclination for another meal, till in some measure relieved from the effects of his former one, it is not to be wondered that he should decline the invitation, coming as he must see it does, from so suspicious a quarter. One plan however has been found to succeed under these circumstances, when all others have failed, and this has been to rouse in the bait with a good splash right behind the pike : when, the commotion suddenly arousing his attention, and turning round to ascertain the cause, which probably resenting as insult, he instantly lays hold of the imaginary offender, intending doubtless to annihilate him utterly for his presumption. But be this as it may, many a pike has been thus taken, and I would strongly advise my angling readers under similar circumstances, at any rate to try the experiment.

Extreme cold weather is also unfavourable to pike fishing ; the best adapted to it being a cool overcast day, with a good bustling breeze that will thoroughly ruffle the surface of the water ; yet a cold wind in the summer is not so much to be regarded ; and even in the winter, when there has been no frost, I have sometimes had good sport, in a regular black Easterly wind ; though more frequently in such weather I have toiled away without obtaining a single run. In bright weather I have rarely done much.

The height and colour of the water is another very important matter. A tolerably full water I have generally found favourable, when not discoloured by rains; but it is almost useless to try for pikes in muddy waters, or at any rate those that are rendered so by floods; on which account some of our best stored rivers are in an improper state to fish in during the very best time of the whole year; that is from the latter end of September to the beginning of March, as at those times the waters being clearer of weeds, the troller escapes the annoyance they would otherwise occasion him; added to which, the fish being then in the highest season are so much the more worth catching; yet there are few rivers that run through a clayey soil that are not in a turbid state during the autumn and winter months, the only intervals at which they become clear being during the time of frost, and then it is of little use to attempt to fish for pike.

And now a word or two about how the pike is to be caught, and the proper tackling to be employed for the purpose.

There are two modes of fishing by which pikes may be taken by sportsmen: that is by trimming or by trolling. Certain other methods are indeed resorted to, such as netting and wiring, both most poaching modes of proceeding: and as to shooting them when basking on the surface with a rifle, it is an act that can only be justified upon the plea that "a man may do what he likes with his own," which can never be admitted when practiced upon the property of his neighbours, unless it be at their special instance and request. Nor can laying down a trimmer in every case be considered as fair fishing, particularly in small streams; in which, unless they are set for the purpose of extirpating the breed, is almost an unsportsmanlike a mode of proceeding as wiring hares or trapping foxes. In extensive waters however trimming is a perfectly fair mode of proceeding, and is a particularly exciting mode of fishing when carried on in right style over a considerable extent of water like the Broads in Norfolk. Of these Horsea Mere, and Heigham Sounds, have been celebrated for the store of pikes they contain from the time of Camden even until now: and the numbers that have been taken in, or rather out of those waters by this mode of fishing is truly surprising. Mr. Yarrell mentions a return of four days pike fishing there with trimmers in March 1834, viz. on the 11th at Heigham Sound, sixty pike, the weight altogether 280 lbs: on the 13th at Horsea Mere, eighty nine pike

379 lbs: on the 18th again at Horsea Mere, forty nine pike 213 lbs: on the 19th at Heigham sounds, fifty eight pike 363 lbs, producing altogether in the four days 256 pike, weighing altogether 1135 lbs. The trimmers, or as they are provincially termed in Norfolk, "liggers," are usually made of cork, though in some places, and generally in the Broads above alluded to, they are made of a mere bundle of rushes tied together at each end in the form of a small and slender yet tightly bound faggot, the line being wound round it, except the stray line to which the bait is attached, which is prevented from being run off by the live bait by being between the rushes, but not so tightly but that it may be detached by the pike when he lays hold of the bait, and which he unwinds as he walks off with it; nor is it a trifling check that will induce him to relinquish the treacherous prize he has thus seized upon. Trimmers of this kind have been preferred in the Norfolk broads, as being less calculated to excite the suspicion of the fish than those made of cork, in which respect the former are certainly superior; the latter of which being usually painted very gaily, have a very traplike appearance. These cork trimmers are constructed of a sound piece of round flat cork about seven inches in diameter, with a groove round the edge wide enough to receive a line of ten or twelve yards in length; a small wooden peg with one end slit to admit and confine the line is fixed in the centre, and a small double hook, attached to gimp is fixed to the line. Another kind of trimmer is made of a flat piece of cork cut into an oblong or wedge-like form, with notches at the sides and both extremities, sufficiently deep to prevent the spare line from slipping out; and these, from their form, are the best adapted for making their way through the weeds after the pike has run off the line.

Either roach or dace, bleak, ruds, or gudgeons, or in fact almost any small fish, including even perch and ruffes in spite of their spines, may be employed as baits in this kind of fishing: those that will live the longest on the hook being the best suited to the purpose, as a dead bait possesses very few attractions, and is rarely well taken.

The best way of baiting is to insert the baiting needle just behind the pectoral fin, keeping it just within the skin of the side, bringing it out about midway between the back fin and the tail, drawing the sned and the hook after it, so that the latter when drawn home will be partially concealed by the pectoral fin.

When a trimmer is baited with a frog, and of these it seems the yellowest are the best, it should be managed according to honest Izaak's directions, although these have caused his memory to be maligned by a set of modern pharisees, who with gnat straining squeamishness pretend a sympathy for insects and reptiles they too often deny to their suffering fellow creatures. His directions are as follows ;—" Put your hook into his mouth which you may easily do from the middle of April to August, and then the frog's mouth grows up, and he continues so for at least six months without eating, but is sustained, none but, " he whose name is wonderful," knows how ; I say put your hook, I mean the arming wire through his mouth and out of his gills, and then with a fine needle and silk sew the upper part of his leg with one stitch to the arming wire of your hook, or tie the frog's leg above the upper joint to the arming wire ; and in doing so, use him as though you loved him, that is, harm him as little as you possibly may, in order that he may live the longer."

A bait of this kind may be employed either with a rod and line, or for a trimmer ; but upon the whole it seems better adapted to the latter mode of fishing. In trimming, whether a live fish or a frog be used, enough line must be unwound to keep the bait at a sufficient depth, which is to be secured by being inserted in the slit in the peg or cork, or between the rushes in the ligger, to prevent the baited fish by his own strength from unwinding the line. The proper depth the bait should swim, as well as the length of line to be allowed it, depends upon a variety of circumstances. In deep waters a scope of a yard or more may be allowed, but in those that are shallow, or where weeds approach near the surface, then a very small portion can be permitted ; for if much line were then used the bait would either run purposely in amongst the weeds, or become involuntarily entangled with them, or by detaching some particles, which adhering to the line ; hooks, or bait, would present an unattractive appearance to the pikes.

In order to manage a trimmer properly in large waters a boat is almost indispensable, though in some parts it may be fastened to some bush or a stick driven into the banks ; in smaller ponds trimmers may be started on the windward side, and be met on the opposite shore ; but these should have sufficient scope of line to allow the trimmer to come within reach, though this will scarcely be possible if the pike when hooked should pertinaciously adhere

to the windward side of the pond. This kind of fishing used formerly to be carried on by means of blown bladders, though the latter does not seem to be much practised now. Fishing of this kind has also been carried on by fixing a bait hook to the legs of ducks and geese, and driving them into a pond. Walton, and indeed several of the earlier writers on angling, speaks of this as a very common diversion; and Daniel mentions that it was formerly practised in Loch Montieth, in Scotland, which abounds with very large perch and pike. "Upon these islands, says Daniel, a number of geese were collected by the farmers who occupied the surrounding banks of the loch; after baited lines of two or three feet long had been tied to the legs of these geese they were driven into the water; steering naturally homewards in different directions the baits were soon swallowed; a violent, and often a tedious struggle ensued, in which however the geese at length prevailed, though they were frequently much exhausted before they reached the shore. This method has not," he says, "been so long relinquished, but that there are old persons upon the spot who were active promoters of the amusement."

But the most extraordinary mode of carrying out a trimmer that has yet been resorted to was a paper kite, which I have been informed upon undoubted authority was practised at Slapton Lea, a large piece of water in Devonshire, by a celebrated sporting character who was then residing in that neighbourhood. The baited line was attached to the string by some contrivance or other; but at any rate it was so cleverly managed as to cause the death of a great number of pikes in that water.

In smaller streams and ditches a trimmer may be set as follows: a rod of withy or hazle with a slit at the extremity is stuck into the bank, the point projecting over the water, so preventing the bait, which is confined by the line inserted in the slit before mentioned, from swimming too close to the shore, or in fact from wandering in any way from the spot. The remaining part of the line is made fast to round a sheave fixed on the top of a stout wooden peg, which is driven in and stuck firmly in the bank side; so that when the line is detached from the rod by means of the fierce jerk of the pike on laying hold of the bait, it unwinds from the sheave, and allows the fish to bear away the bait.

But the most fair and legitimate way of fishing for pike is by trolling, and which as far as sport is concerned, throws every

other far behind. This may be carried on either with a live or dead bait; and in the latter instance sea as well as fresh water fishes may be used.

The rod for this purpose should be stout, yet in some degree elastic, so that a pike when hooked may always be prevented from straining too heavily on the line. The length of line requisite will depend on the kind of trolling that is to be practiced. If a live bait is employed the rod must be at least sixteen, and ought even to be eighteen feet long, as it is only by means of a long rod that a bait can be cast in lightly to such a distance as will often be required; for if soused in with a splash, it will not only be more likely to excite suspicion among the fishes you are angling for, but will very shortly thump all the life out of your bait. For a dead bait, a rod of twelve feet, and in some instances, as I shall mention hereafter, one much shorter, will answer every necessary purpose.

A trolling rod, whether to be used with a live or a dead bait, should be closely ringed; the rings must be of stout wire, and much larger than those used in a trout rod: that is, sufficiently wide in diameter to admit a goose quill to be passed through them, and should be immoveably fixed, setting right straight out from the rod, in order that the line may run the more readily through them. When a live bait is used, a large multiplying reel should be fixed to the butt of the rod, and should contain about thirty yards of good strong line, to the end of which should be attached a swivel to receive the sned of the hook, which must be of gimp.

The most attractive bait seems to be a live gudgeon, though a roach or a dace, or indeed most small fish, even to a minnow, will answer the purpose. The hooks commonly employed are the bead hooks; when the pike is intended to be indulged in making a meal on the bait, previous to his capture: and the spring snap, when he is to be struck immediately,

The bead hooks are two hooks of moderate size fixed together back to back, to which a lead is fastened, by means of a small brass chain, of about three or four links, attached to and coming out between the bend of the two hooks. This lead should weigh about five pennyweights, and be of an oblong form, sharp at the extremity, but rounded at its junction, with the chain, is put into the mouth of the fish bait, which is sewn up; a stitch or two being passed through the lower link of the chain, to keep it from slip-





ping out, and notwithstanding the lead, the bait will swim with the support it receives from the line, with nearly the same ease as if at liberty. Sometimes a large cork float is used to buoy up the bait. Another plan is to have the hooks as above, and sinkers to the line, instead of the lead to the mouth; one of these hooks is just run through the fleshy part, of the back of the dorsal fin, and may be angled with in the same way as the former.

I have also often met with good sport, with a live minnow, baited by running the hook through the upper lip, or the fleshy part of the back near the dorsal fin; but when I have used this bait, I have also used a float. With any of the above baits, when no float is used, the bait should be dropped gently into the water, in such places as the pike is likely to resort to, and should be kept constantly in motion, when a bite will be easily detected, by a strong succession of tugs the pike will then favour you with. When this occurs, you must instantly give way to him, letting out line after him as he sails off, and when he stops, allow him ample time for his meal, which he will frequently take ten minutes about, before he will effectually gorge the bait: when you think you have given him time enough—though he himself often gives you notice of it, by shifting his position—shorten in your line gradually, so as to get your fish tight; then strike right upwards, when the tug of war will most certainly follow, to meet which, you must be prepared to veer away line, should it be required, taking at the same time, every possible care to prevent the pike from running you under any weeds, or getting you foul of any roots, moats, stumps, or other obstacles with which the waters may be encumbered; when he first feels the prick of the hook, a pike generally gives two or three fierce struggles, as if to detach the hooks, and then darts swiftly off, causing the line to chatter through the water with the velocity of his motions, when, unless the line runs freely off, and he is well followed up, he often breaks the line, asunder, and so escapes. If you succeed in turning him, reel up again, and keep him short: but still be prepared for another start, which he often very unexpectedly makes, after suffering himself to be lugged unresistingly along for some considerable distance, and which he will repeat, till becoming exhausted, he comes to the surface. If you can keep him there, it will afford you the best chance of landing him, more particularly if you can manage to keep his eyes above the surface of the water, whilst approaching him with the landing

net. For landing a large pike a gaff hook is preferable to a landing net, as it is not always an easy matter, to get an overgrown fish into an ordinary sized one. If you have no gaff, a crook stick cut from the hedge, inserted in his gill covers, will answer the purpose tolerably well; at any rate, I have contrived to land many a whacking pike by that means.

As your success in the above kind of fishing, will depend in a great degree, on the liveliness of your baits, (for with a dead one you will do but little,) you ought to have a good sized bait kettle, which should not be over crowded, and the water should be frequently changed, plunging the kettle into the river, and allowing it to remain there as long as you continue fishing at any one fixed spot. If you purchase a new bait kettle, or fresh paint your old one in the inside, you must keep it filled with water a day or two before you use it, or what is still better, allow it to remain for some days, sunk under water: otherwise, the fresh paint will either kill or considerably weaken the baits.

In fishing with the dead gorge, the hooks are placed back to back, and leaded up almost to the bend. They should be of different sizes, to correspond with the proportions of the respective baits to be used: as when baited, they ought not to stand far out from the lead, but to repose snugly and as unobtrusively as possible, cheek by jowl with the face of the fish. Gorge hooks, such as sold in the fishing tackle shops, are generally fitted upon wire, with a joint beyond where the tail of the fish when baited, would come out. The better plan however is to remove this wire beyond the joint, and supply its place with a piece of gimp. The mode of baiting it, is to attach the baiting needle to a loop whipped at the end of the gimp sned: then put the needle in at the mouth of the dead bait, and out at the middle of the tail, drawing the gimp after it, till the hooks reach the fish's mouth; fixing the point of each hook near the eye of the bait; then with a strong piece of well waxed white silk, tie the tail to the gimp, which will not only keep the bait in a proper position, but prevent the caudal fin from catching against weeds and other obstacles. When thus baited, the hook is to be attached to the line by means of a strong single swivel; and the bait being cast into the water, is kept in constant motion, by sometimes letting it sink, and gradually raising it, and then suddenly lowering the rod, it will dart ahead in a very natural manner. When a pike runs, you must proceed exactly in

the same way as with the live gorge just before mentioned.

THE LIVE SNAP, which is either fitted by three hooks placed back, consisting of two large and one small one, the latter of which, only reaches down to about a third of the arming wire of the two larger ones. But the spring snap is a great improvement on the above contrivance, which should never be resorted to, when spring snaps can be procured; as indeed they now may be at most of the fishing tackle shops, either in town or country. Both sorts of tackle are baited in the same manner: viz: by running the small hook through the fleshy part of the back of the bait, at the commencement of the dorsal fin. This mode of fishing, though suited to all waters, is particularly adapted to those that are much encumbered with weeds, having only small-apertures here and there into which a bait can be cast, so that the ordinary modes of trolling, cannot be effectually carried on. In apertures of the above kind, the largest pikes in the waters are often to be found, and a tempting live bait dropped within their view, is not often rejected by them. As soon as the bait is taken, allow the pike to turn and make off with before you strike, which must be done with a smart stroke, the contrary way to the course the fish is pursuing, when the spring hooks instantaneously flying open, will most probably fix themselves somewhere or other in the pike's mouth, which he will soon make you aware of, by the tearing struggle he will instantly make. In other snap fishing it often happens, that the pike detains the bait so tightly compressed between his jaws and powerful teeth, that the hooks repose harmlessly in his mouth, even after you have struck, and in this way he will allow himself to be played for some time, till at length, tired of the contest in which he finds the strength is against him, he suddenly expands his monstrous jaws, and spits forth the bait without feeling the prick of a single hook. The best method to prevent his thus escaping, is to worry him by a succession of quick jerks the contrary way to his course, which if he continues to pursue interruptedly, after you have struck, you may conclude he is uninjured by the hooks; for no sooner does he feel their lacrating power, than he is pretty sure to exhibit strong symptoms of resentment, by a kind of fierce tearing struggle, there cannot possibly be any mistake about. I have often known a pike that has held on most manfully to a dead gorge, till weakened by the contest, and being drawn to the surface, it has then been discovered,

that he is merely holding crosswise on the bait, wholly unharmed by the hooks ; when, the line being relaxed, he has taken advantage of the temporary cessation of hostilities, to pouch the bait, and been captured in consequence.

THE DEAD SNAP is fitted with several hooks ; and as there are a great many patterns, so almost every particular one has its advocates. The one I have succeeded the best with, is a very simple contrivance. It consists first of a single hook : number two or three, tied to an ordinary snead of gimp, which is baited by inserting the baiting needle in the lateral line of the bait, just above the anal fin, drawing the snead and hook after it, leaving the hook just free of the incision : a smaller hook, about number 4, with two small loops or eyes just large enough to allow the hook to run over the snead of the former hook, (and to which a flyer hook, number 1, is attached by a piece of gimp just long enough to allow the whole hook, arming wire and all, to be clear of the gill covers of the bait, when run in at the mouth and brought out there,) is slid down the snead, the flyer being run into the mouth and out of the gills on the opposite side of the sneaded hook, and the small hook run in at the mouth and fixed firmly there, the point coming out on the top of the head ; and then a turn or two of waxed silk must be made over the arming wire of the small hook, to keep that and the snead well and firmly attached to each other, which can easily be cut adrift again when the hooks require to be rebaited.

As the length of the gimp attached to the flyer, should be proportioned to the size of the bait, several of these, varying from an inch to two inches and a half, should be provided, as a great deal of the success of this particular pattern, depends upon the flyer hanging just loosely clear of the gill covers of the bait that being the hook that generally secures the pike. The looped end of the snead should be hung to a strong single swivel, attached to about a foot or more of gimp, with a noose at the other end to fasten it to the line, and on this should be fixed the leads to sink the bait, which should be of the barley corn shape ; the thickest at the middle, and tapering gradually towards each extremity : these should have a hole through them, in order to push the gimp through, and the ends should then be squeezed, either with your teeth, if you are blessed with such as are adapted to the purpose, if not, with a pair of pincers ; the proportion of lead will depend

upon the force of the stream and depth of the waters you troll over ; but from half an ounce to an ounce will generally be sufficient. These weights should be attached as I before said to the gimp foot line, and be fixed at a short distance above the swivel. In tough bodied baits, like the roach, dace, or perch, it is a good plan to insert a lead like that used with the bead hooks into the mouth of the bait which must then be sewn up, which will cause it to sheer wildly about, and will render it very attractive. Sometimes, however, the lead from its weight is found to work its way out, causing a very untempting exposure of itself, as of certain unsightly appurtenances, which will then also protrude themselves. To prevent this the lead should be fixed on a piece of brass wire, like that I before alluded to for minnow trolling, which being run down through the belly towards the tail, will keep the lead in a proper horizontal position ; added to which by bending the wire slightly you may give an inclination to the body of the bait, which will cause it to play in a more lively manner.

Most anglers, however, prefer the double hooks placed back to back for the dead snap, though I certainly have not found them answer as well as the plan I have already recommended, as they show very much more in the water than the single hooks, and often deter a pike from laying hold of the bait ; and as far as hooking the fish is concerned, I have found my own plan more successful than any other I ever used ; as a proof of which the very first day I used it, and in which I chanced to obtain nine runs, I caught eight of them ; and if on all occasions I have not been equally fortunate, I have taken more fish in proportion to runs with that, than with any other pattern I have ever fished with.

The rod and line that should be employed for this kind of trolling must depend entirely on the sort of water you purpose fishing in. If the waters are not extensive a long rod with a reel should be used, the same in fact as for the live snap, only that the bait should be played as if trolling with a minnow for trout. But in large waters a reel had better be dispensed with, and then the short trolling rod should supersede the long one.

The rod I generally used for the latter purpose was my ordinary long trolling rod minus the butt ; my line being of stout black horsehair from thirty to forty yards long. This I carried either in a coil in my hand, or dragged behind me. The way to make a cast is, (supposing your bait to be attached to the line which has

been run through all the rings,) having the bait and foot line just clear of the ring of the top of the rod, to make an undercast throw, allowing the line to pass unchecked through the rings, by which means, with very little practice, you will be able to cast away five and twenty or thirty yards of line with perfect ease. When the bait reaches the water, it should just be allowed to sink, and then the line should be drawn in with the left hand, which will make the bait seem to move along as if alive, though in a confused manner in which apparently helpless condition, a pike, if he sees it, will consider a favorable opportunity to take advantage of, and will make a bold dash at it immediately. When the line is drawn in short, then lift out the bait, drawing in the line, till the tackling is in the same position as when you made your first cast, and then throw in again. You should not be too ready to lift out your bait as it approaches the shore, but play it to the very water's edge, as it is often followed by a pike who will seize it there, fearing it may escape him: and this is one advantage of a short rod, as with a long one, it is not so convenient to draw in the bait so near; added to which, the advantage obtained in lessening the toil of making continued casts with a long heavy rod, is a very considerable one. If indeed it is desired, a rod of not more than three feet long will answer the purpose for this particular kind of trolling, and will in the hands of a skilful troller cast out quite as much line as will be required.

Upon the whole I have found the snap tackle preferable to the gorge, the latter of which sometimes the pikes, though they lay hold of, will only mangle without swallowing. This is particularly the case when you use salt water baits, or even those of the fresh water, if kept too long.

Some years since I was fishing with a most patient follower of the art in the lower part of the river Test, in Hampshire. The only baits we could procure, having started on our expedition on the spur of the moment, were a few small whittings we purchased in the Southampton fish market, and these certainly not quite so fresh as they had been a day or two previously. We both tried with the leaded gorge for some time without either of us moving a fish. At last my companion repaired to a lock in the Romsey Canal, which was only a stone throw or so from the river. Here he no sooner cast in than he had a run of a pike, but soon the line slackened and a mangled bait was all that was drawn ashore.

This I saw repeated two or three times on the same spot, and as I firmly believe by the same fish; so perceiving my companion had a prospect of employment for the rest of the afternoon, I left him wishing him every possible success, and proceeded again to try my fortune in the river. Knowing now that even if I got a run with such baits as I then had, no pike would swallow them. I set to work and rigged out some snap tackle, and with this I did manage to lug out a small jack or two, when returning again to the lock there I found my companion still assiduously trolling away at the self same stand I left him, having as he informed me had several runs in the meantime all terminating exactly as the first had done. I then persuaded him to try my snap tackle, which he did and got a run the very cast he made with it, and this time he after a manner actually hooked the fish; for the latter on his striking gave two or three angry struggles, but soon after the hold giving way away went he; and could not be prevailed upon to run again.

The next time I passed this lock hole, my bait a herring sprat, I hooked and finally brought to land a jack between two and three pounds weight, which I believe to be the identical fish that afforded my friend so many hours amusement, though he did not come up to more than one sixth part of the dimensions he supposed him to be; but as I often tried the same spot afterwards, without ever obtaining a run there, I consider my opinion was the correct one after all.

But notwithstanding I consider sea fish as baits inferior to those that are found in the fresh water, yet as the latter cannot at all times and seasons be procured, it becomes necessary to consider what salt water fish can best supply their place. The best I know of is a small basse, though sometimes I have been obliged to use one of three quarters of a pound weight, and with even one of these I have taken pike when unable to procure smaller ones. The bright appearance of the basse, and the firmness with which the scales adhere to the body, causes it to maintain an appearance of freshness after being sometime out of water.

The next best bait is a small grey mullet; and when I could procure neither of these, I have often succeeded very well with a good sized herring sprat, or even a full grown herring itself: the great objection to both these latter baits is, that the scales soon come off, when the bait acquires a dull and stale appearance; on which account I generally provided myself with an ample stock,

and put on a fresh bait when I came to a part of the water I entertained an opinion a pike was lurking near. The smaller wrasse I have never tried, and perhaps from their dark colour they would not prove very attractive; yet from the tough nature of their scales and of the fishes themselves, nothing but the lacerating teeth of the pike would injure them; so that if pikes would take them, they would be a truly useful bait. Some anglers I have heard speak very highly of the smelt, or rather of the atherine, as a bait for pike: but I have never known them answer with a gorge bait; and from the extreme tenderness of their heads they are very difficult to fix on snap tackle, and they can never be employed for any length of time at a long cast.

I have never in any of my fishing excursions chanced to raise a pike with a fly, nor do they seem inclined to take a bait of that kind in this country, though it seems that both in Scotland and Ireland they are often taken with the large salmon flies, and one particular fly I have often seen with which I have been informed the Irish pikes are frequently taken. It represents a large corpulent butterfly, being in fact as big as a tomtit; the wings are constructed of the eyes of a peacock's feather standing proudly erect, with a lot of the blue barred jay's feathers tied under the wings; a rough stout body of squirrell's fur, ribbed and finished off at the tail with gold twist; the head having a couple of gold beads by way of eyes; the whole altogether forming a very showy appearance.

But it seems that even very large pikes may sometimes be taken with a common trout fly, as a proof of which Daniel mentions the skeleton of the head of a pike weighing 70 lbs, which is the largest ever taken by a line, or perhaps ever caught in Great Britain, that was captured with that bait in Loch Ken, near Galway, in Scotland. How this monstrous fish was tempted to rise, does not appear. Possibly the fly might have irritated him by tickling his nose as he lay basking on the surface, and he might consequently have caught a tartar by snapping too hastily at the daring intruder. But the most extraordinary bait I have ever heard of for taking a pike has been recommended me by a most practiced sportsman, and a man incapable of making a false assertion, which is about three inches of the skin of a red or dun cow's tail, which being sewn together and stuffed, (something heavy enough to sink it being also inclosed inside,) this being well armed

with hooks is trolled with in the same manner as the dead snap, and my informant told me it was a plan he himself had often and successfully put in practice.

Small pikes, or rather jack, I have sometimes hooked when fishing with a worm, though they have usually effected their escape by biting through the gut, and so got free; but I have never known a pike of any size move at a worm; a taste they grow out of, just as boys when they become adults outgrow their taste for lollipops.

I have seen very good imitations of frogs, mice, and fish exhibited at the fishing tackle shops, and sometimes in the possession of a few of my angling acquaintance; but I never heard of much being done with any of them. I consider that artificial baits can seldom prove successful in taking pike, their sense of smell being remarkably acute, as is so often exhibited by their turning back at a yard's distance or more from a tainted bait they were before rushing eagerly to seize upon. With the artificial minnow and red ribbed kill devil, I have however occasionally got a run from a pike, and that generally to my cost, as the pike was pretty certain to carry off some portion of my tackle; but which I had sometimes the fortune to redeem by adopting more suitable gear, and again hooking and finally securing the same fish.

CHAPTER VI.

ODDS AND ENDS, AND A FEW OF ALL SORTS.

The Grey Mullet.

In my concluding chapter I purpose treating on a few stray fish, without any attempt to classify them as belonging to any particular order or family. Few if any of these, with the exception of the eel and burbot can be considered as belonging to the fresh water, which in fact some of them never venture into; but as they approach near enough to the shore to afford good sport to the angler, it would be hardly just to my readers if I were to pass them by unnoticed; particularly as some of them supply excellent diversion where no other kind of fishing can possibly be obtained.

The grey mullet is so named from its colour, which is a dark leaden grey on the back, growing lighter towards the sides, till it approaches the belly, which is silvery white. It is armed with a spiny dorsal fin like the basse and perch, but that of the mullet only consists of four spines, whereas the basse has nine, and the perch twelve. The mullet has also a sharp spine on the pectoral, ventral, and anal fins, which are found exceedingly troublesome to the angler's hands in unhooking these fish.

In shape the mullet differs from most other fish, being remarkable for the roundness of its form, which is nearly cylindrical, and has been vulgarly though not unaptly compared to that most useful domestic article, a rollingpin. The head is wide, and remarkably

flat on the crown, particularly towards the muzzle. The mouth is of a very singular form, from its small size and protuberant fleshy lips, which it never allows any hard substance to pass; on this account it is an extremely difficult fish to hook, as when prevailed upon to take hold of a bait, it instantly ejects it, repeatedly seizing upon and casting it away, till it has extracted all the nutritive qualities; but before it does this, a slight prick of the hooks often warns it of its danger, and the bait is consequently rejected.

The mullet, though a sea fish, is not often found to wander far from the shore, and notwithstanding it never of its own accord, ascends beyond the influence of the tide, yet it has been proved that these fish will thrive and grow in ponds having no communication whatever with the sea; and in these confined limits, it is generally found to take a bait more freely, than when left to wander at liberty; the reason of which probably is, that when permitted to roam at large, they find food more suited to their tastes than any an angler can offer them, as well as of a more minute kind than he can possibly employ as a bait, which these fish may often be seen thrusting their mouths in the soft mud in search of; and for selecting which, Mr. Couch, as quoted by Mr. Yarrell observes, "the fleshy lips appear to be furnished with excessive sensibility of taste." They are also very partial to a kind of maggot found among decomposed sea weed, in search of which they come into very shallow waters, and offer very excellent marks at such times for a rifle, when very good sport may be obtained by shooting at them; a proceeding that may in this instance be justified, as in such places, it is almost hopeless to try to tempt them with a bait. Indeed, as I before remarked, where mullets have been allowed to range about in perfect freedom, I have never taken many, and had I depended upon these fish for sport, should often have been doomed to utter disappointment; and yet when pent up in places from which they have been debarred from egress, I have often met with very superior sport. In the canal near Southampton, I before alluded to, in which the basse and mullet were detained by the embankment being thrown across it, I often obtained some very important catches of the latter fish, which were not the less highly prized on account of my being at that time but a novice in the angling art.

The manner in which I first lighted upon this sport was rather

singular. It chanced that cousin Dick and I were passing by this said canal, as we were returning home rather disconcerted and empty basketted, from a small inlet of salt water hard by, in which we had vainly been attempting to catch some of the smaller basse, that usually made their appearance about that time of the year, though not one of them that day favoured us with a nibble, but which, as the sequel will show, was the most fortunate event that could have happened to us ; for as we were returning by this canal, and with our stock of bait but little diminished, observing a motion in the water, but which was too thick to enable us to distinguish what, we put together our tackle, to try to solve the mystery ; I, being the first ready, had scarcely thrown in, than bob—bob, went my float, when striking, a tug or two, much stronger than I expected, informed me I had got hold of something worth capturing, and having pretty strong tackle, I soon brought a mullet of a pound weight or more to land ; after which, as long as our bait lasted, we continued to catch them ; not one under a pound, and some as much as two ; and when at last our bait utterly failed, we even with a few detached pieces, such as we could collect adhering to the mouths and lips of the mullets we had previously captured, managed still to catch away, till not an atom more bait remaining, we were obliged reluctantly to abandon the pursuit ; and though we took an early opportunity of resuming it, we never found the fish take so freely as on the first occasion, though we often caught our dozen, or dozen and half between us, in the course of an evening ; and occasionally some larger ones than we had before taken. Once I remember catching one that weighed nearly 4 lbs, and fine sport I had with him ; having made his acquaintance in an excellent place for playing him, and he proving a remarkably game fish, did not very readily give up the contest. We also used to catch basse as well as mullet in this place, but the basse did not seem to thrive so well there, nor were they so plentiful as the latter fish. Unfortunately our success at length got wind ; and first a swarm of anglers from the town, and finally the nets of the fishermen swept all away before them, and so utterly destroyed our future sport, by exterminating the race.

Another instance of the mullet biting more freely in a state of confinement, was communicated to me by a very scientific and intelligent angler, I had the good fortune to fall in with very recently, and to whom I stand indebted for much valuable information, on

this and other subjects connected with angling. At the head of a kind of creek, communicating with the Barnstaple river, my informant stated, there is a lime quarry containing several deep pools of water, into which the tide flows at ordinary spring tides, but from which in neap or low tides all communication is cut off. In these pools mullets are often left by the tide, and whilst shut up there, are often found to bite very freely, though it is almost useless to attempt to catch any in the creek communicating with it, though many mullets may be seen playing about there; and basse will bite away freely enough at the latter spot, as will also eels and flounders; the creek in fact being deep and large enough to allow barges to come up and load at the quarry.

The best places therefore for mullet fishing, are deep pools in creeks, where all communication is cut off between them by the receding tide; and the most favorable time is a cloudy day, with a stiff breeze to crisp the waters. Some localities I am however aware, afford an exception of this rule, and these fish may in certain places, be taken over ground that is only covered with waters at the very top of the tide; such places in fact as the ragworms are to be met with, which the mullets approach the shallow water, in search of, and which are indeed the only bait I have used successfully for these fish, wherever I may have angled for them. The hook should be of a peculiar form, being almost squared instead of rounded at the turn, and short from the outer turn to the point, in order the better to suit the mullet's peculiarly formed mouth. A small float should be used, which the line should always be kept nearly tight with, so as to be ready to strike the moment it is drawn under. The bait should be just clear of the bottom. The rod should be a very long one; the line strong, with about a yard of good gut for the foot line; for fine tackle must be used for these fish as they are remarkably wary and timid; equalling even the carp, in cunning, and in one respect they exceed him, or any other fish; frequently jumping one after another over the head ropes of a net, following each other like a flock of sheep; so that if but one has the sense and courage to set the example, the whole shoal often make their escape. I must say this is a trick I wish all fresh water fishes were up to, and would never fail to put in practice, as it would very much enhance the angler's chance of catching them in a more fair and legitimate manner.

But although the only bait I have taken mullet with is a rag

worm, I am not prepared to state it is the best ; Mr. Couch who possesses great knowledge in matters of this kind, as quoted by Mr. Yarrell, informs us that the mullet is most readily taken with the bait formed of the fat entrails of a fish, or cabbage boiled in broth.

According to Mr. Yarrell also, this fish rises freely at the flies used for trout, and even at the larger and more gaudy flies used for salmon. I have not however succeeded with the artificial fly, though often tempted to try it when I have seen these fish playing about in the shallows : but though I myself may not have succeeded, it by no means follows that others more skilful may not prove more fortunate. Basse, as has been already remarked, will take an artificial fly very freely.

It is also probable there are many salt water fishes that may be caught with an artificial fly, although that bait has never yet been employed for the purpose. Mr. Pennant mentions that a friend of his, Mr. Low, of Birsa, in the Orknies, assured him that he had caught many thousands of herrings with a common trout fly in a deep hole in a rivulet into which the tide flowed. And a gentleman into whose company I chanced to spend some very agreeable hours a short time since, (Mr. Brooking of Dartmouth,) informed me that excellent sport was often to be met with in the Range outside that harbour, by casting an artificial fly from a boat, and that by that means during the summer and the early part of the autumn, great numbers of fine mackerel were caught in the course of a few hours. The fly generally used was a red palmer trimmed on rather a larger hook than is commonly used for trout, and the fly itself proportionably larger.

This must indeed afford noble sport to those who can brave the dangers of the deep and of sea sickness ; a mackerel being a remarkably game fish, swimming with wonderful swiftness and possessing great strength in the water, as I myself can bear testimony of ; having besides a very multitude of these fishes I have taken with the ordinary sea lines, often captured them by means of a rod and fine tackling, which it required some degree of skill to accomplish.

The best amusement I ever met in this kind of fishing was at anchor in a boat in the Southampton water, about three miles above Calshot castle, where cousin Dick and I in the course of an afternoon contrived between us to pull out eight dozen mackerel, and

some of them very fine ones, who actually astonished us with their wonderful strength; indeed such as it seemed scarcely possible for fishes of their size to have exhibited. When we commenced the water was calm and clear, and we could perceive a great number surrounding the boat. At first they were shy of biting, and the only way to entice them was by drawing the bait rapidly through the water, when all hands or rather fins would make a start after it; but soon afterwards a light breeze springing up, we put on a float each, which continued to disappear almost as fast as we cast it into the water. The bait we used was first a rag worm, but subsequently a portion of some of the mackerel we had previously caught, which those cannibals preferred to any other bait we offered them; a piece of a bright silver whiting being absolutely rejected by them.

As a further proof of mullet being adapted to fresh water, Mr. Yarrell mentions that where a number of these fish, of about the size of a finger, were put into Mr. Arnould's fresh water pond in Guernsey, "after a few years mullet of four pounds weight were caught, which proved fatter, deeper, and heavier for their length than those taken from the sea."

Mullets have been celebrated for their conjugal affection, and it is said that if one is hooked the mate will follow it to the surface, evincing great woe and anguish; and I myself have often witnessed, when I have been playing a large mullet, that another has closely pursued it, but as I then ignorantly supposed with no other motives than to come in for a share of the bait, which he or she, as the case may be, believed the other to be selfishly absconding with; but I had not then read Du Bartas with sufficient attention, who clearly explains the whole in the following lines, which to confess the plain truth I am now indebted to honest Izaak for, as he quotes them in the early part of the Complete Angler, praying those he addresses to hearken to what the piscatory poet sings of the mullet,—

"But for chaste love the mullet hath no peer,
For if the fisher hath surprised her ppeer,
As mad with woe, to shore she followeth,
Prest to consort him both in life and death."

“The hearing of such conjugal faithfulness,” says the worthy old angler, “will be music to all chaste ears.”

Du Bartas also sings of the conjugal faithfulness of the Cantharus,—

“————— The constant Cantharus
Is ever constant to its faithful spouse,
In nuptial duty spending his chaste life,
Never loves any but his own dear wife.”

Whilst M. De Lacepede sets forth in very glowing colours the affectionate conduct of the lump fishes, who, according to his account, follow up all their conjugal duties to the very letter : not only by forsaking all others of their species, and attaching themselves for better and for worse to each other, but also mutually assisting in bringing up their little family in the most exemplary manner it is possible for fishes to do.

But alas! it seems that few species of fishes are thus virtuously inclined: for according to the poets, and where are we to look for higher authorities? Fishes, cold blooded as they seem, are not universally devoid of the frailties which too often mark the lives of those, “within whose veins a warmer current flows;” for Du Bartas, who sings such praises, on the exemplary lives of the mullet, and chaste Cartharus, with equal candour exposes the flagrant conduct of the obscene Sargus, whose lewd habits he justly reprobates, and the truth of which no one ought to doubt: for, saith Izaak, he hath gathered this and other observations out of authors that have been great and industrious searchers into the secrets of nature. Hear then the poet’s accusation:—

“The adult’rous Sargus doth not only change
Wives every day in the deep streams, but—strange!
As if the honey of sea love delight
Could not suffice his ranging appetite,
Goes courting she goats on the grassy shore,
Horning their husbands that had horns before.”

Surely a most grave and unheard of charge against a fish; yet supported not only upon the authority of Du Bartas, but by the joint evidence of both Ælian and Oppian: both of whom also state that such was the affection of the sargus for goats, that if one of these animals but showed itself on the sea shore, it was

quite sufficient to raise a commotion amongst the sargi, who rushed eagerly towards the object, and like young men of the present day, showing off the presence of young ladies, so did these fishes after their manner try to show off before the object of their admiration; leaping out of the water, and exhibiting such other graceful feats and attitudes as they were capable of, and in their minds considered would set them off to the greatest advantage. So blind indeed was this propensity, that according to the above authorities, a fisherman by merely attiring himself in goat skin—of course not forgetting the horns—might catch as many as he pleased; or should these fishes entertain any scruples about the honesty of his intentions, a little flour steeped in goat broth was sure to remove them.

The only precaution required on this part of the fisherman then was to smooth them down gently, so as to place the spines even with the body before venturing to grasp them with his hands. In case any of my readers should be desirous of knowing what manner of fish this sargus is, all the further information I am able to afford on the subject is, that he is a spinous fish, with firm flesh, and having a black spot on the tail, and a body marked with several black lines. It is an inhabitant of the Mediterranean, and the Bay of Biscay, but it seems never known to approach on the coasts of our own country.

The Wrasse.

There are several species of this fish to be met with on our coasts; the distinguishing characteristics being an oblong body, covered with hard scales that adhere very closely to the skin. The general form and position of the fins, resembles that of the common carp, but the singular appearance of the large fleshy lips, which generally turning upwards, present a row of teeth resembling more those of terrestrial animals than fishes, mark a totally different genus.

The colours of the wrasse are also very remarkable, two being scarcely to be met with that are exactly marked alike; but the most prevailing colour is a kind of reddish brown, mixed with a darker colour. Others, are of an olive green, mottled with a darker colour, and generally growing paler towards the belly, whilst we meet with many that are beautifully striped, especially about the head with the richest colours, such as blue, red and yellow.

The most beautifully marked of the whole tribe is the rainbow wrasse, so called from the extreme brilliancy of its colours, which are changeable when viewed in different points of light; the back is of a beautiful pale blue, beneath which is an orange band extending from the head to the tail, beneath which, are lilac coloured bands on a silvery ground, the head varied with all the colours of the rainbow. The tail, which is slightly rounded at the end, is tipped at the end with azure; the central and anal fin, with rather a darker tint of the same colour: the upper part of the pectoral fins blue, the lower yellow. The fore part of the dorsal fin is a bright blue, tipped with yellow; forming altogether a very pretty little fish: but here all his merit ceases; the whole of the wrasse tribe being a watry and insipid race, who although they afford very good sport in the catching, and of little value afterwards, though I have met with many who esteem them by no means bad eating.

The rainbow wrasse never attains to any considerable size, nor have I ever met with one that has exceeded half a pound weight;

but the common wrasse grows to a much larger size, and I have caught several of four or five pounds each at the same standing.

They frequent rocky ground, feeding generally in shallow water on such insects as they can collect : the best places for angling for them are sheltered coves amongst the rocks into which they enter in search of food. The only time for catching them is on the rise of the tide, as they invariably leave off feeding as soon as it begins to ebb.

The baits I have taken them with, are soft crabs, lug worms, rag worms, muscles, limpets, and perriwinkles taken out of the shell : in addition to which I have been informed that they will bite at garden snails, slugs, raisins and broad figs ; the latter of which is considered to be a most depending bait.

By far the most successful that I have employed has been a portion of the peel crab ; that is the raw flesh of the female of the larger kind of crabs just before casting off its outer shell, the flesh being then so tough as to be cut with a knife ; but still it will not adhere firmly to the hook without being tied to it with a piece of waxed thread, which must be attached to the snead above the hook for that purpose. Next to the large crab, one of the softer of the smaller species is the best that can be used ; and after this the lug worm, or a large species of rag worm that is found amongst the loose stones in rocky pools left by the receding tide, which the Cornish fishermen term primain ; they will also bite very freely at common rag worms. The other baits I have only adopted in cases of necessity, and never met with great success with any one of them : though it may be right to state that I have never yet given the figs or raisins a trial. Wrasse sometimes, come up into rivers as far as they run salt, and into harbours, piers, and creeks ; and in these places they may be taken with a rod and line. When fishing for them from a pier always keep your baits near the stone work, and the better plan is to employ a paternoster line with two or three hooks, which should be stout but not overlarge. When you have a bite, give the fish time to carry your float well down, and then strike pretty smartly, yet at the same time not hard enough to endanger your tackle. When hooked they afford good sport as they struggle very hard, and it sometimes happens that from their swimming in companies, you have when using a paternoster line, a couple or more of them on at the time ; each pulling different

ways ; which, if they do not break the tackle between them, serves considerable to enhance the sport.

Very large ones may also sometimes be taken by angling in the deep pools in the rocks, left by the receding tide, where these fish may often be seen swimming about in the deep clear water. You must manage then to keep as much out of sight as you well can ; using a good long rod, and having your line sufficiently leaded to sink the bait readily to the bottom. Drop carefully in, letting the bait sink to the very bottom, then draw it gradually up, and sinking it suddenly down within view of the fish, but not approaching so near as to discover yourself, when most probably one will come forward and seize on the bait. See that he gets it well into his mouth, and then strike and play him till you tire him out, and after landing him, give his fellows in the pool a quarter of an hour or ten minute's respite, to recover from their alarm, before you try them again ; by which means you will be very likely to catch one or two more.

But the best fishing for them, and where the largest are taken, is in water of a moderate depth, in some sheltered nook, washing the rocky cliffs of the open sea, where the angling rod must be laid aside, and stouter tackling adopted. For this purpose, a stout line of cord must be employed, at the end of which should be a loop, to which the stone strap is to be attached, being merely a small piece of common twine put on double. By means of the latter, a moderate sized stone by way of a sinker must be attached to the line ; above which, at about a foot and a half from the stone, as also at three feet above it, should be fixed a hook, having a sned about nine inches long of ordinary sized whipcord. In casting out, care must be taken to keep the hand at least the length of the sned above the upper hook ; otherwise a great risk will be incurred of running this hook into your hand, of which some of the inexperienced have ere now had woeful experience. The line may be cast out tolerably far, and the stone should be of just a sufficient weight to travel slowly homewards along the bottom with the wash of the sea ; the line being all the time kept just tight with the stone. A bite can readily be detected by your feeling two or three smart jerks, but as the fish generally hook themselves, it is unnecessary you should strike ; and a good tugging struggle informs you when the hook has taken a fast hold.

It often occurs in this sort of fishing, that the stone becomes

entangled in the crevices of the rocks, and becoming firmly fixed there, the line can only be cleared by your pulling away till you break the stone strap : on this account therefore you must take care to provide yourself with a sufficient supply of stones and stone straps, though the former may generally be broken from the rocks by means of a hammer, which, like a practical geologist, a wrasse angler should never enter on his labours without providing himself with. The best form for the stones is an oblong or oval, as being less likely to catch in the crevices, and each end should be notched with your hammer, to prevent the stone strap from slipping off, and to which it may be easily attached by a simple loop.

The proper time to commence fishing, is the first rise of flood, from which time you may pursue your sport till high water, after which time, as I before remarked, it is useless to attempt to try for these fish. They may be angled for either from a boat or casting from the cliffs, and great sport may be often met with. I have in the course of two or three hours, not only taken more of these fish than I could carry away, but actually more when collected together, than I could lift from off the ground.

The Pollack.

Another fish the angler may sometimes meet with, is the whiting pollack, which in form very much resembles the common whiting, but may easily be distinguished by being usually of a darker colour as well as by the lengthened form of the under jaw; the whiting pollack being an underhung, and the whiting an overhung jawed fish. There is however a fish very much resembling the pollack, which is called the whiting coal, or rawlin pollack. The difference between the latter two fishes may be detected by an examination of their lateral lines: this in the whiting pollack is incurvated, rising towards the middle of the back, and then sinking and running straight towards the tail, whilst in the rawlin pollack, the lateral line is nearly straight throughout, and silvery white.

Both these fish attain a considerable size, but the coal fish is the larger of the two; sometimes attaining the weight of thirty pounds; whereas the pollack seldom reaches to above half that weight.

Both fish are alike in their habits; inhabiting and feeding in rocky grounds, and often approaching sufficiently near the shore to be taken from it. On some parts of our coast the fry of the rawlin pollack may be literally said to swarm—playing about in shoals upon the surface, where they may be caught with a rod and line as fast as the latter can be cast into the water. A small piece of the flesh of a fresh herring, or a rag worm is the best bait, though very few baits come amiss to them. They may be fished for either with or without a float, and the whiting pollacks may be angled for in the same manner.

But the best way of all for taking the larger kind of pollacks is by whiffing or trolling from a boat, either with rod or without one, though in this kind of fishing I have found it the better plan to dispense with the rod altogether, or rather only to use the short rods or rather twigs, I shall shortly have occasion to mention.

The lines should be of strong cord or horsehair, and may be

used either with or without a sinker, as pollack feed at different depths of water, sometimes at the very surface, and at others twenty fathoms beneath it; so that in this kind of fishing several lines may be employed at different depths, which may be regulated by adopting sinkers of different weights. When you have more lines than your company can manage to hold in their hands; a number of small slight rods of about three feet long should be stuck in the gunwhale of the boat, which the line should be attached to, the bending of which will show you when a fish is hooked. It will not do to trust solely to the strength of these fragile rods, and therefore, the rest of the line should be either wound on a stout reel, that no fish could pull overboard, or be fastened securely to some part of the boat. The sinker should be fixed on the main line, to which a foot line of four or five fathoms should be attached, and the snead next the hook should be either of stout silkworm gut, or fine twisted cord, and the hooks should be proportioned to the baits, and the size of the fish you are likely to meet with.

The success in pollack fishing depends almost entirely on fishing over the proper ground, the best localities being generally well known to the fishermen of the neighbourhood, who can tell exactly where to pitch upon them, by taking landmarks from the shore. Spots of this kind are generally distinguished by some name, not unfrequently by that of the person who chanced first to light upon it. But some of these places are only good for a season, their attraction being most probably caused by an accidental deposit of sand, amongst some of the interstices of the rocks, which afford shelter to the sand lance of which these fish are very fond, and which is again swept away by the next gale of wind or strong spring tide.

Directly therefore a fisherman in passing over one of these spots, gets a bite, he instantly takes up his landmarks and retries the ground; and if he is successful there, he stores up the marks in his memory against a future day, but rarely if ever communicates his discovery to others; an old fisherman being ever shy of furnishing others with information, and is as jealous of a favorite fishing spot, as the most tenacious lord of a manor is over his game preserves; so that it is very difficult to discover many of these spots; for if you discover a fisherman there, no sooner does he see you approach, than he will shift his quarters; when at a short distance off, it will be difficult to discover the precise spot,

which is often of very limited extent; so much so indeed, that I have not unfrequently hauled as many as two dozen large pollacks on board in traversing a space of half a dozen yards, beyond which, I could not obtain a single bite.

When a pollack bites, he generally hooks himself by the check he receives when running off with the bait. On finding himself held captive he generally gives a few strong struggles, which finding unavailing he usually darts forward, thereby causing a slack line, which often induces beginners to imagine he has escaped, till a smart tug informs them again of his presence: when if he be a strong fish it will be better to give out a little line; pulling in as rapidly as you can when he again slackens, as he soon will, by which means you will soon subdue him, and having hauled him to the surface strike him with a gaff hook on the lower side just behind the ventral fin, and throw him aboard; or if only a small one lift him in by the snead.

The baits to be employed in this kind of fishing are the sand launce, small common eels, sprats, smelts, or pieces cut from the tail or side of a mackerel or gar fish: as also rag worms, and primum. When a piece of fish is used, the hook should be merely run through one extremity, without taking any pains to conceal it from view. When rag worms are used, they should be put on two at a time, and baited in the manner above directed for baiting a couple of worms for trout. When sand launce are used, it is generally better to put on two at a time; running the hook first into the mouth and bringing it out again a little below the ventral fin, and then drawing the point of the hook a little out, run it in again through the laterel line a little lower down, bringing it out again in the opposite side. The second bait should be fixed by simply running the hook through the head, entering and bringing it out at the eyes; but should be so contrived that the bodies and bellies of the two fish may be placed on reverse sides, as in that way they will play better, and present a more attractive appearance. The small common eels may also be baited in a similar manner, though the better plan seems to be to employ only one of the latter baits put on in the same way as the first sand launce as above directed. Common eels may be preserved in salt, in which they will keep a considerable time, and from their toughness, the same bait will catch a great number of fish before it will be worn out in the service.

Pollack may also be caught at anchor as well as under weigh, and this either with light or heavy lines. In fact it is a frequent practice when fishing at bottom on rocky ground for whiting and other fish, to have at least one light line overboard to pick up any stray pollack that may chance to pass that way.

The best stations for pollack fishing when brought up at an anchor, are near to or rather over a shallow reef of rocks, which cause a strong rippling current, where the same baits may be used as in whiffing. In more quiet waters a shrimp baited by sticking the hook through the middle joint next the tail, as before directed for basse, will also be found a very useful plan.

But it is not pollacks only, but also mackerel and gurnards of all kinds may be caught in whiffing, as also the gar fish or sea needles, the shad or alosa, and the scad or horse mackerel. Should you chance to fall in with a party of mackerel you are pretty certain to meet with sport, but as soon as you find you are in the neighbourhood of the latter fish, you should accelerate the speed of your boat; and if you find them biting shyly, making a touch and go affair of it, you should, as in minnow trolling increase the speed of your bait, by drawing it in towards you, which is the best plan of exciting their avidity, and generally a successful one.

The Burbot or Eel Pout.

The burbot is the only one of the cod tribe that are ever known to visit the fresh water: but it is by no means a general fish, being rarely if ever found in any of the rivers of estuaries communicating with the British Channel. It is however found in the Trent, Severn, Ouse, Esk, Skern, Tees, Cam, and some of the rivers in Norfolk. It seems that it will live in lakes as well as rivers, being taken in the lake of Geneva as large as seven pounds weight, which is more than double what is known to attain to in the waters of this country: but it does not seem to inhabit any of our own large standing waters.

It is said to be a well flavoured fish, though from its unprepossessing appearance, it is not so much esteemed, as from the goodness of its flesh it deserves, and Mr. Yarrell very justly remarks, that as this fish, "is in its nature extremely hardy, few difficulties present themselves in the way of their increase in quantity, while the value of the fish would amply repay the trouble or the cost of the experiment."

The burbot seldom exceeds two pounds weight; in form it very much resembles the common ling, and like that fish has a single large barb beneath the chin, and a small pair between the nostrils and the snout. The general form of the head is however more rounded than that of the ling, which from its toadlike appearance gives the burbot an unpleasing aspect; both the jaws are well furnished with numerous small teeth; the gill openings are large, the form of the body is cylindrical, from the shoulders to the anal fin, but becomes gradually more compressed towards the tail, which is rounded at the extremity; as are also the pectorals; the ventral fins are small and placed forward before the pectorals like those of the haddock, and the rest of the cod tribe. It has two dorsal fins; the first short, commencing near the head, the second long, commencing immediately behind the first, and reaching nearly to the caudal fin. The scales are small, and adhere very closely to the body, which is coated with a kind of mucous slime like that of

the common eel. The back and sides are of a greyish olive colour, and the belly silvery, though in many specimens the colours are found to vary, some being dusky, others of a dirty green, sometimes spotted with black, and at others with yellow; the real colours in fact being frequently concealed by the slime; but the distinguishing marks on the fins seem to be alike in all; they are as follows: the dorsal and anal fins are edged with white, and the caudal is marked with a transverse black bar, the extreme tip being white.

Their habits resemble those of the common eel, lurking like them beneath stones and fissures in the banks on the look out for prey; and from which when hooked therein, it is no easy matter to dislodge them. From their sharp teeth gimp hooks should be employed.

The burbot seems to lay pretty close during the day time, choosing chiefly the night season for his feeding time, when he is generally taken on a night line or trimmer. He will bite at most small fresh water fishes, and as he will not object to a dead bait, many salt water fish might likewise be employed to catch him. It is said that the best time for catching burbot is during, and shortly after a violent storm of thunder and lightening, accompanied with heavy rain.

Their spawning time is early in the spring.

The Common Eel.

Eels are too well known in this country to require any general description, but it seems there are four distinct species which slightly differ from each other so as to mark them as a separate and distinct race. 1. The silver eel, which is of a very long make, having a remarkably silvery belly, and a great clearness throughout. 2. The greg or greenish eel, which is thicker in proportion than the former, and of a greenish colour on the upper parts, and of a yellow cast below. 3. The broad nosed eel, which has a broader, flatter, and much larger head than any of the others; and the red finned eel, which is mentioned by Walton, though he says, "it is very rarely to be met with in our country;" so rare indeed that I never met with any one who had seen one, and I have considerable doubt whether the species actually exists.

Of all eels the silver eel attains the largest size: instances having occurred of their weighing upwards of twenty pounds, but occurrences of this kind are exceedingly rare; an eel of three or four pounds weight being considered a fine fish of the kind. The fact is eels are exposed to so many enemies that but few escape to attain their utmost size, whilst their increase in growth is exceedingly slow as compared to that of most other fishes.

Eels as we all know are remarkably tenacious of life, and will continue to move for some considerable time after the head is severed from the body; and yet, what though strange is true, and let those who doubt the fact try the experiment, if you merely divide the spine behind the head, just above the ventral fin, after a faint struggle or two all motion will cease; yet if the head be entirely severed the body will move about for a considerable time! How or why this is, I must leave wiser heads than mine to determine: for I must candidly confess that to my slender understanding the matter is altogether incomprehensible.

Eels also will not only live a longer time out of their own element than any other fishes, but are often known even voluntarily to forsake it and wander about the meadows in search of

worms, snails, and such other kind of food they may find there; on this account it is difficult to keep them in some waters, for if dissatisfied with their quarters, they will soon desert them and pursue an overland pilgrimage in search of some more agreeable locality.

In support of the migration of eels Mr. Yarrell has inserted the following extract from Dr. Hasting's natural history of Worcestershire. "A relative of the late Mr. Parrott was out in his park with his keeper near a large piece of water, on a very beautiful evening, when the keeper drew his attention to a very fine eel quietly ascending the bank of the pool, and with an undulating motion making his way through the long grass: on further observation he perceived a considerable number of eels quietly proceeding to a range of stews, nearly the distance of a quarter of a mile from the large piece of water from whence they started. The stews were supplied by a rapid brook, and in all probability the instinct of the fish led them in that direction as a means of finding their way to some large river from whence their ultimate destination, the sea, might be obtained."

With regard to the generation of eels, the ancients seemed to have entertained some very extraordinary ideas. Aristotle assures us that he could find no difference of sexes nor yet any organs of generation: for which reason they have been supposed by many to have proceeded from putrefaction of the mud on the sides of ponds and rivers. Pliny talks much in the same strain, affirming that though they are neither male nor female yet that by means of rubbing themselves against rocks and stones they detached particles or scabs from their bodies, that quickening by degrees turned into eels. Nor have moderns been wanting who have also given into these opinions, or maintained others equally absurd. Some holding that these fish couple together like dew worms, at the same time shedding a kind of viscous fluid, which by being retained in the mud reproduced the species. Others even entertained the absurd idea that they were created from the mud alone.

But the most ridiculous opinion of the whole, (which it is wonderful should obtain one moment's credit with any person gifted with reason) is, that eels may be produced from horsehairs cast into the river, which Captain Browne, in an interesting note to his edition of White's Selbourne, informs us is a very common belief among the school-boys of Scotland, and that they at least consider

they have established the fact to their own satisfaction by experiment. "Repairing to a rivulet," he observes, "they stick a hair in the mud at the bottom, both because they think the incipient animal derives some nourishment from the ground, as to prevent its being swept away from their observation. On their return to the spot the next day; perhaps the admiring group gather round; one with his fingers touches the hair, which by this time being rendered moist and pliable, exhibits in the rippling stream, a tremulous motion that is unhesitatingly ascribed to animation. It is allowed to float down the current, and the urchin philosophers depart fully persuaded of the possibility of rearing and planting beds of eels."

Mr. Pennant however, to whose opinions the greatest deference is most justly due, and who of course discarded all the above absurd notions, has stated that the immediate generation of eels has been sufficiently proved to be in the ordinary course of nature, and that they are viviparous, producing their young alive; but still he favours us with no one single instance, in which this satisfactory proof has occurred. And Mr. Couch, who has searched more deeply into these matters than most men, maintains directly the contrary position, contending that they are produced from roe, which he considers is contained in the pearly substance which lies along the spine of this fish; and his opinion is confirmed by that of Jesse, Yarrell, and Dr. Mitchell of New York; the latter of whom states that the roes or ovary of eels may be seen by those who will look for them at the proper season, like those of other fishes. Eels generally deposit their spawn about the latter end of April, and are considered to be at their worst in May. It is not however known how long a time expires before the spawn becomes vivified.

During the whole of the winter, eels remain buried in the mud in a torpid state, during which time they exist without taking any kind of food; but for this abstinence, they make ample amends when they issue forth, being by far the most voracious feeders of the whole finny race, devouring almost everything that comes in their way. They bite freely at worms, minnows, and salmon spawn, either preserved or fresh, and should be fished for in the same manner as for the perch or tench. Eels generally run off with the bait as soon as they seize hold of it, and never cease to move about with it, though they seldom wander far away from the spot they first seized upon it. Time should be given them when

they bite, and when hooked, every care will be requisite to prevent them from tangling your tackle in weeds or other incumbrances, which they will never fail to attempt. Sometimes an eel draws your bait into his hole, where he lays imbedded in the mud, and in firm clayey ground it requires some patience to start him; yet by keeping him well within the bend of the rod, his strength will by degrees relax, and when he is drawn clear of his hole, he will be so thoroughly tired out, as to be unable to offer any further resistance. You must be careful however not to pull away too violently; for it is only by tiring out the eel, by keeping a continual strain upon him, if he is a fish of any size, that you can succeed in drawing him out: employing force will only insure you a breakage of your tackle.

Eels are frequently indeed taken by dropping the bait into their holes, which in clear waters may be discovered in the mud at the bottom. A strong line, and a small but stout hook should be used, and a moderate sized worm is the best bait, which should be dropped quietly into these holes, when if there is an eel there, he will seldom decline the invitation: and after allowing him a minute or so to gorge the bait, draw the line gently tight, which will cause the eel to close his jaws, and so render the hook less likely to slip through them, and then striking, manage your fish afterwards as above directed. This kind of fishing is called *sniggling*; but there is also another mode by which it is carried on. This is effected by means of a stout needle, whipped about the middle part to three or four yards of fine whipcord. The end of the needle should then be thrust into the head of a large lob worm, and drawn on till it reaches the middle of the worm. Then, in the end of a small stick, which you may fix into a joint or more of your angling rod, there should be fixed another needle, with about half an inch of the point appearing: this should also be stuck into the head of the baited worm, and the whole length of the cord held in the hand together with the stick. The worm should then be poked gently between the cleft of any clods or piles, or in crevices between the stonework of walls or bridges, where an eel is likely to be concealed: the stick should then be drawn softly away and laid aside, the line only being kept in the hand till it is perceived to draw; and then after giving some time for the eel to gorge, draw the line gently tight, and when you feel the motion of the fish, strike pretty smartly, when the needle, which before laid

buried straight in the worm, will be pulled quite across the throat of the eel and hold him fast. Then keep a steady pull on the line till you thoroughly tire him out, and having safely landed him you may, by squeezing one of the points of the needle through his skin, draw that and the whole line after it, without going through the cutting and maiming process, generally required to dislodge a hook from an eel's stomach.

And now I must beg to offer a few remarks on bobbing for eels; a very ancient and good plan for capturing these fishes. In order to put this in practice, you must first of all take care to provide yourself with a good stock of large worms; the species is immaterial, but they ought to be well scoured, which from being too often omitted, is frequently the cause of this mode of angling not succeeding so well as would otherwise have done. Having then these worms all duly prepared, with a long needle pass a thread of worsted through them till you have what will make a tolerable sized bundle of them, then tie all the ends of the threads together, making a kind of mop of them.

This done, fasten them all to a stout line about two yards long. Six or eight inches above the worms there should be a knot for a lead plummet to rest upon, which should be tolerably weighty in order that the baits may be sunk the more readily. The line should then be fastened to a short taper pole, about three or four yards long. Being thus prepared you must angle in muddy water, or in the deeps or sides of creeks, and you will easily find out when the eel lays hold—as they often do several at a time—by their tugging away at the worms, let them pull away unmolested for a short time, and then hauling them gently towards the top of the water hoist them suddenly to land, and then do your best to secure all you can; for frequently you may throw two or three on shore at the same time, and yet every of them will contrive to slip through your fingers and escape back into the water again.

It is but seldom you can prevail the larger eels to bite during the day time, though sometimes in hot thundery weather they will venture forth, as they will in rivers affected with the tide just on the rise of flood; but even in those places the evening is the best time for taking them. The best plan however to catch large eels is with a strong night line baited either with worms, a minnow, a small pride lamprey, or a portion of one of the smaller of

their own species. They will also bite at a slug or snail denuded of its shell.

I have found it the best plan to set a number of single hooks with stout sneads about two or three yards long; dropping the bait in shallow water close to the edge—for there it is that eels prowl about in search of their food, and not in the deeper waters,—leaving plenty of slack line for them to run off, and freely gorge the bait.

The Conger.

The conger bears some resemblance to the common eel, so much so indeed, that many more positive than learned in these matters, have stoutly maintained that they both were the same identical species; the conger being only an eel of larger growth, and the difference in colour and appearance, being solely occasioned by their abode in the salt water; but to a scientific person, the two species are easily distinguishable; in fact such a marked difference exists between them, that Cuvier has withdrawn the conger from the genus *anguilla*, and made it the foundation of a sub-genus under the name of conger.

The chief marks of difference between the eel and conger, independently of the colours are: 1, that the latter, however small it may be, has always the upper jaw projecting beyond the lower, whilst the common eel is equally remarkable for its protuberant under jaw; 2, the lateral line is scarcely visible in the common eel, being a series of minute mucous orifices, whilst that of the conger is very distinctly marked, being broad and of a whitish colour; 3, the conger is also much more bony than the common eel, having 40 more vertebræ, and the latter having only 116, the conger 156; and also in the lower part of the body, particularly towards the tail, the conger's is so full of small bones as to render that portion in a small fish scarcely eatable, but which are never to be found in a common eel.

But for all this, a middle sized conger of from fifteen to twenty pounds, or indeed one of much larger size, is by no means bad eating; the best parts are the middle pieces, which roasted, baked or stewed with a pudding sewed up in its belly, is a most excellent fish. The middle parts of a small conger of about a pound or two weight, stewed in the same manner as common eels, also forms an agreeable dish; those parts being almost free of the small bones that occur towards the nether extremity.

There is no fish that presents a more delicate appearance when

brought to table, than the conger, from the snowlike whiteness of its flesh, which is unequalled by any other fish whatever.

These fish grow to an immense size, often exceeding a hundred pounds weight, and afford a very important article of food in the south-western coasts of the kingdom, where, taking the year through, they average as high a price as the best cod.

The larger species are exceedingly powerful as well as tenacious of life, and not only struggle most desperately in the water, but also show a stout fight after they are hauled on board, hissing all the time like serpents. But they are soon overcome by a blow from a bat or club on the abdomen, which is the most tender part on which they can be struck, and one or two good blows there will speedily disable them.

They are exceedingly voracious, not scrupling to devour even those of their own kind : and often have I caught two on the same hook, when I have set a bolter or long trimmer ; the first having taken the bait and been hooked through the upper jaw, and then becoming a bait himself, was the means of catching one of his mightier brothers, who had presumed uninvited thus to make a meal of him.

The larger congers are taken chiefly with stout cord lines, on rocky ground ; amongst whose crevices they repose and shelter themselves in the day, never venturing forth till sunset, but during the night, they feed most voraciously.

The small ones may be caught in abundance from the rocks with a rod and line, and almost any bait on a moonlight evening, and occasionally a large one may be gotten hold of ; though the latter from his great strength, generally rends the tackle asunder and so effects his escape.

The spawning time of the conger is generally about christmas.

The Flounder.

There is one fish I had nearly forgotten to make mention of, which is the flounder or fluke; which although properly speaking a sea fish, yet is often found to wander a considerable distance up the fresh waters, where it remains till it attains a considerable size: frequently as much as two or three pounds. It bites freely at worms, but the largest are usually caught with a minnow; it always feeds near the bottom, and should be fished for there.

When hooked, from the peculiar form of the body it is extremely difficult to raise one of even a hand's breadth suddenly to the surface; therefore inexperienced anglers, if they get hold of one of these fishes, fancy they have a perfect monster at their hook, and as they frequently break their tackle in trying to haul the fish out by main force, are never undeceived. But if a flounder, instead of being attempted to be lifted up, be drawn steadily along it may very easily be brought to land.

Although the flounders wander so far from the sea, they are most abundant within the influence of the tide, and the best time for taking them is during its rise, at which time they prowl eagerly about in search of food, and are seldom found to reject either a worm or a minnow that is placed within their reach. But after high water I have generally found them bite less eagerly, never taking half so many on the ebb tide, as during the flood.

But before I conclude I cannot allow the

Miller's Thumb, Bull Head, or Tommy Loggie

To pass me by without acknowledging my acquaintance with him, which has been of many years standing, though we have never been on any very strict terms of intimacy. I am however compelled to admit that his appearance is far from prepossessing; for his head is large, round, and of a toadlike form, with a wide gaping mouth; whilst the blue pupils of the eyes produce a much more singular than pleasing effect. As for the rest of his body it is of rather a cylindrical shape; the upper part is brown, covered with minute dark

spots; the belly white. It inhabits stony rivulets, where it seeks to escape the attacks of its foes by secreting itself amongst the loose gravelly pebbles. They usually spawn in summer.

When no danger is at hand they may often be seen sunning themselves in the shallows, when a small red worm dropped in just before them is rarely rejected; and thus these little fishes often afford amusement to juvenile anglers, who by means of a worm stuck on a crooked pin fastened to a piece of thread attached to a willow wand, are enabled to indulge in the pleasures of angling to "*a certain extent*," as a west country friend of mine so aptly and often qualifies his expressions by observing, and would doubtless do so now, had he like myself, the task of commenting on the pleasures of angling for tommy loggies.

And now I take my final leave, trusting that the foregoing pages may not have proved tedious or been found totally devoid of interest; and as I bid my readers farewell, I wish, like honest Izaak Walton, that the blessing of St. Peter's Master may rest upon them now, and remain with them throughout eternity.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

- Page 9, line 11, for "their" read "there."
34, line 10, for "consolatory," read "consolatory."
44, line 7 from bottom, for "particularity" read "particularly."
56, line 11, for "too" read "two."
65, line 11, for "died" read "dyed."
95, line 9 from bottom, for "inpracticable" read "impracticable."
82, top line, for "least rate" read "at least."
127, line 7 from bottom, for "deseperate" read "desperate."
143, line 3, for "was" read "is."
156, line 13, for "left" read "let."

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