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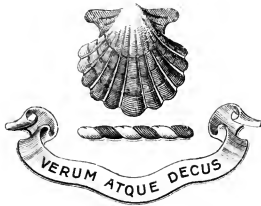


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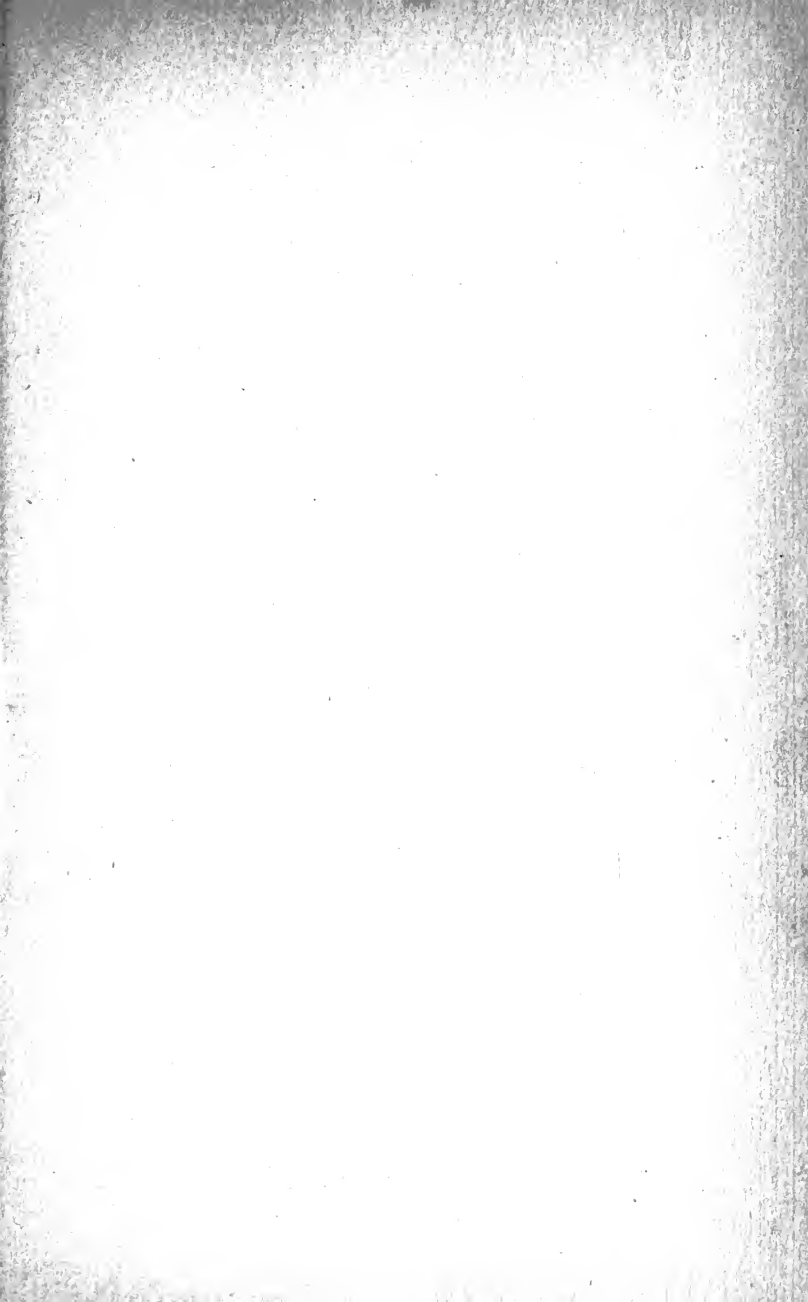
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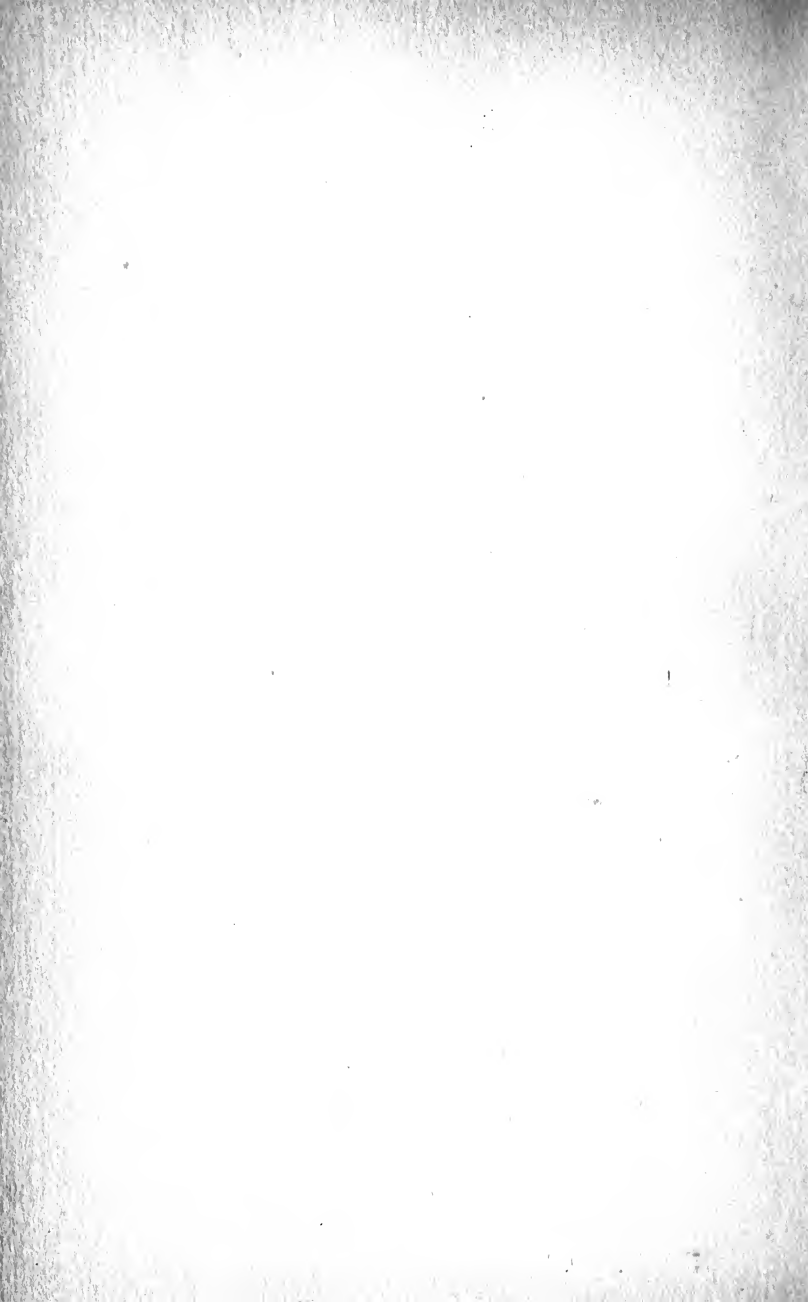
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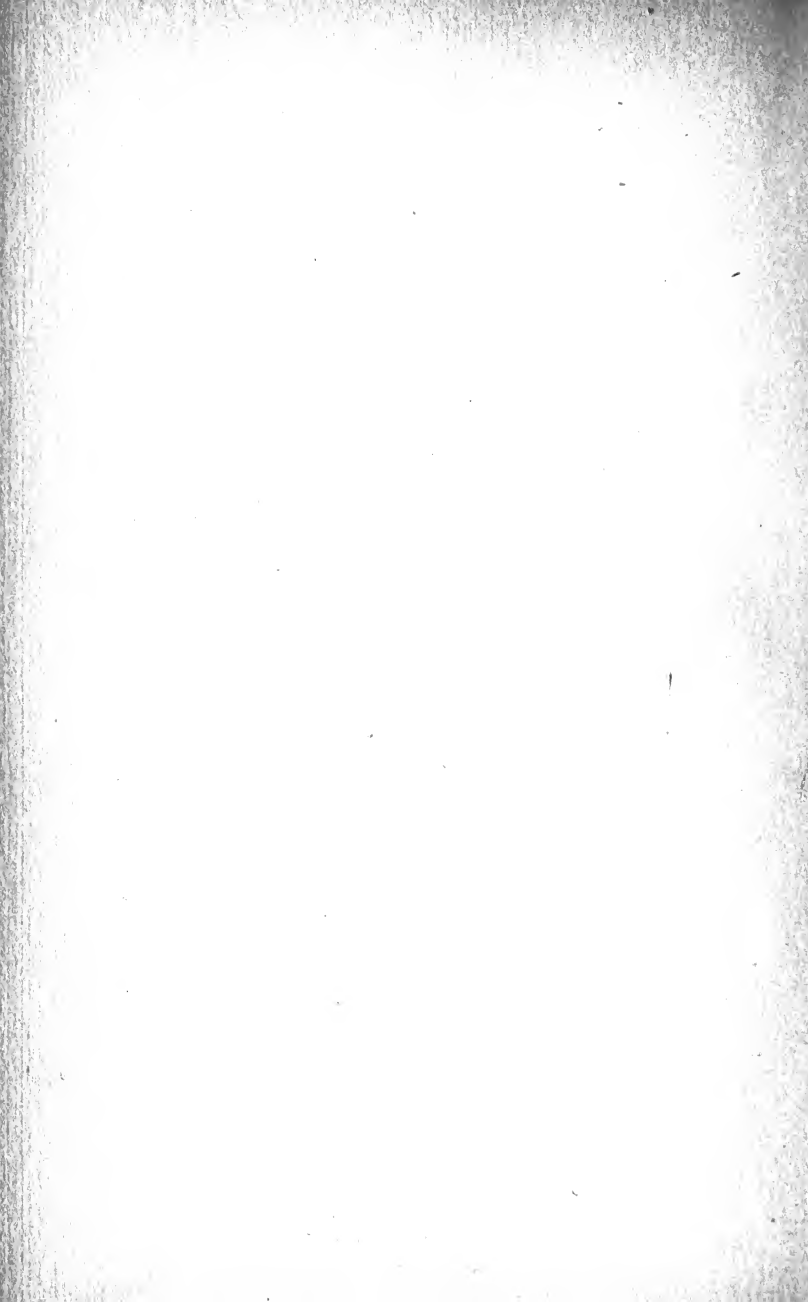
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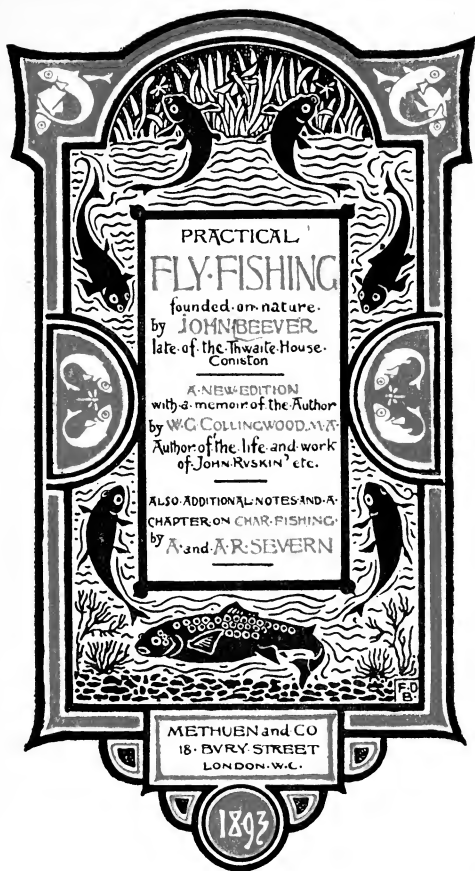
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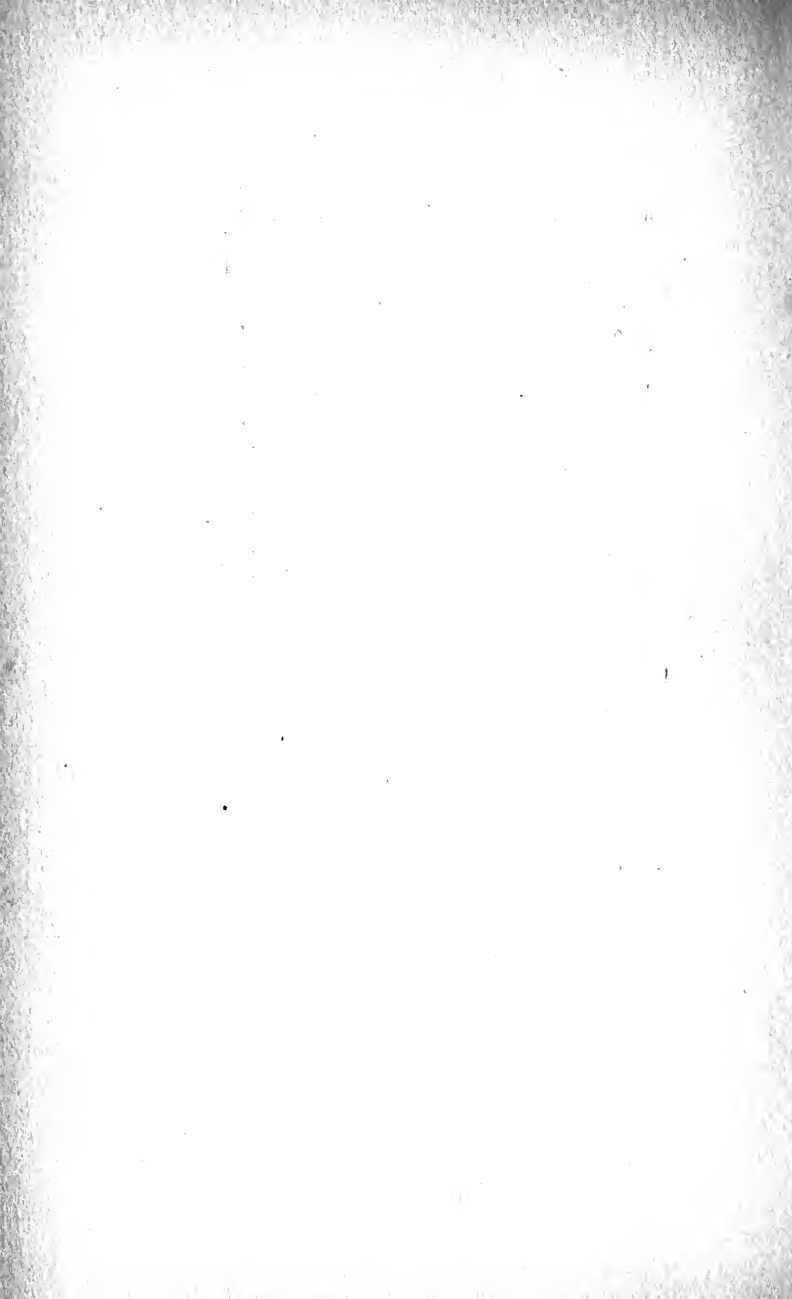




PRACTICAL FLY FISHING







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MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR

THIS little book has long been a favourite with those who happen to own copies, somewhat rare, of the original edition. They say there is nothing like it; and, now that the prospects of anglers in the Lake District are improving, *Practical Fly-fishing* ought to be within the reach of every amateur. At their instance accordingly it is reprinted; and at the desire of the surviving member of the Author's family, his name, still honourably recollected by many, is exchanged on the title-page for the modest *nom-de-plume* of 'Arundo,' a reed of the river.

John Beever was born nearly a hundred years ago; the elder son of Mr. William Beever, a Manchester merchant. In the earlier years of this century the family lived in an old mansion, since inhabited by Mr. J. R. Wilkinson, the well-known banker and art-patron, at the Polygon, Ardwick, then—hard as it is to believe it

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—a rural suburb. On Mr. Beever's retirement from business they removed to Birdsgrove, near Ashbourne by the Dove, in Derbyshire; and in 1827 they settled finally at the Thwaite House, Coniston, which has ever since been known, and widely known, by their name.

Four years later Mr. W. Beever died. His wife had died when the children were quite young. A second son, Henry, was settled in Manchester, practising as a lawyer; but the rest remained for many years together,—Miss Anne, a year older than John, and her sisters, Mary, Margaret and Susanna. They lived a simple country life, spending much of their strength in the service of their village neighbours, secure in the affection of a close circle of friends, and contented with 'the harvest of a quiet eye.'

Several of the sisters became authorities on the botany of the district. Baxter in his *British Flowering Plants*, speaking of a rare species of Pearlwort, says: 'The specimen of this curious and interesting little plant, from which the accompanying drawing was made, was communicated to me by Miss Susan Beever. To the kindness of this young lady, and that of her sister, Miss Mary Beever, I am indebted for the four plants figured in this number.'

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And in the latest *Flora of the English Lake District*, by Mr. J. G. Baker, F.R.S. (1885), the name of 'Miss Beever' occurs again and again. Under their care the garden of the Thwaite has become famous not only for its flowers,—for its rarities domesticated among old cottage-favourites, ideally picturesque,—but for other and more widely interesting associations. Admirers of Mr. Ruskin who have read the collection of his letters to these two ladies, published under the title of *Hortus Inclusus*, knew something of their love for bird and beast, and sympathies extended to human creatures, far beyond the limits of their 'garden enclosed.'¹

Mr. John Beever, like his sisters, was a close student of natural history. He was an ardent sportsman and fisherman; but he was something more, — a diligent and affectionate observer, reflective, ingenious, logical. He attributes his first lessons in this school to a humble but very efficient teacher, 'Frank, the Matlock chaise-driver,' who, in Derbyshire days—it must have been about 1810—showed him then a lad in his 'teens, the grand secret of an art that seemed almost like magic.

¹ See also the Rev. W. Tuckwell's *Tongues in Trees and Sermons in Stones* (George Allen), for illustrations of the Thwaite and its garden.

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It was at the pool below Cromford Bridge that this initiation took place, which made young John Beever a successful angler, and enabled him in the end to write *Practical Fly-fishing*. From the same place, still as lovely as in those ancient days, even though its repose has been broken in upon by the main line of the Midland Railway, the Rector of Cromford, the Rev. W. H. Arkwright, kindly sends the following extracts from private letters, giving some gossip about this same Frank, in whom any reader of his pupil's book can hardly fail to be interested. Mr. James Arkwright of Cromford writes (Nov. 15, 1892): 'Old Frank Ogden, about whom you inquire, was a great friend of mine from fifty to sixty years since. I learnt a good deal from him of the gentle art or 'contemplative man's amusement.' I got my flies from him, and sat watching him making them, which was his occupation in his latter days. At one time Frank was my father's huntsman, when he kept harriers, which was before my time, though I can just remember the kennels in front of the Rock House Lodge. 'Old Frank' was afterwards coachman to my father, and I think at one time was a post-boy, probably before he lived with my father. A son of Frank was a distinguished fly-maker, and

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had a fishing-tackle shop at Cheltenham ; and there are descendants of the name at Matlock Bath now. Frank was a little man, very clever with his rod and line, which he always used *short*, *i.e.* he never attempted to throw far, saying the sides of the stream were the most *likely*; though I think he enticed the fish from some distance off. For some time he was confined to the house at the top of the hill above Guildroy at Matlock Bath, having injured his knee by a fall on slippery stones when fishing. He never *waded*, or went into the water. His flies were very small; principally *duns*, no bright colours. I do not remember that he fished up stream, or threw a dry fly as is now done. I remember well Frank's long thumb-nails, which enabled him to dress his flies so neatly.'

Mr. Greenhough of Matlock adds: 'He was great-grandfather to the present young Ogdens at the shops, who now have instructions and flies made by him. He was evidently a local character, noted for his fishing, and going about dressed up in a superior way. He probably drove carriages at one time, but seems to have had no regular occupation, and lived an easy life. Both Job Walker and old Mrs. Radfirth remember him, and repeated to me the

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lines made on him by some local 'poet' of the day:—

'Franky fine with his rod and line,
Never shall true-hearted miners join.'

'*Fine* is an allusion to his fine clothes. The explanation of the last line is a trial that took place about the ownership of some lead ore, and Frank gave evidence that did not suit the miners.'

This unpopularity, no doubt, explains why Mr. Beaver went out of his way, as it seems, to defend his first teacher: 'Always true to his colours, and one of Nature's gentlemen.'

Frank's grand secret was simply the principle to 'Rule by obeying Nature's laws': to watch the real flies upon which the fish were feeding, and to imitate them, without regard to common usage and the rules of theorists. But it needed a born artist to do that,—with a keen eye, a neat hand, and a good share of brains. Mr. Beaver was an apt pupil, and carried out the principle with success during forty years' experience, in frequent visits to Scotland, to Wales and abroad, as well as in constant practice over the more familiar waters of the Lakes and Derbyshire. Such an interest in fishing led to a keen interest in fish, and he spared no pains

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to make himself acquainted with their growth and habits.

Behind the Thwaite House Mr. Beever made a big pond by damming a little rivulet which flows down from the Guards Wood; and he stocked his pond with fish of various kinds. Once a year he caught each member of his water-colony, and examined it to see how it was grown. It was for his use that the picturesque Gothic boat-house, which every visitor knows as the station of the steam-gondola, was built by Mr. Binns, the former landlord of the Thwaite, before Mr. James Garth Marshall added it to his property at Monk Coniston.

The fishing-rod, described in the book, was the result of long experiment and much painstaking. It was made about 1837, just in the way our author recommends—by a ‘clever joiner, and a young one,’—Mr. William Bell, of Hawes Bank, Coniston, then a youth of seventeen. He used to see a great deal of Mr. Beever, and has a lively recollection of him in several capacities—as a fisherman, as a very good shot, in those earlier days; on one occasion bringing down twenty-two snipe at twenty-one shots; and an ingenious mechanician. The pond behind the house served not only as a fish-tank but as a reservoir for a water-

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wheel. As they kept no horses, only a donkey, the coach-house stood empty, and was used as a workshop; the water-wheel was built below, and drove a lathe in the loft. There Mr. Beever occupied himself when he was kept indoors, as any one must be for a great part of the time in rainy Coniston; and he used to turn all sorts of pretty and curious articles, to carve—long before the days when wood-carving came into fashion—and to make elaborate inlaid mosaic of ingenious design. In most of these works he employed the young joiner as an assistant; got him also to make the printing-press, still standing there, at which Mr. Beever used to print the little books written by Miss Susanna. But the chief object of this industry was to provide the texts and tickets for the Sunday-school, in which he was an earnest worker, like his sisters.

He was very fond of children, and beloved by them. Miss M. H. Beever, his cousin, says that to her and her sister, who came to spend happy holidays at the Thwaite, he was a delightful companion, and the most wonderful storyteller in the world. In his Coniston Nights' Entertainments they all figured under fancy names, and the stories went on day after day, and week after week, as inexhaustible as the

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sequels of Scheherazade. He was a man of quaint imagination and humour ; indeed all the family have been noted for originality of character ; all were interestingly peculiar, and each in a different way.

Such was the author of this little book, his only literary venture ; hardly, indeed, a literary work, but the results of a ripe experience noted down without affectation or ambition of style or system. It appealed of course only to the few ; but forty years more have amply ratified the teaching he founded on forty years' practice. Since his time there have been great changes, both in the opportunities for angling and the methods ; and yet Time is bringing about its revenges. The lake that he loved became gradually depopulated of fish—they say, owing to turbid or poisonous matter washed into it by the stream from the copper-mines. Now at last the copper-mines have almost ceased working, and the waters of Coniston Lake have become pure again. An Angling Association has been formed, and is working with energy to re-stock the lake and the tarns in its neighbourhood with trout, and the famous native char, re-imported from Windermere, or bred in their pond near Coniston Hall. And as the Fishery Conservators are taking similar steps in all the

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surrounding districts, it is hoped that angling will again become what it was in old days in the North of England.

To bring Mr. Beever's work up to date, a few notes have been all that seemed necessary, and they are kept together in the Appendix, in order to leave the original paragraphs untouched. The contributors of the notes, Messrs. Arthur Severn, junior, and Agnew Ruskin Severn, of Brantwood, Coniston, are, as all their neighbours know, experts with the rod, and fully acquainted with the fishing of their own country. It would be far beyond the scope of this work to add detailed instructions adapted to other centres, or to discuss the value of Mr. Beever's paragraphs, in various matters upon which opinions differ. For example, many readers may feel that he lays too much stress on the advantages of making your own rod; and that modern improvements have superseded the clever joiner and his plane. To most amateurs, certainly, who only fish a little, it is not worth the trouble. But the other day, talking over this question with a professional authority, Mr. Hully, the watcher for the conservators of the district—he had come, by the way, with a hundred full-grown char to add to the stock of our lake—I was interested to find him a staunch

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believer in the home-made rod. As to new flies and fancy flies, I imagine Mr. Beever would say to any reader of his: 'I put before you my principles, and give you my experience. If you can improve upon either, do so by all means!'

He outlived the date of his preface just ten years and ten days. His last seven years were, unhappily, clouded by illness, and the result of an unsuccessful operation which affected the brain; so that, even before his time, our 'Arundo' was cut down, and his friends had indeed to

'Sigh for the cost and pain,—
For the reed which grows nevermore again
As a reed with the reeds in the river.'

He died on the 10th of January 1859, aged sixty-four. As a parishioner of Hawkshead, he was buried at the picturesque church, which Wordsworth's reminiscences of his own school-days have made famous. The tourist who makes a hurried ascent, while his coach stops at the Red Lion, to this place of modern pilgrimage, will find the family tomb of the Beevers hard by the old sundial, on the north side of the church, where all the greater mountains are full in view, and the quaint old town

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seems at his feet. Many tender associations haunt the ground, but no stone in the church-yard bears a name more worthy to be read with affection and respect.

Three younger sisters survived Mr. Beever, Miss Anne having died in 1858, and Mr. Henry in 1840. Of the survivors, Miss Susanna is now left alone to represent a family connected for so many years with Coniston—'at once sources and loadstones of all good to the village in which they had their home, and to all loving people who cared for the village and its vale and secluded lake, and whatever remained in them or around of the former peace, beauty, and pride of English Shepherd Land.'¹

W. G. C.

CONISTON,
New Year 1893.

¹ Ruskin : Preface to *Hortus Inclusus*.

PRACTICAL FLY-FISHING

FOUNDED ON NATURE

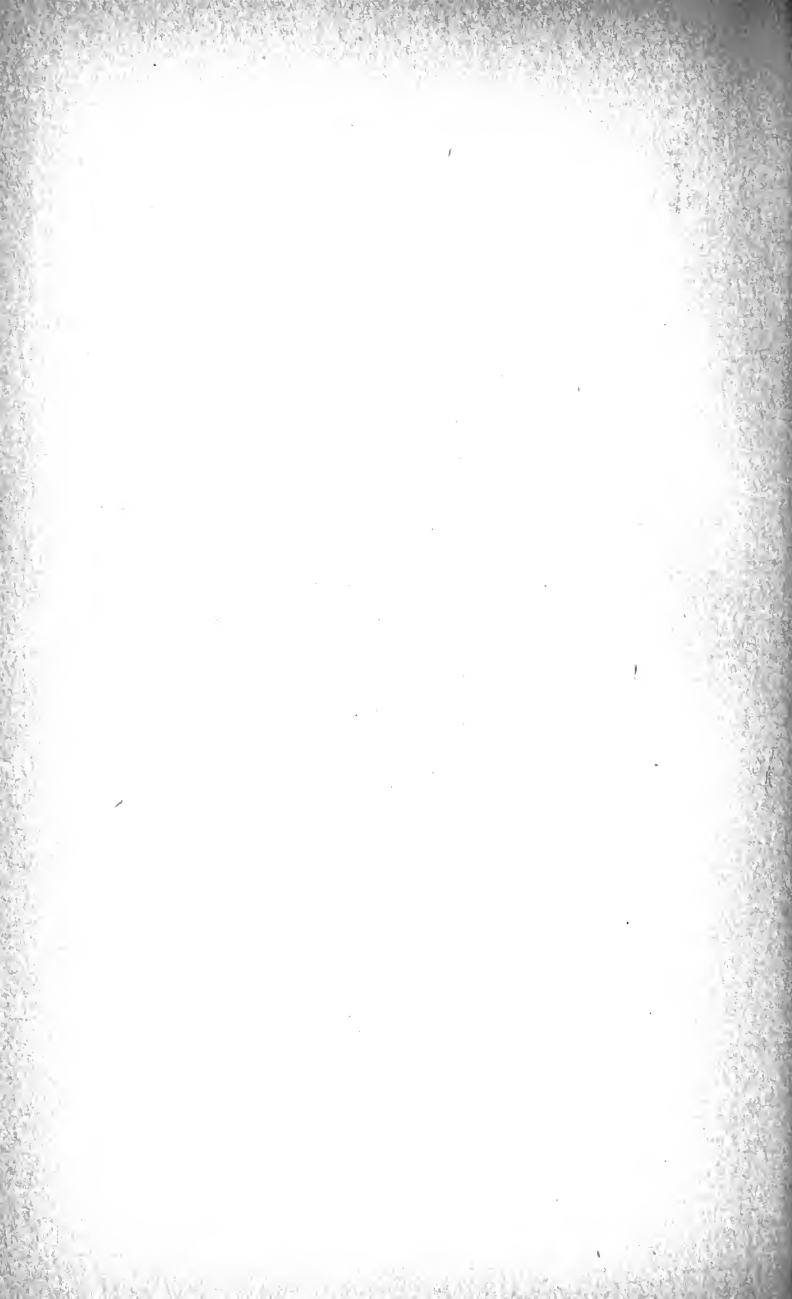
AND TESTED BY THE EXPERIENCE
OF NEARLY FORTY YEARS IN VARIOUS
PARTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

WITH INSTRUCTIONS

FOR IMITATING ALL THE MOST
USEFUL FLIES: ALSO

REMARKS ON FLY-RODS

THE BEST WOODS FOR THEM AND
THE BEST WAY OF MAKING
THEM: ETC., ETC.



INTRODUCTION

WRITERS on Trout-fishing, who are ignorant of the Nature and Habits of aquatic Insects, are apt to give instructions for the making of flies which are so utterly unlike anything in Nature, that it would puzzle any one to discover what they were intended to represent.

The Author of the following pages has endeavoured to describe, as distinctly and accurately as he possibly could, such flies as are found to be generally useful in angling for Trout and Grayling. His aim has been to seize their colour, size, and character. The following anecdote will show the importance of a close imitation of the natural fly.

Long ago, a few young Professors had fished down the lowest part of the Derbyshire Wye, to its junction with the Derwent; and also a short portion of the latter river. They had been unsuccessful, for the water was low, and fine, and their skill was not very great. However, they had succeeded in persuading each other that fish were not to be caught *that day* by any one; they were lounging upon the bridge at Rowsley, when one of them exclaimed, 'Now we shall have some *fun*, here

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comes a fisher! we'll send him to those fish that are rising in the pool below, that we have been throwing at so long.' The man looked like a mechanic, or weaver; he was plainly dressed, and seemed very poor; but his countenance was cheerful and intelligent. His rod was of hazel,—a top and a butt,—tied together with a waxed end; his line of about five yards long, with four more of single hair, was tied to a loop at the end of his rod, and was *there* so thick as to seem almost a continuation of it (being well adapted for the wood-encumbered Derwent). He had neither reel, nor rings, nor varnish. 'Master,' said one of the Gentlemen, 'you may have some rare sport; here are half a dozen good Trout and Grayling rising in this pool.' The man seemed glad to hear this, for he had been angling some time; had ascertained what insects the fish were feeding upon, and having made himself a set of flies upon the river's bank, had about half filled a small woodland pannier, which hung at his shoulder. He went down to the rough stream at the foot of the pool, and unwinding the line from his left hand, made a few throws to soak and straighten it. He then proceeded to the fish, as the Gentlemen pointed them out to him, and after being successful in taking them all, he looked up rather archly, and said, 'Gentlemen, can you show me any more?'

CONISTON LAKE, *January 1, 1849.*

ARTIFICIAL FLIES

PERHAPS many of the flies mentioned in this book may be different from those which the reader has been accustomed to fish with, or made in a different way. But let it be remembered, that of all insects there are two kinds, male and female, often very different both in size and colour, and perhaps in some cases I may have described the one, and in some the other; however, they are all painted from nature, and I hope faithfully.

If you have a choice, it is always best to imitate the female fly, as she is larger, and, with her eggs, makes a more tempting morsel. In many kinds, the male, having performed his office, leaves the water and wanders away; sometimes I have even seen him in the midst of large towns; but the female always returns to the water to deposit her eggs and to die. I am speaking now of aquatic flies, which form a large proportion of those imitated by the angler.

The great majority of fishers have no confidence in their own flies, when off their usual beat. Perhaps they travel four or five hundred miles to a river, and see upon the water half a

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dozen kinds of flies, the very counterparts of those seen near home at the same time of year. Instead of beginning to fish with confidence, how do they act? They send for some tailor, cobbler, or superannuated keeper, who tells them that they have not in their whole stock a fly worth a bawbee.

What are they to do?—*He* can sell them some *which will kill*. The fisher generally falls into this trap.

A gentleman who was at Selkirk in the spring of 1823, inquired for a guide to St. Mary's Loch. He was referred to John Redhead, a Northumbrian, who lived in the town, made rods, lines, and flies; fished,—sold his fish, and found it hard work, by his own account, to scrape up a living amongst the Scotch.

They fished their way up the beautiful streams of the pastoral Yarrow, and were hospitably entertained for the night at 'Mount Benger,' the house of Mr. Scott 'the Elder.' After breakfast the next morning they went to St. Mary's Loch. They angled for three or four hours in vain, having each taken only one small fish. They repaired to the deserted burial-ground of the Covenanters, on the hill, to make a fisherman's meal; which, though homely, is generally accompanied by an excellent appetite. A good stone bridge was seen in the distance. The following discourse ensued—

Gentleman. What bridge is that?

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Redhead. Over the Meggat.

Gent. What is the Meggat?

Redh. The main feeder of the Loch.

Gent. Let us go there.

It was a fine afternoon in the month of June; the water was full, the fish were rising at the Middle-dun; the creels were nearly filled, when the Middle-dun ceased to come down the water, and not a fish could be stirred.

Gentleman, sitting down upon a large stone, —I shall try a 'Grouse.'

Redh. You need not, Sir.

Gent. Why not? It's the best fly now.

Redh. It's no use, Sir.

Gent. I'll try one, however.

Redh. I've often seen *English Gentlemen* try them, and catch *nothing*.

Gent. Here they are, ready dressed, and I mean to give one a chance; we cannot well be worse than we are.

Redh. It *may do* in England, but I tell you it's no use here; you might as well throw your *hat* into the water.

Gent. May I not please myself?

No answer.

The Gentleman stepped on the gravel-bed, —threw his line,—drew out a nice fish, and taking it off the hook, said very quietly,—'Grouse!'

He took another,—'Grouse!'

He took fourteen more; making sixteen fish in succession, all with the 'Grouse,' although he had other flies on his line; and as each fish

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was unhooked, he pronounced the monosyllable 'Grouse!' Redhead now approached, his hand at his bonnet, and said, 'Sir, will you please to give me one of *those flies*?'

The Gentleman gave him two.

HINTS ON FLY-FISHING

'FISH fine and far off,' say the books ; fine as you please, but never far off, when you can help it. Not that you are to place yourself immediately above the fish, with a short line, but get below them, or, at any rate, abreast of them. Nineteen out of every twenty fish, taken by the fly, are killed with a line under ten yards long from the top of the rod. Whilst the fisher is straining nerves and tackle, and cracking off his flies, to reach a fish in a broad part of a river, let him remember that other fish are rising at the same time in narrower places, which he can cover with ease. It is of no use throwing more line than he can *swim* when it *is* thrown ; and this *swimming* of the artificial-fly is beyond my power to explain, as it partakes of the nature of *Genius*. Some acquire it, in a degree, very early, whilst others would plod for a hundred years, without ever dreaming that such a thing was requisite. Give a fiddler, who knows how to play, Paganini's violin and bow—will that make *him* a Paganini ?

A fact or two will better illustrate my meaning. Two Gentlemen went out together, in Derbyshire, for a few hours' fishing ; they used

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the same flies ; both were attentive and diligent. After the lapse of a few hours one of them had eighteen pounds, the other not more than four.

Two anglers got permission for a day's fishing, and the use of a boat, on a lake in Wales. One of them made a few flies for their joint use. The one, at the end of the day's sport, had forty-eight Trout, weighing twenty-four pounds ; the other had not three pounds.

Let no learner despair, or think to himself, *I shall never be a fly-fisher ; I shall never return home with a basket full of fish. Depend upon it, you will.* Industry, neatness, and perseverance, will do anything. I had just your ideas when a youth. I was standing on the margin of that broad and beautiful pool, below the bridge at Cromford ; the flies were on the water ; the fish were rising ; but I could take nothing.

A brisk and cheerful little man jumped over the wall, and came to me in his shirt sleeves, with a fly-rod in his hand. It was *Frank*, the chaise-driver of Matlock, one of the nicest and best fishers in England—*always true to his colours.* And what was far better, one of Nature's gentlemen. I showed him the fish I had been throwing at, and *he took them.* Then he showed me his flies, and kindly told me what they were, and pointed out their resemblance to those which I had seen upon the water.

I followed him for some time, to watch him fish, and to ask from him such information as occurrences suggested, which he kindly gave me ; and I have never desponded since.

A LIST OF
THE MOST USEFUL NATURAL FLIES
WITH THEIR IMITATIONS

THE SPRING BLACK

THIS is the first Black of the season, on most running waters; appears about the latter end of March, and is *good* until about the middle of May, when the Black Caterpillars and Black Gnat take its place.

The hook is No. 1; the wing from the quill of the Swift; body, silk, the colour of Lundy Foote's snuff, with a bit of fine black Ostrich's herl laid on like a screw, to show the silk underneath; and a small hen's hackle,¹ of a sooty black, for legs.

About four-and-twenty years ago, a friend and myself were fishing, in the middle of April, in the Slate-Quarry Dub, on Tweed, a little below Elibank Wood. We had come, in a chaise, from Selkirk (eight or nine miles) that

¹ *Cock's Hackles*.—The hackles of game fowls are preferable to those of any other breed, being narrow and well tapered. The hackles of well bred bantams are also very good for small flies.

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morning. For about an hour all was still, until a shoal of Spring Blacks came upon the water. Every fish seemed in pursuit of them. I had three of them dressed in my book, and immediately put two of them on my line, one at the point, and one next me. The colour was so *true*, and so many fish were feeding within reach, that I had only to select the best fish. This feed only lasted forty minutes ; and, in that time, I got six pounds and a half, taking two at once six times. Unfortunately, my friend, who had the opposite side of the river, had no Spring Blacks, and could not touch a fish. I tied up my remaining fly in a piece of paper, with a pebble for ballast, and threw it across to him. At the first throw he hooked a Trout, which took his fly from him, as he had neglected to tie the knot securely. During the whole of the feed, though a skilful and industrious fisher, he only got two fish ; for so very particular were the fish that day, as they sometimes are, but they would have nothing but the Spring Black. This fly may often be seen in great numbers in the cold afternoons of spring, upon fresh horse-dung.

THE MARCH BROWN.

Dun Drake, Brown Drake, Turkey Fly. This is a fine handsome insect, and is out during the whole of April, and part of May. On sunny mornings it springs early, and is often very numerous. It is the first of the large flies

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which attract the notice of good fish. A party of gentlemen, who made Selkirk their headquarters for about a month, many years ago, took a great quantity of fish with this fly in Tweed, Ettrick, Yarrow, St. Mary's, and Meggat. They made it in many ways; the following was esteemed the best. Hook 2 or 3; wing from the tail of a hen Pheasant, or the quill of a Partridge; hackle dappled, or cuckoo-coloured (prevailing colours, light-blue dun and tawny yellow). Silk, generally primrose, but sometimes chocolate.

On the Dove, it is called the Turkey-fly, and winged from the quill of a Turkey-hen, or Turkey-poult, and hackled with a light, meally dun cock's or hen's hackle.

THE LESSER MARCH BROWN.

This fly is not much more than half the size of the last. It is generally made as a hackle, with a feather taken from the back of the cock Partridge, in November or December, which is then beautifully and regularly speckled. Hook 1 or 2; silk mahogany colour; and a little coarse claret-coloured dubbing, of mohair.

THE GRANAM OR GREEN-TAIL

is an early fly, generally seen the first warm days of April, and is very fond of sunshine. Sometimes it is so numerous that the water appears as if a quantity of chaff had been

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thrown out by a miller. Old anglers are not generally much pleased to see it; for the number and liveliness of the natural flies render *their* chance small, and also enable the fish so to glut themselves, as to require little more insect food that day. It is like many other insects, very variable in its appearance. In some years scarcely any are seen. It is a flat fly with four wings, and flutters very much upon the water, perhaps, from an instinct of the female to deposit her eggs, which hang in a large green bunch at the end of her body; and from which, doubtless the name of the fly originated. Hook No. 2; wing or hackle from a feather which grows on the bone underneath the Woodcock's wing, and is of a lead colour, barred with white; silk, of a grass or ivy-green colour. About half the body should be made with fur from a hare's face, leaving the remainder of it bare to show the green silk.

THE SPRING DUN,

The Middle Dun, the Dun Cut, the Yellow Dun, the Dotterel Dun, the Honey Dun, the Brown Dun. These names, and many more, are, in various parts of the country, applied to an ephemera, which appears in most, if not all, of the Trout waters of these kingdoms, throughout the whole season, although in greater numbers during spring and autumn than at other times. It is also rather larger at those periods than in the summer months.

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Like other ephemerae, it is an afternoon or evening fly. Various as are the names by which it is known amongst anglers, the *ways* of imitating it are far more so. It is winged or hackled, in different parts of the country, in many different ways. In Scotland, the underwing of the Moorpoult, the wing of the Sparrow, the Skylark, and the Bunting, are used : for the North of England, the Snipe, the Dotterel, and the Golden Plover are preferred : in the Peak of Derbyshire, cock's and hen's hackles are much employed : in the South of England they use the wing of the Starling ; a feather from the bastard-wing of the wild Mallard is sometimes made use of. Having tried these and several others, without the success which an imitation of such a well-known fly ought to command, my next attempt was with the wing of the *young* Starling, before it attains the adult plumage. It is a beautifully blended tint of blue, brown, and yellow.

I tried it in conjunction with a hen's hackle of the same colour (not easily met with), and a mixed body of a primrose and dandelion-coloured silk, and have never made it any other way since. So very often has excellent sport been had with this fly, in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, that it is needless to mention any particular locality. It will always be in fashion whilst the world lasts and streams run. The hook for this fly is 1, 2, or 3, according to the water.

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THE RUDDY FLY,

The Marlo Buzz, the Furnace, Coch a Bondu. The Ruddy is a beetle, chiefly a fly for spring and summer; and most useful as an afternoon or evening fly. The upper wings are of a colour redder than cinnamon, and much brighter, and the under wings are black. Under different names it is a great favourite on most Trout streams. Hook 2; silk, bright red, between scarlet and crimson; hackle from a ruddy cock; the body, black ostrich's herl, rather full.

I once (early in May) saw a person hook three very nice Trout at once; (he was fishing three Ruddys); he landed two of them, and lost the third.

THE COWDUNG FLY.

A good fly, particularly for cold, windy days. Hook 2; wing, a yellowish brown feather from the bastard-wing of the female Woodcock; silk, orange; dubbing, a mixture of orange and red mohair, with a few hairs from a hare's face.

THE DARK-BLUE DUN, OR MERLIN.

This fly is excellent on dark, cold, and stormy days, throughout the season. It is one of the ephemera, or upright wing flies, and is generally made with a dark blue cock's or hen's hackle, and lead-coloured silk. The following way of making it is original, and has been very successful during a long trial. Hook 2;

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wing from the dark-blue part of the quill of the male Merlin Hawk ; hackle from the grey part of a Jackdaw's neck ; silk, dark lead, with a little Mole's fur for dubbing, very sparingly introduced.

One day, long ago, in the middle of June, being in the neighbourhood of Ashburn, I took my rod, and walked (about four miles) to Dove-dale. The day was dark and foggy, with a gentle rain, which was just sufficient to give the river a faint milky tinge without muddying it.

This was one of the best days I ever saw for fish feeding upon the fly, as they were rising greedily when I arrived at the water, about eleven o'clock in the morning, and I left them feeding at three in the afternoon. This was a great day for the Merlin. After angling for about an hour, I saw the gamekeeper approaching : he asked about the fish, and I told him that they were doing pretty well, and whilst we were talking, I noticed several very nice Trout and Grayling feeding not far from where we stood. At last, the keeper wished me good sport, and left me. I soon took most of the fish that I had *marked* whilst conversing with him, and then my basket was full. Fortunately, I had a large hare-pocket in my jacket, and I loaded one end of it, until it became very uncomfortable, when I began to fill the other end, and soon brought matters to a balance. I believe I had eight-and-thirty fine fish, and nearly all of them were taken with the Merlin.

I once met with an old Friend who was going

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off to a distance to fish fly. I gave him two small feathers of the Merlin Hawk, which I happened to have in my pocket-book. When I next saw him, some time afterwards, he told me that he had made two flies with the feathers which I gave him; and that he had caught fifty-six Trouts with them, having carefully re-made and repaired them several times, until they were quite worn out.

THE BLACK CATERPILLARS.

There are two flies of this name, the little one and the large one. The latter is too large for stream fishing, except in very rough weather. The little Black Caterpillar appears about the tenth of May, and when out, may always be found on the hawthorn. It may easily be known by some of its legs hanging down when flying, in a peculiar way, as if one or two of them were broken. Hook 1; wing from a Starling's quill; silk, dark lead colour; a turn or two of black Ostrich's herl under the wings. The large Black Caterpillar is made in a similar way, on a 3 or 4 hook, and is an excellent fly for Lake or Tarn fishing.

A few years ago, a large flight of insects came out in the neighbourhood of Coniston, of a kind which I have never noticed before or since. They were, in every respect but one, quite similar in size and appearance to the Black Caterpillar. The whole of their legs and thighs were a deep rich claret colour, whilst in the

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caterpillar they resemble black sealing-wax. In the time of their appearance also there was a difference, as this flight came in September. It was difficult to walk in the lanes without treading upon some of them : they were all over the lake, and upon the hedges, fields, and fells ; in fact, they appeared to be everywhere, and remained about a fortnight.

THE BLACK-HEADED RED.

This is a beetle or Lady-bird, made as a hackle, in two ways. First, with a cock's hackle, of which about one half is red and the other black ; second, with a deep red hackle, having a black stripe up the middle of it, Hook 1 or 2 ; silk, dark orange, or red. This fly is good all the season, especially when the water is resuming its natural size and colour after a flood.

THE LITTLE CHAP.

A small beetle, good from April to October, on sunny days, and an especial favourite with the Grayling. Hook 0 or 1. It is hackled with a Peewit's topping, or a very small sooty-black hackle of cock or hen. The body is short, of Peacock's herl ; silk, dark lead or very dark brown. In July, orange silk is very good, made to show a turn or two of silk below the Peacock. A very dark-blue dun hackle may sometimes be substituted with advantage.

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THE BLACK GNAT.

The Black Gnat is generally first seen early in May, and sometimes congregates in flocks of hundreds if not of thousands. If nicely made, and finely fished, a well-filled basket is often the result. I have found it to answer best as a hackle. Hook 0 or 00; feather from the bastard-wing of the Swift, or small hackle from a very dark brown (nearly black) hen's neck: silk, the colour of Irish snuff; a very fine piece of black Ostrich's herl put on open like a screw to show the silk.

THE ORANGE DUN.

The Orange Dun may be looked for about the middle of May, and lasts to the end of October. There are several distinct ephemerae known by this general name, of which the three following will be found the most useful to the angler. 1st. The Dark Orange Dun; hook, 0, 1, 2; wing from the Merlin Hawk's wing; silk, deep orange; hackle from a dark-blue cock or hen's hackle; no dubbing. 2nd. Orange Dun; hook 0, 1, 2; wing from the Starling's quill; hackle from dun cock or hen; silk, orange. 3rd. Light Orange Dun; hook 0, 1, 2; wing from a light-coloured Sea-gull or Sea-swallow; hackle, very light-blue dun; silk, tawny or faded orange. All these flies may be made as hackles, by feathers of their various shades, which are often to be found on the

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backs of half-grown chickens. Pigeon or Cuckoo feathers do not wet well.

The Dun flies, especially the Orange, and the Blue, and middle Duns, are great favourites on limestone waters, particularly the clear streams of the Peak of Derbyshire, where coarse tackle and slovenly imitations *will not do*.

THE GROUSE.

This is a beetle, and is excellent from the middle of May to the middle of July in all waters. Hook 1, 2, 3; hackle, a dark mottled feather from the back of the cock moorgame; silk, orange; body, Peacock's herl of a copper colour.¹

THE IRON BLUE.

This is one of the ephemerae, appears in May and June on cold days, and generally in great numbers. It is a very small fly, and is usually made with wings from the Tomtit's tail or Jackdaw's ruff. The Merlin's wing makes it best. Hook 0; silk, dark lead colour; body, a little Mole's fur. It is called the Iron Blue, I believe, from the resemblance of the colour of its wings to that of tempered steel.

THE GREEN WOODCOCK.

A decided evening fly, and best from the middle of May to the middle of July. It

¹ [Note by A. and A. R. Severn.—A green or yellow body takes very well from the middle of May until the end of June.]

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should never be seen upon the line until after six o'clock. In the almost endless days of summer, it will kill after bright hot days, longer than a person can see his flies.

Once, at Midsummer, when on a visit at Birdsgrove, near Ashburn, on the Dove, I determined to try for an extra large Trout, with this fly, in the evening; as I had heard of several very fine fish having been taken by some country night fishers. I made a Green Woodcock on one of the largest Salmon hooks I had, perhaps a 15 or 16 Kendal hook. Not having any gut which I thought strong enough for my purpose, I selected sixteen good strong horse-hairs, to which I dressed my fly, making it very rough. That I might not be diverted from my purpose, I took out with me only this one fly.

The place I had selected, as most likely for my operations, was an extremely rough narrow stream, about half a mile above Hanging Bridge; with an open stone wall, and excellent *holds* on the Derbyshire side of it, and not a likely place for a net to be put into by any one who ever expected to see it come out again whole. I arrived there at dusk, and, beginning at the top of the stream, fished it step by step; when I came to the middle of the stream, where it was still very rough, there was a splash at the fly, as if some one had thrown into the water a large paving-stone, and my line flew over my head. On looking at it, the sixteen hairs were *staring* in all directions, but the fly

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was gone. I have seen many a large Salmon rise, but never any with such a plunge as that ; and there was no struggle, but a clear cut. I can only conclude that an Otter had mistaken my large fly, in the rough stream, and in the twilight, for a small fish.

Hook for the Green Woodcock 1, 2, 3 ; hackle, light-coloured feather of mixed brown, dun, and dirty yellow, from a Woodcock's wing ; silk, ivy or apple-green ; body, hare's ear (dark part).

THE SILK FLY.

This is one of the most delicate and beautiful insects that we have. It is one of the ephemera. The angler may not perhaps meet with it half a dozen times in the course of his life, and if he is not prepared with a few ready-made ones, or materials for making them, he need not expect any sport so long as any of the natural flies remain. It is a very rich bright yellow (brighter on limestone than on gravelly or sandstone streams), the colour that of the dandelion flower, body and wings, and is generally made with a dyed feather. There is a North American Starling with a brilliant yellow breast, which imitates it very well, and few dyed feathers are to be trusted, as if stained with vegetable matter, they are apt to fade ; if with mineral acids, they are sure to be tender. Hook 2 ; hackle bright yellow ; body, floss silk of the same colour.

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THE SAND GNAT OR GRAVEL FLY.

A man may have with him ten thousand good flies, ready dressed, on a good fishing day too, and not meet with much sport.

In the course of many years' fly-fishing, it had not been my fortune to meet with the Sand Gnat, though I had frequently heard it extolled by my seniors: my angling had been much confined to limestone waters, where it does not appear.

It was a fine gray morning, early in June, somewhere about 1825, when I set out in company with a friend from Coldstream, to have a day's fly-fishing in the Bowmont, one of these well-stocked little Trout rivers which rise in the Cheviots, and find their way, by the Till, into the Tweed. We began to fish about eleven o'clock, and as the Trout were feeding pretty steadily, we got on tolerably till about one, when we came to an abrupt turn of the river, with a fine large deep dub; which was quite *alive* with fish. The flies with which I had previously been having fair diversion—the Grouse, the Spring Dun, and the Ruddy, were no longer of any use. I was quite disconcerted, till looking at the sandy gravel in which I stood, I exclaimed, 'It is the Sand Gnat.' There they were by scores, under and about my feet, and a gleam of sun and a light breeze had sent them upon the water. I sat down on the gravel and caught one, and made two imitations, one at each end of a piece of gut. Hook 1; body,

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light-blue silk ; wing, from the brown part of the quill of a Thrush ; legs, a dark sooty-dun hen's hackle. I was soon upon my legs again. I got about twenty fish out of that dub, and raised and hooked many more. It was quite *still* when I left it, and as the fly-feed appeared to be nearly over for that day, I walked away with my friend to Coldstream.

THE BIG DUN

appears about the end of May, or beginning of June ; it is rather a large ephemera, and the fish are fond of it. Hook 2, 3, wing or hackle, Sea-swallow or Sea-gull ; body, yellow camlet and pale blue Rabbit's fur mixed ; silk, primrose colour.

THE BRACKEN CLOCK

is a beetle, bred in light sandy ground, with a south or west aspect. It is very common in Cumberland and Westmoreland, where it is generally called 'The Clock.' It is first seen about the middle of May, and generally lasts about a month. Hook 2, 3 ; wing from a Landrail's wing ; hackle from a red cock ; silk, red ; body, Peacock's herl. When this fly is numerous, there is no good fly-fishing for a month after it is fully out. The fish glut themselves with it, and it soon makes them soft and out of condition.

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THE FLAT YELLOW

is a long, flat four-winged May-fly. Hook 1, 2; hackle, a white cock's or hen's hackle, dyed with the 'Green Drake Dye'; silk, bright yellow; body, a mixture of stained Hare's fur (yellow), which may be got at the hatters, and a little blue Rabbit's, or Water-rat's fur mixed.

THE STONE FLY.

A large flat fly, is generally most seen in the months of May and June. The male and female are very different in appearance. The former has short wings, which are only about half the length of his body, whilst his lady has four large broad flowing ones, an inch long, which give her a very imposing appearance when she comes paddling across the stream. Hook 3; hackle, dark grizzly cock's; body, yellow mohair and Water-rat's fur mixed; silk, light brown.

THE DOWNLOOKER, OR OAK FLY.

A rather large fly, generally seen in or near long grass. It is not, I believe, known where it is bred, certainly not in the oak-apple, as frequently asserted. It has many names, and is beautifully marked and variegated, both in wing, body, and legs, with shades of black, brown, and orange.

It stands upon a tree, rail, or post, with its

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head downwards, whence its name. It appears on breezy, sunny days in May and June. Hook 2 ; hackle, feather from the top of a Woodcock's wing ; body, fur from a Squirrel's cheek ; silk, orange.

THE GREEN DRAKE, OR CADOW.

This is the largest ephemera of Trout fishers, and appears generally about the end of May or the beginning of June, varying about a week as the season is a forward one or otherwise. It continues a fortnight, or more, if the weather be cold. The fish are very partial to it, and it is of little use trying anything else during its stay upon the water, though a few fish may be had with the small flies, in the early part of the day, before the Drake appears, which is often near two o'clock. Many are the ways of imitating this fly. Very large hooks are used for it, often 5 or 6. My own experience has led me to think better of it as a hackle. Hook 2 or 3. A good light-grey feather is got from the side or breast of an old cock Partridge, in December or January. This must be stained by the following mixture :—

DYE FOR THE GREEN DRAKE.—Take a large table-spoonful (heaped) of ground quercitron bark, and put it into a glazed mug, with a small tea-spoonful of pounded alum. The feathers to be dyed must first be well washed with soap and warm soft-water, and slowly dried. Pour about half-a-pint of boiling water upon the mixture of

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bark and alum. Put the feathers in, one by one, and stir them well up with a bit of clean wood. Take out a feather or two—rinse them in cold clear water, and dry them. If the colour is not deep enough, add another spoonful of bark, and a little more hot water, till it is to your mind. The higher coloured ones will be best for the Silk Fly. Put in a few white cock's and hen's hackles at the same time, they will be useful for the Flat Yellow or the Silk Fly. The body for the Green Drake is of wool from the lower part of the abdomen of an old sheep; silk, rather a bright yellow.

THE BLACK DRAKE OR GREY DRAKE.

This is the same fly as the last, only, having lived a few days longer, and cast off some of its superfluous raiment, it has become an old friend with a new face. Hook 2, 3; hackle, a dark grey feather from the side of the Teal Drake; silk, light brown; body, white floss silk. This fly must be kept very clean whilst making it. After a broiling hot day, when the sun sets, this fly is often taken very greedily for half an hour or an hour.

THE ORANGE FLY.

This is an afternoon and evening fly, in the long days of May and June; good for Trout or Grayling, especially the latter. Hook No. 1; wing from the bright buff part of a Thrush's quill. The legs are imitated by a feather of

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a Wren's tail, used as a hackle, the long side of the feather being pulled off. The body is formed of orange silk, with a little fur from the cheek of a Squirrel.

THE BLACK ANT.

This fly is an inhabitant of woods and coppices, and is very abundant in the neighbourhood of the English lakes. The nest is often of enormous size, sometimes containing more than a cart-load of sticks and small twigs. The Vale of Duddon swarms with Wood Ants, and is the only place in which I have seen the Wry-neck, which is said to feed principally on these insects. Like other Ants, they have the enjoyment of wings for a few weeks in each year; and often, as the proverb says, 'to their sorrow,' as by them they are conveyed to places where they suffer greatly from birds, as well as from fishes. They generally make their appearance in August and September. Body, a strand of Peacock's herl, and one of black Ostrich's herl laid on together; silk, dark brown; wing, the lightest part of a Starling's quill; hackle from a black Cock.

THE RED ANT.

This fly is much more generally distributed than the former, and is frequently a very good fly for Trout; and is also much admired by Grayling in the month of September: especially

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in a clearing water after a slight fresh, or in warm, showery weather. Hook 1; body, Peacock's herl; silk, red; hackle from a red Cock; wing, Starling's quill.

THE PALE BLUE, OR WILLOW FLY.

This is a capital fly in September, October, and November. It is often called the Willow Fly, perhaps, from its being most numerous when the early frosts are taking off the leaves of the willows, which overhang the water.

It is a most delicate ephemera, and is equally good for Trout or Grayling. Hook No. 1; wing from the Sea-swallow; silk, pale straw or brimstone colour; hackle, very light pale-blue hen; a little Water-rat's fur for dubbing.

This fly is excellent at Matlock, and also on such parts of the Wye and Dove as are sheltered with wood.

THE SHAMROCK FLY.

This is a large gnat, and is excellent in Grayling streams, particularly in September, October, and November. Hook 1, 2; middle dun or blue dun cock's or hen's hackle; silk, ivy green; dubbing, a little Hare's face.

H O O K S

It may be necessary to say that the hooks mentioned in the foregoing pages are the Kendal ones; numbering from 00 to 16—the double cypher being the smallest Trout, and No. 16 the largest Salmon hook. A hook exceeding No. 6 is rarely used for Trout flies.

These hooks, which are excellent in quality and reasonable in price, are made by Mr. Philip Hutchinson,¹ late partner of, and successor to, the famous Adlington, of Kendal; and I think that they are now made better, and more equal in temper, than I ever remember them to have been.

Mr. Hutchinson is very obliging in making hooks to order, of any kind which the angler thinks more suitable than the regular sorts for any particular purpose. I had a few hundred bright ones, made by him some years ago, and they answered well for fly-fishing on bright sunny days. Of course the size of hook and fly varies with the *water*. For instance, if No. 2 is mentioned, an average water is meant. No. 3 would be the same fly for a high, and No. 1 for a low water.

[¹ Whose successors, Messrs. G. Hutchinson & Co., of 43 Stricklandgate, Kendal, worthily sustain the reputation of the house.]

ON FLY-RODS

A FEW words on rods for fly-fishing. The majority of rods are made, not primarily for fishing, but for portability. When we had only small coaches to squeeze ourselves and our rods into, there was an excuse for this ; but as travelling is now chiefly performed by steam, and as a few feet in the length of a parcel is no objection, either upon the roof of a railway carriage, or the deck of a steamer, it is high time that there should be a radical reform in rod-making. Lengths of five or six feet would rid us of at least half the ferrules, diminish the expense, and greatly increase the efficiency of fly-rods. I may be allowed to observe, that I never saw any kind of rod that would open a line half so well, to say nothing of the lightness and comfort, as a neat, handy, home-made rod, in two or three pieces, without ferrules, made of such materials, and in such a way, as some few amateurs whom I have the pleasure of knowing can make them.

The greater number of fly-rods are also faulty in another respect. The spring is continued too far down. The object of this is to enable a long line to be thrown ; and as the top of the

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rod is unable to do this, the assistance of the middle is called in, and sometimes a portion of the butt. This is a very ancient as well as a very common error—most of the books on Angling recommending that the rod should play down to the *hand*.

Generally speaking, a long line is *not required* in Trout-fishing, except in large rivers, as the Teviot, Tweed, Wharfe, Herefordshire Wye, etc., etc. ; and in cases of this kind, it is much better to have a light two-handed rod of sixteen or seventeen feet, as the character of the fishing is completely changed, and, instead of throwing at *points*, the streams are swept by successive throws, advancing a step between each, not unlike mowing on a gigantic scale. In this kind of fishing, comparatively little skill or judgment is required. In Boat Fishing, a long rod and short line, and also an extra long shaft for the landing-net, are very advantageous, as with an expert *lander* the time and trouble of winding and unwinding the line are spared.

The fly-rod *proper* should have nearly all its play in the one-third part next the top. This arrangement will be found to be attended by several advantages. 1st. The line can be thrown much quicker ; and it is generally desirable to cover a feeding fish as soon as you can. 2nd. It requires less room to turn, amongst wood, or with bushes, or high banks, or rank vegetation behind. 3rd. By the rod not following the line so far, the slack line is got up by the time the flies are well on the water, and the Angler

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is enabled to show his flies in the quiet part of it, *beyond* the stream, and to keep them *there* a little while, without having them dragged away in a forcible and unnatural manner the instant they touch the water, which the natural flies *never* are. 4th. Fish can be better hooked and managed amongst rocks, piles, or weeds, or kept out of dangerous places. And, lastly, if a rod should unfortunately be broken, it will always be in the *thin* part, where a pocket-knife and a little waxed thread, with the loss of a few minutes, will make a temporary repair, sufficient to carry on, through the remainder of the day, without material inconvenience.

ON THE WOODS PROPER FOR FLY-RODS

ALMOST any kind of wood, if not heavy, will make the butt of a fly-rod, but the middle and the top require a brisk wood, in which the qualities of elasticity and toughness are well combined ; it should also be very sound and well seasoned, and the grain must be in the right direction. White hickory is decidedly bad, and even red hickory is better employed as a material for hand-spikes than fly-rods : like ash, it is too pliable for tops, or even for middle pieces. Lancewood, which can be had everywhere, makes a middling top, and is easily worked, but it is heavy and dull, especially in damp weather. Bamboo is tough and pretty-looking, but slow, and if severely bent, will never return without help ; Green-heart, which may now be got at any shipbuilding port, is very much better ; but clean and straight-grained logwood is the best of all ; with common care seems almost imperishable ; nor will a fly-fisher who has used logwood for a season or two ever be *contented* with anything else. Red-deal and white-spruce make very good butts ; red and yellow-pine very fair ones ; there is no

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danger of their breaking with fair play ; indeed, I never remember one breaking, and from their being so much lighter than ash, of which butts are usually made, they may be larger in the handling-part, with less weight. A small butt cramps the fingers in the course of a day's fishing. *White-pine* I cannot recommend, nor beech.

HOW TO MAKE RODS AT HOME.

As all anglers are not amateur joiners, it may be well to inform them how they may become possessed of a few good rods at a moderate price. After purchasing a small quantity of the best wood that you can procure, send for a clever joiner (if a *young* one so much the better), and let him saw up the wood, under your directions, for the length of rods, and the number of pieces they are to consist of ; taking care to have wood enough in them, but at the same time not to cut the middles and tops wastefully. Then order him to splice them with rather long splices, and to see that they are straight. Let every rod *in the rough* be well glued together, and very firmly bound with sound twine. Put them all in a dry place, and let them remain there a day at least, or until the glue is *set*. Let your joiner come again, when you can spare time to be with him, and let him bring a plank or thick board, at least the length of your rods, to lay upon his bench. Let him begin at the top, and *round*

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and *taper* it, dress over the joinings, and form the butt to your fancy. As soon as it begins to look like a rod, handle it, and tell him from time to time where to take off wood, invariably working from the top downwards (as you must always leave wood enough below to carry the top): when you find it *play* to your mind, you may order him to take out the plane marks with a file and sand-paper. Tie a few folds of rag round each splice, and pour boiling water quietly over them for a few minutes, and the joints will separate. Any fisherman can put on the rings, and varnish. When finished, you will find it to handle very much the same as it did from the bench: the rings and varnish about compensating for the filing and sand-paper.

DIMENSIONS OF A FLY-ROD.

As example is said to be better than precept, I here give the dimensions, etc., of a home-made fly-rod, for brook-fishing or small rivers (about twelve years old), which seems no worse for wear, and comes very near what a small fly-rod should be.

This rod consists of three pieces:—The butt is of yellow-pine, and is five feet long; the middle is of logwood, four feet long; the top, also of logwood, is three feet three inches and a half.

The first splice, on the butt, five inches and a quarter; the second, on the middle, two inches and a quarter. Allowing for the loss by

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splices, this leaves the rod about twelve feet long.

Diameter at the top,		$\frac{1}{15}$ of an inch.
Do. 1 foot from the top,		$\frac{1}{10}$ do.
Do. 2 feet do.		$\frac{1}{8}$ do.
Do. 3 do.		$\frac{1}{8}$ and $\frac{1}{3}$ of $\frac{1}{8}$ do.
Do. 4 do.		$\frac{1}{4}$ do.
Do. 5 do.		$\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{16}$ do.
Do. 6 do.		$\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ of $\frac{1}{8}$ do.
Do. 7 do.		$\frac{1}{2}$ do.
Do. 8 do.		$\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ of $\frac{1}{8}$ do.
Do. 9 do.		$\frac{3}{4}$ do.
Do. 10 do.		$\frac{3}{4}$ do.
Do. 11 do.	1 inch and	$\frac{3}{16}$ do.
Thick end of butt, 1 inch and		$\frac{1}{4}$ do.

Weight of the above rod, *eight* ounces and *a half*.

Should you purpose staying a week or more at any fishing station, it is well worth while to glue your spliced rods together, and bind them with fine waxed thread or silk; they will then handle as if they were all in one piece. For home fishing it is desirable to keep a rod or two, glued, and neatly and firmly bound up, with a little varnish over the joints.

THE ANTIQUITY OF FLY- FISHING

THE Art of Fishing with the Artificial Fly is of much higher antiquity than is generally imagined; as will be seen by the following extract from Ælian, a Greek author, who flourished more than sixteen hundred years ago, and who is quoted by Walton, in his 'COMPLETE ANGLER'; though, most probably, he had never read his works, as a passage so interesting could not well have escaped his notice. We are informed by his biographer, that Walton had not the advantage of a learned education, and that he quoted chiefly from the translations of Topsel and others.

EXTRACT FROM ÆLIAN.

'I have been informed of the following method of fishing, practised in the river Astræus, which flows between Beræa and Thessalonica. The fishes bred here are tinged with many colours, and provide themselves food from the indigenous insects which flutter about the river.

'Nor are these flies of the same species with

PRACTICAL FLY FISHING

those which are found everywhere ; they are unlike Bees, Wasps, and Hornets : they bear, however, some affinity to each of these, for, together with a degree of boldness, which they possess in common with many others, they have the size of the Hornet, the colour of the Wasp, and like the Bee make a humming noise (the inhabitants call them Hippuri). These insects, fluttering about on the surface of the water, are not unnoticed by the fish ; for as soon as a fish sees one of these flies come upon the water, he sails to it in the quietest manner, lest the agitation of the water should cause it to change its situation ; and approaching directly to its shadow, like a wolf snatching a sheep from the flock, or an eagle a goose from the flight, so does he with his widely-gaping mouth devour it.

‘Now, although the fishermen are by no means ignorant of this circumstance, they do not make use of these flies to ensnare the fish, for upon being touched with the hand, they immediately lose their natural colour, their wings fall off, and they become unfit for the food of fishes, as they do not value them in the least. They, however, who are eminently skilled in the art of angling, by a certain crafty device and cunning machination overreach these fishes. They wrap the hook round with scarlet wool, and to this they add two wings from the beard or wattles of a cock, and of a yellowish colour : they form these into the figure and shape of the fly : their rod is four

PRACTICAL FLY FISHING

cubits long, and their line a similar length: these hidden deceits they cast upon the waters; the fishes, allured by the colour, eagerly approach, and believing from its fair appearance that it is their much-admired food, are transfixed by the hooked bait, and with the loss of their liberty, obtain the vexatious food.'—ÆLIAN, *De Animalium Natura*, xv. 1.

A DAY'S ANGLING IN FRANCE

VERY early in the year 1821, I was in France, and was obliged to return before the season was advanced ; I arrived at Montreuil in the middle of March ; and, having heard that there was a pretty little river near that place, I determined to explore it.

Montreuil is a very strongly fortified town, situated upon a lofty hill in the midst of a plain, about twenty miles from Boulogne, and a dozen miles from the sea. The low grounds and marshes surrounding the place can, by opening the sluices at the spring-tides, be all laid under water.

Owing to the flatness of the land, many ditches are formed, which are, as is usual in such situations, both drains and fences. There had been many wet days in succession—these dykes were all streams, and many of them rather considerable ones.

Passing the barriers, I made my exit from the town by a drawbridge over the river Canche, which fills the ditches of the fortress. I came soon after to several of the drains which I have mentioned, and was quite at a loss to know which was the little river Etreles. Seeing a

PRACTICAL FLY FISHING

man approaching, I said to him, 'Monsieur, auriez-vous la bonté de me montrer la petite rivière d'Étrelles?' 'Oh, oui, Monsieur, vous allez par ce moulin-là. Are you not English, sir?' 'I believe I am,' I replied. 'Oh, then, I can tell you a great deal better in English, for I am an Englishman myself, and I belonged to the Hussars who were quartered here. I married a girl, and when the troops left, I got leave to remain here, and I look after two horses for a gentleman who lives at Montreuil. But with regard to the river,—there is little or no fishing near here, and the best is about two leagues off, near the villages of Wrek and Étrelles. General Vyvian, who commanded the Hussar brigade, was so fond of fly-fishing, that he went almost every day when the troops were not out, and I always attended him. There is an old fisherman who lives at Enxern—the General always left his tackle with him through the winter—a very honest old fellow.' I gave the old soldier a shilling for his information, and walked on in the direction he had sent me, but got entangled in a bye-water, which ran about two miles; and when I got out of this labyrinth it was too late to think of proceeding up the water, the feed at this early part of the season being very short. I saw a man catching Eels; he told me that there were no Trout in that part of the water, but a good many higher up, in the streams, and a considerable quantity of Sea-Trout in the autumn, some of them of a very large size. I returned to the

PRACTICAL FLY FISHING

Hôtel de l'Europe, a very comfortable and reasonable house, to take up my quarters for the night.

When I arose in the morning, I found that the frost had been very severe during the night, and the ice was of considerable thickness. Having nothing else to do, I breakfasted, and again ascended the stream of Etreilles, about two leagues, through a very beautiful valley, extremely well wooded. I had a rod, eight feet and a half long, composed of four pieces, and spliced together with slanting joints. The two lower pieces were of lancewood, the upper ones of logwood. Though it was in appearance but a hand-whip, yet it opened well a line of eight yards and a half. This rod I carried in my portmanteau.

As the morning was so cold, I sauntered along, admiring the little villages and chateaus with which the valley was studded. In one part of my route, observing a sequestered hamlet environed with trees, I made a deviation to explore it; but no sooner had I got into it, than I was surrounded by about a score of curs of various sizes and shapes, who seemed bent on worrying me. I confess I felt rather alarmed, and took refuge in a hovel, where an old couple lived. The old woman had two dun hens of excellent colour, and I asked her if she would allow me to have a few feathers from them. 'Oh, certainement, Monsieur.' And strewing a handful of corn on the floor, she had her whole flock in the house quickly. I gave her

PRACTICAL FLY FISHING

a half franc, with which she was much pleased, and, driving away the host of collies, she escorted me out of danger. My road lay on the side of the hill which skirted the valley, on the left bank of the river, through immense corn-fields, intersected only by hollow roads, which the heavy rains had made to resemble the dry beds of torrents, being strewed with flint-stones, of which the soil is full, and which, from their knotty and knobbed forms, have a striking resemblance to bones blanched in the sun. Many of the peasants were ploughing, and I stood still some time admiring the dexterity of one man who was cleverly managing a team of five horses without a driver. When I came to that part of the river which I intended to fish, the sun was very bright, and the wind easterly and cold. I tried some time, but saw no evidence of a fish being in the water. At last my eyes were gladdened by seeing about half a dozen of my old English friends, the Spring Dun and the Blue Dun, sailing down the stream, and two exceeding good Trout rose at them just opposite to me. A bottom of flies, which had been successful in Dovedale, was soon attached, and after soaking it in the lower part of the stream, I prepared for action. The point-fly was a Spring Dun, the first hanger a Ruddy cock's hackle with a little black Ostrich, and the third, what in Derbyshire is called the Turkey-fly, or large March-brown. I threw over the first fish, and in a moment we were together ; and after a famous battle I landed

PRACTICAL FLY FISHING

him. I did the same with the second ; and perceiving other fishes rising above me, I had an hour of very good fishing.

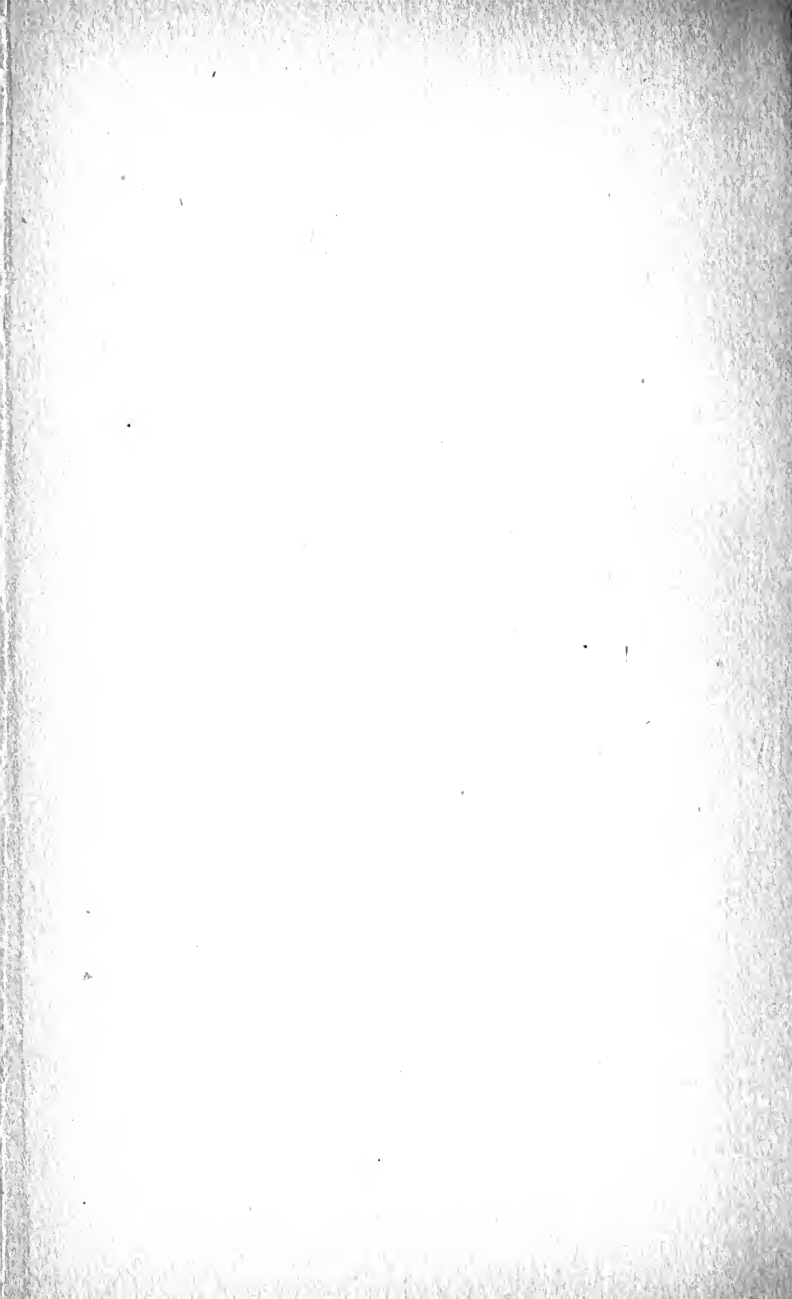
About a score I lost, as, from the shortness of my rod, I could not hold them up ; and they got down to the gravel, and rubbed the fly out of their noses in spite of me. However, I managed to land seven fish in very good condition, and I had scarcely one under a pound. I varied my walk by taking the right bank of the river on my return, and upon the whole enjoyed the day very much.

APPENDIX

BY ARTHUR SEVERN, JUNIOR

AND

AGNEW RUSKIN SEVERN



ADDITIONAL NOTES ON ARTIFICIAL FLIES

THE BLUE DUN

APPEARS about the end of March, and is a good fly all through the season, especially on cold dark days. It is equally useful for lake and stream fishing.

Body, dubbed with the fur of a water-rat, and ribbed with yellow silk ; legs, dun hen's hackle ; wings from the feather of the Starling's wing ; tail, two strands of a grizzle cock's hackle. Hook, No. 10 ; or 7 or 8 for a lake.

THE ALDER.

Also very good both for lake and stream fishing. It comes in May, and will kill fish even when the May-fly is on the water.

Body, Peacock's herl tied with dark brown silk ; legs, coch-a-bonddu hackle ; wings, the brown speckled feather of a Mallard's back. Hook, No. 8.

If this fly be dressed on a 6 or 7 hook, and winged with the red rump-feather of a Pheasant, it will be found an excellent lake fly.

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THE PHEASANT AND GREEN.

Good throughout the season, and best on a dark day. The fish will often take it when they refuse others.

Hook, No. 7 ; silk, apple-green ; wing, from a hen Pheasant's tail ; legs, black. This fly may be used successfully on any of the English lakes.

THE HARE'S EAR.

A capital fly for June and August.

Body, the fur of the Hare's ear ; wings, the feather from a Starling's wing ; tail, two fibres of the brown feather from a Starling's wing. Hook, about No. 10 for streams, but on a lake about No. 7 or 8.

This fly will often kill fish with a Woodcock's or Pheasant's wing.

THE SOLDIER PALMER.

This fly will take almost anywhere.

Body, red mohair ribbed with gold twist ; and over all, a red cock's hackle.

HOFLAND'S FANCY.

This is a south country fly, which we have used with success after sunset in the Lake District, for both lake and stream fishing.

Body, a reddish brown silk ; legs, red hackle ; wings, from a Woodcock's tail ; two or three fibres of a red hackle.

APPENDIX

THE RED PALMER

is a good fly, either for lakes or streams throughout the season. Body, Peacock's herl; a red cock's hackle over all. Hook, about No. 8.

MR. PRITT'S FLIES.

There are also a number of north country Hackle Flies invented by Mr. Pritt. They are used very successfully in the Lake District, in Yorkshire, and in a few other counties. Some of the principal are Dark Snipe and Purple; Dark Woodcock; Partridge and Orange; Night Hawk; Brown Owl; and Dark Starling. They can be got from Hutchinson of Kendal, or at any good tackle-shop.

FLY-RODS AND LANDING-NETS

MR. BEEVER'S model was excellent, no doubt ; but nowadays fly-rods are made more or less with Hickory, Green-heart, or Split-cane ; and the tops are sometimes Lancewood. They are brought to such perfection, with balance-handles, snake-rings, and lock-joints, that it is hardly worth while to go to the trouble and expense of making a rod at home. The number of joints is a matter of taste : more than three are not necessary. As a rule, however, every fisherman has his own pet rod, and will hear of no other.

A landing-net should be carried, if there is a chance of a big fish. A very good model, which can be used while wading, has a short handle, a pear-shaped ash ring, water-proof net, and a clip which fixes on to the strap of the basket. This net can be brought into action very easily, and is quite as serviceable as more elaborate patterns.

CHAR-FISHING

NO account of fishing in the English Lake District at the present time would be quite complete without some mention of Char. A separate description is necessary, because these fish seldom rise to a fly, and, when they are not netted, are usually caught by Trolling, which is differently managed at different times of the year.

The Plumb-line.—Early in the season, that is to say in the end of March and during April and the first weeks of May, the Char are found very deep, in about ninety feet of water. It is necessary then to use the plumb-line, though difficult to manage.

You have about 40 yards of strong fine line, six-thread, with a pound and a half of lead, pear-shaped, at the end. The plumb has sometimes a wing or fin of tin inserted to prevent its spinning and twisting the line. To this plumb-line you attach at different depths half a dozen gut lines, with 3 or 4 swivels on each; they should be of salmon gut, as they have occasionally to bear very considerable strain. The lowest gut line is about three yards long; the highest about five. In this way you will be sure to hit the right depth for the fish.

The plumb-line is carried by a stout rod, about ten feet long, fixed into the stern of the boat. The country fishermen cut their own rods of ash; they then tie about three yards of twine to the top, and

PRACTICAL FLY FISHING

fix a wire hook at the end of the twine. On the plumb-line proper they make a loop, which they hang on the hook, leaving three or four yards of the proper line in hand, to be wrapped on the winder and laid within reach of the fisherman as he sits rowing, with gentle short strokes, at an easy pace, enough to make the baits spin quietly, but no more.

When the jerking of the rod tells of a bite, the fisher rows steadily until he is sure the fish is hooked, and then pulls in the line (unhooking it from the rod, if he thinks well, or else leaving it hooked) until he comes to the fish.

When the fish comes to the top of the water, if it offers a lively resistance, it must not be allowed to get under water again; but it must be pulled steadily out, and, if large, landed with a net. In Windermere Char are sometimes caught over a pound; but in Coniston Water they average five to the pound, and do not usually need the landing-net.

Ordinary Trolling.—By the end of May the Char come up to the top of the water, so that during June and July trolling is much simpler. Instead of the complicated plumb-line, you have a cast about four yards long, with swivels on it, at the end of a line of about forty-five yards. This is managed with a rod and wire hook, in the way already described, except that the rods for this kind of trolling are cut thirteen or fourteen feet long; and three or four rods and lines are used at once, as there is only one cast to each.

The Char go down a little in July, so that during August you must put some lead, about a $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ an ounce, on your line, one or two feet above the cast. They come up again in September, and the fishing is as it was in June. But they now begin to go nearer the shore, in shoals, in anticipation

APPENDIX

of their spawning-time, which, at Coniston, is in October; in Windermere it is later. During September, therefore, it is better to leave the deep parts of the lake, and try about 100 yards from the shore, now and then turning in towards the bank; and as they go in shoals, when one is caught, the same ground should be fished over again.

Kinds of Char.—In the English lakes there are two kinds of Char; the *Red*, most familiarly known, and largest; with bellies red all through the season, but redder towards spawning-time; red pectoral fins, and dark backs, looking black or violet in some lights:—and the *Silver* Char, altogether lighter in appearance than the red; with bellies and pectoral fins inclining to orange; backs silvery, with a few very pale pink spots. The Silver Char, though smaller, are thought to be more delicately flavoured than the Red. The flesh of both kinds is red.

Baits.—As we said, Char seldom rise to the fly. When you see them playing in shoals on the surface it is very little use fishing for them; though when one or two here and there rise almost imperceptibly, making a faint ring on the water, they can be caught.

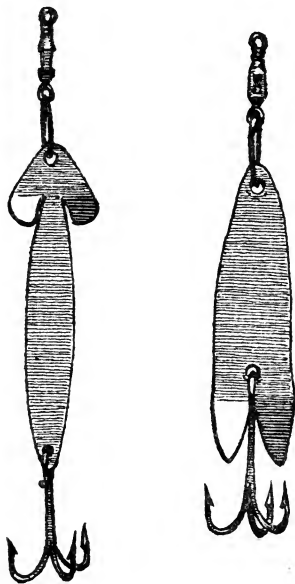
In the early season they take best the natural minnow on a Chapman or Archer Spinner. For ordinary trolling (without the plumb) it is best to have three lines out, one with a natural minnow, and two with artificial baits of different shapes: you will soon find which is the most successful.

Country fishermen make their own baits of old carriage-lamp reflectors, or other thin metal; one side painted with vermilion and the other showing the silver highly polished. The baits are about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long with a swivel at the head, a small triangle hook at the tail, and two little fans or fins

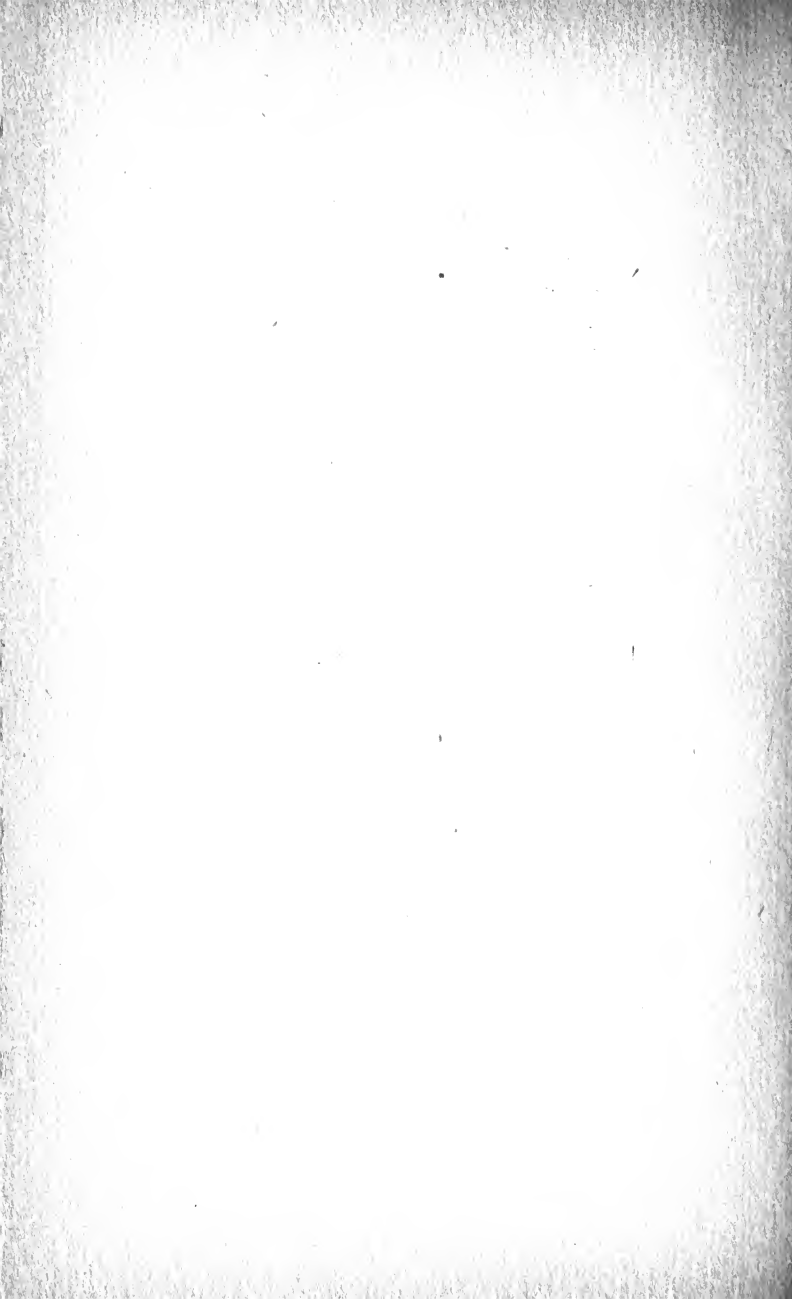
PRACTICAL FLY FISHING

cut out at the sides, turned opposite ways to make them spin. The most useful shapes are those shown in the figure.

Licence for Trout and Char includes fly-fishing and trolling, and can be got for half-a-crown at any Post-office.



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Messrs. METHUEN beg to announce that they are about to issue, in ten volumes 8vo, an authorised collection of Mr. Gladstone's Speeches, the work being undertaken with his sanction and under his superintendence. Notes and Introductions will be added.

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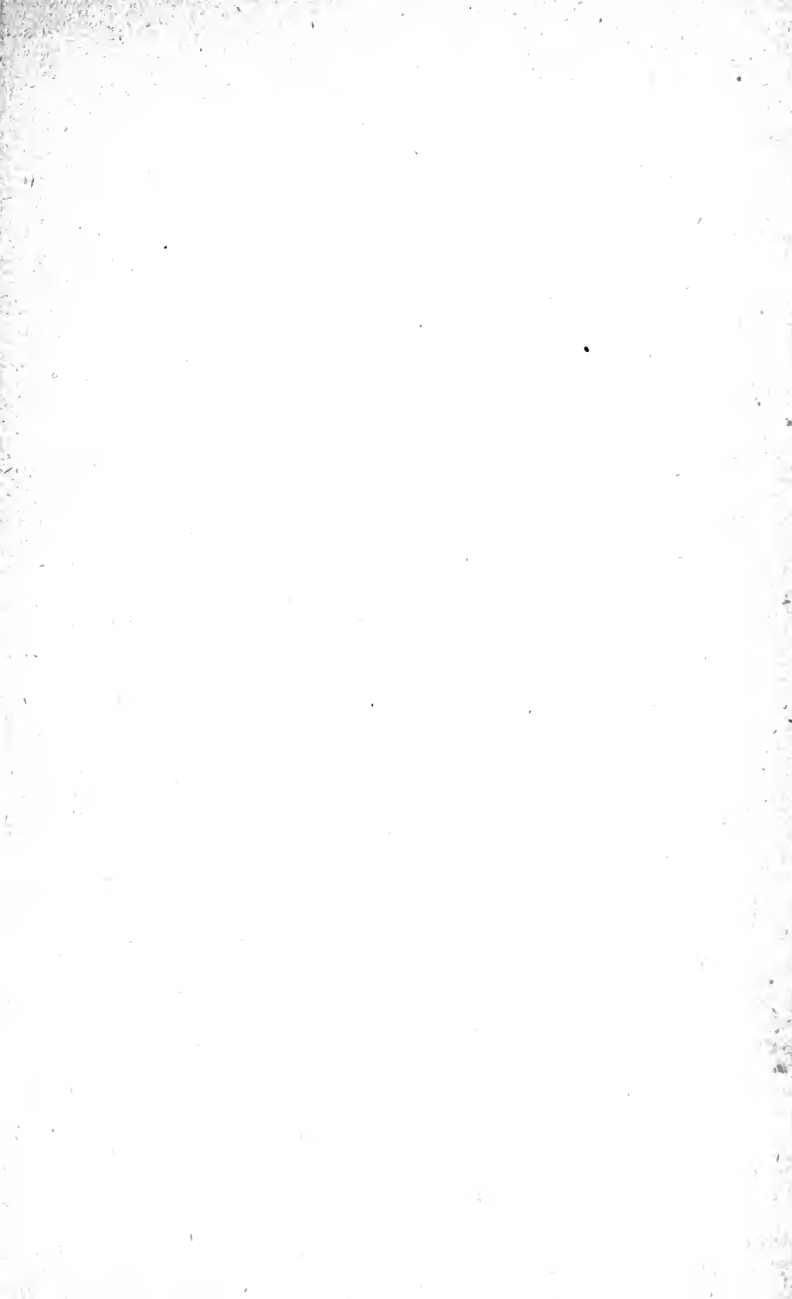
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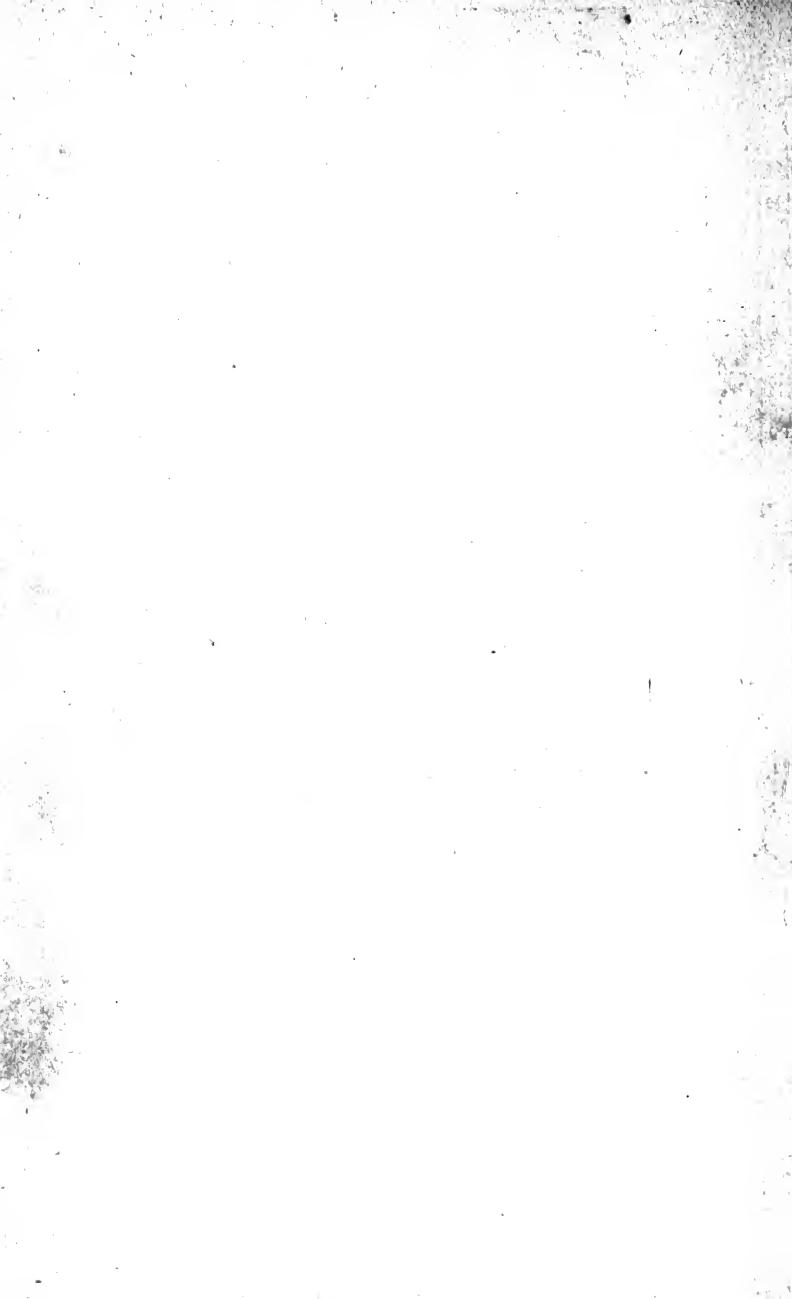
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