

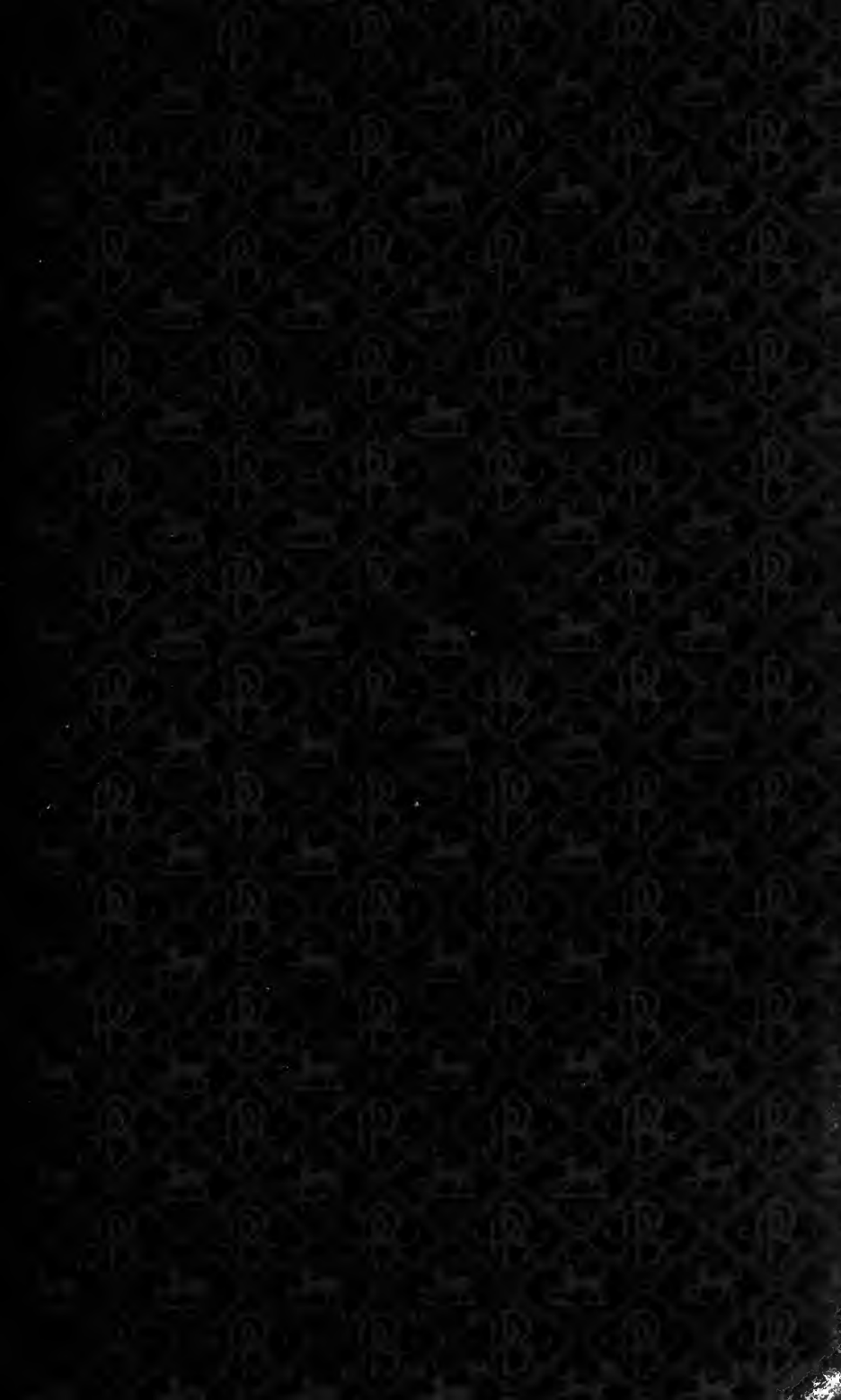


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ROD AND RIVER

OR

*FLY-FISHING FOR SALMON, TROUT,
AND GRAYLING*

BY
Arthur
MAJOR A. T. FISHER

AUTHOR OF 'THROUGH THE STABLE AND SADDLE-ROOM'

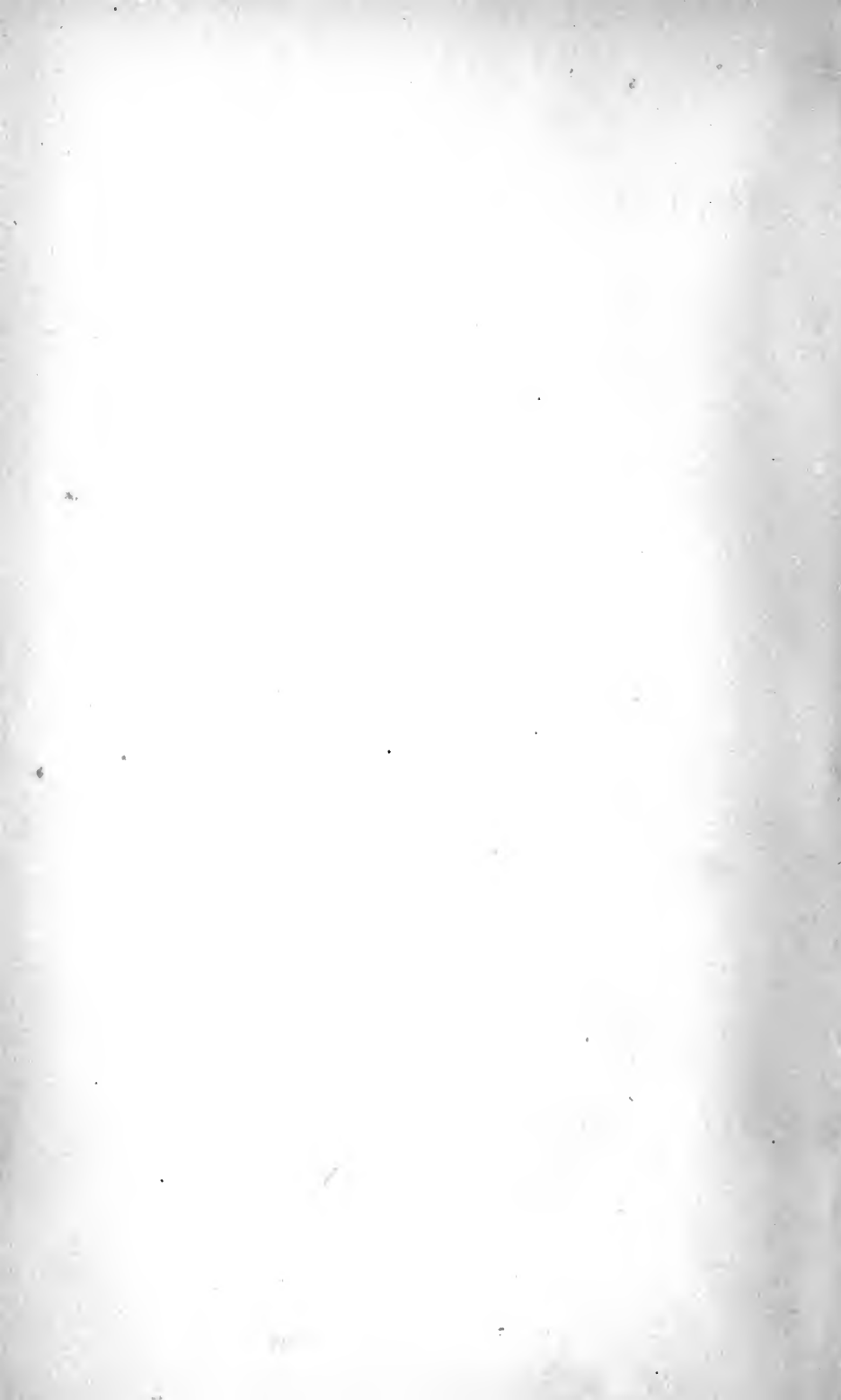


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1892

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TO

E. ST. J. G.,

G. B. W.,

G. R. K.,

IN REMEMBRANCE OF

MANY HAPPY DAYS SPENT IN THEIR SOCIETY

WITH ROD AND GUN,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE DEDICATED

BY THEIR FRIEND

THE AUTHOR.

M838975

CONTENTS



CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Ignorance of Fishermen regarding the Habits of Fish— Fishing Literature—Yarrell's 'British Fishes'—Yarrell's Classification of Salmonidæ—The Common Trout—De- scription of Rivers suitable for Trout—Fly-food Essential for Trout—Chalk and Gravel Beds—Varying Colour of Common Trout—Sensitiveness of Fish to Colour—Fish difficult to Discern—Fish visible from a Height above the River—Deterioration of Trout with Age—Overlarge Trout detrimental to a River—Loss of Sporting Qualities in Trout—Partial Cause of Same—Overstocked Streams— Shelter for Fish necessary—Care of Spawning-beds neces- sary—Evils of neglecting Rivers—Positions for Fish- shelters—The Hampshire Wey—Pollution of same— Evil Effects of Watercress-farming—Inland Fisheries Act not duly enforced—Variation of Rivers as to the Spawning Season for Trout—Advisability of abridging the Trout- fishing Season—Objections to same—'Sport-spoilers'— Disappointed Anticipations—'The Weed-cutting Fiend'— Rocky Rivers and Small Trout—Beauty of Small Trout— Lochleven Trout—Experiment of Transportation of Small Trout to more Suitable Streams—Varieties of Common Trout in same River—Varieties of Trout in the River Test —True Test Trout—Early Condition of Brown Trout in Lower Test—A Ruined Trout-stream—Pollution of Rivers —Pollution of Rivers Act, 1876—Inactivity as regards the Act being enforced—Necessity for Cleanliness of Rivers and Spawning-beds—Plausible Pollution . . .	1—27
---	------

CHAPTER II.

	PAGE
Trout-spawning—Perils of Spawning Fish—The ‘Water-drowner’—Process of Spawning—Spawning-beds—Late-spawning Trout—Early Condition of Spawn-eaters—Large Trout in Lower Test—Mr. Kendle’s Specimens of such Trout—Mr. Butt, Taxidermist—Growth of Trout—Experimental Feeding of Trout—Thames Trout—‘Salmo Ferox’	28—39

CHAPTER III.

Fishing-gear—Trout Rods—Greenheart—Material and Workmanship of Rods—Washaba—Blue Mahoe—Hickory—Cane Rods—Wear and Tear of Rods—Shape of Rods—Selection of Rods—Mr. Foster’s Steel-centred Rods—The ‘St. Lucas’ Rods—Length of Trout Rods—Castle-Connell Rods—Spliced Rod <i>v.</i> Ferruled—Rod Fittings—Ferruling—Rod Rings—Winch Fittings—Spears—Spare Tops—Waxed Silk, etc.—Binding a Rod when Broken—How to Wax Silk—Patience under Difficulties—A Broken Line and how to Splice it—A Reel gone wrong—Self-help in Difficulties—Use of Cutting-pliers—How to extract a Hook	40—63
---	-------

CHAPTER IV.

Trout Reels—How to take a Reel to Pieces—Trout Lines—Messrs. Eaton and Deller’s Patent Lines—Tapered Lines—Silk and Hair Lines—Necessity for drying Lines after Use—Messrs. Farlow’s Patent Line-winder—How to uncoil a New Line—Use of Red-deer Suet—Caution respecting use of same—Trout Gut—Varieties of same—Mr. Ramsbottom, Manchester—How Gut is manufactured—How to make a Taper Cast—Selection of Gut—Horse-hair Casts—How to knot Gut—Soaking Gut—Damping-box for Gut-casts—Damping-box for Gut-flies—Cutting out Knots in Gut—Landing-nets—Shape of same—Utility of Long Staff to Landing-nets—Short-handled Nets—Material recommended—Fishing-bags <i>v.</i> Baskets—Plan
--

	PAGE
of Fishing-bag—'Freke' Bags—Wading Garments— Danger of not using Waders—Danger of Waders—Fish- ing-stockings and Socks—Brogues—Messrs. Cording's Wading-boots—Mackintosh Coat and Square	64—83

CHAPTER V.

Trout-hooks—Requirements of a Good Trout-hook—Shape of Trout-hooks—Bends of Trout-hooks—Limerick and Kirby Bends—Necessary Strength of Hooks—A Bad Batch of Hooks—Lightness Essential—Pennell Hooks—Eyed Hooks <i>v.</i> Hooks tied on Gut—Eyed Hooks recommended by Wade—Advantages of Eyed Hooks—Disadvantages of Eyed Hooks—Shape of Eye for Eyed Hooks—Mr. Hall's Pattern <i>v.</i> Mr. C. Pennell's—How to tie on an Eyed Hook —Prejudices against Use of Eyed Hooks—Sizes of Trout- hooks	84—93
--	-------

CHAPTER VI.

The Right Fly and the Wrong—Wasted Time—Science and Sport—Beauty of Water-flies—Artificial and Natural Flies —Wings <i>v.</i> Bodies—Mr. Richardson's Flies—The Water- flies—Ephemera and Trichoptera—Quotations from 'Homes without Hands'—The Ephemera—The Trichop- tera—Duration of the Larval Period—Transportation of Mayfly—Duration of Life of Ephemera—Ephemera cast- ing their Skins—Quotations from Kirby and Spence	94—115
---	--------

CHAPTER VII.

List of Flies for Trout-fishing—The Stone-fly—The Mayfly— The Spent Gnat—The Virtues of the 'Wickham'—Varie- ties of Artificial Mayflies—Mr. Green's Pattern—Drying the Mayfly—The Blow-line—True Sport—Patterns of Mayflies—The Gray Drake and Spent Gnat—The March Brown—The Blue Dun—The Olive Dun—Four Useful Flies—Detached Bodies—The Yellow Dun—The Iron- blue Dun—The Jenny Spinner—The July Dun—The August Dun—The Little Pale-blue Dun—Spinners— Dressings of Spinners—Local Names of Flies—Theak- stone on 'British Angling Flies'	116—165
---	---------

CHAPTER VIII.

	PAGE
The Alder Fly—Sedge-flies—The Grannom—The Needle Brown—The Silver Horns—The Hawthorn Fly—The Peacock Fly—The Gold-eyed Gauze-wing—The Black Gnat—The Red Ant—The Cowdung-fly—The Coch-y-bonddhu—Fancy Flies—The ‘Wickham’s Fancy’—The Red Tag—The Coachman—The Governor—The Orange Bumble—The Claret Bumble	166—189

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Halford’s Work, ‘Floating Flies, and how to Dress them’—The Experience of an Amateur Fly-tyer—Mr. George Currell—Pleasure to be derived from the Ability to tie one’s own Flies—Advice to Beginners—Fly-tying Vices—Mr. Holland’s Pattern of Vice—A Vice and its Vices—Good and Bad Silk—Waxing Silk—Varnishing—Recipe for Varnish—Good Materials Necessary—Order and Disorder—Scissors—Tweezers—Utility of Wooden Trays—Fly-tying by Lamplight—Eyeglass for Fly-tying—The Use of a Trout-rod—Casting with a Trout-rod—Different Styles of Casting—How to Cast—Overhead and Steeple Casting—Casting Horizontally—Switching—Casting in Windy Weather—Casting Dead against Wind—Casting with a Cross-wind—Utility of changing Mode of Casting—Use of Slack Line—Striking: the Right and the Wrong Way—Reasons for not Striking from the Reel—The Limbridge Trout	190—212
--	---------

CHAPTER X.

Where to Cast—Keeping out of Sight—Advantages and Disadvantages of Wading—Streams apparently Barren—Likely Spots—A Quiet Way of doing Things—Much ado about nothing—Where to find Fish—Banks should not be shaken—Fishing directly Down-stream inadvisable—How to cast Down-stream—‘Every Fish has its Angle’—Wet-fly and Dry-fly—The Virtue of Humility—Why a Dry-fly fails
--

	PAGE
on certain Streams—Hackles <i>v.</i> Wings for Wet-fly Fishing	
—The Use of the Dry-fly—An Unbeliever—A Convert—	
How to Fish with a Dry-fly—Tailing Fish—A Day of	
Woe—The ‘Coppersmith’ and the ‘Tinsmith’—Casting	
with a Dry-fly—‘Streams within Streams’—Wandering	
Fish—Vacant Shoes—A Slice of Luck—Long Lines	
and Short—A Change of Tactics—An Alternative—Play-	
ing a Fish—‘Notice to Quit’—A ‘Sell’—Testing a Fish	
—‘Give and Take’—The Value of Good Hands—Fish	
jumping when hooked—School-board Education—Landing	
a Fish—‘Double-hooked’—Foul-hooked	213—233

CHAPTER XI.

Loch-fishing—Reminiscences of Lochleven—The Castle Keys	
—How to fish a Loch—Drifting—Sunk Flies—Want of	
Skill conducive to Success—Fighting Qualities of Loch-	
leven Trout—The Angling Competition Nuisance—	
Feeding-grounds of Loch Fish—Dangers of Loch-fishing	
—‘An East Wind and its only Virtue’—Best Months for	
Fishing on Lochleven—The Green Inn—Flies suitable for	
Lake Trout-fishing	234—244

CHAPTER XII.

Grayling—Relative Size of Grayling—Description of Streams	
suitable for Grayling—Peculiarity of Grayling when rising	
at a Fly—Casting for Grayling—The Grayling as a Sport-	
ing Fish—Tactics of Grayling when hooked—Spawning of	
Grayling—Best Month for Grayling-fishing—Advantages	
of a Grayling Stream—Rising Qualities of Grayling—An	
Exceptional Day—The Olive Dun as a Grayling Fly—	
Shape of Grayling—Delicacy and Shape of Mouth of	
Grayling—The Virtues of Grayling—Edible Qualities of	
Grayling—Origin of Grayling—Weather and Time of Day	
most suitable for Grayling-fishing—Grayling as Spawn-	
eaters—The Law of Retaliation—Yorkshire Grayling Flies	
—Derbyshire Bumbles—Selection of Grayling Flies	245—254

CHAPTER XIII.

	PAGE
Pollution of Salmon Rivers—Obstructions—Fish-passes— Salmon-life—Extract from Preface of Reports made to the Tweed Commissioners—Questions and Answers from Tweed Fishery Reports—Summary of Information given in Tweed Fishery Reports—Average Rate of Speed of Salmon when ascending Rivers—Extraordinary Rate of Speed attained by a Salmon in the Sea—Spring Fish and Early Rivers—Temperature of Water—The Parr—The Sewin—Local Nomenclature—Classification of the Migra- tory Salmonidæ—Differences between Varieties of Migra- tory Salmonidæ—Care of Salmon Rivers—The Value of a River well cared for—The Value of Trout Streams—The Duties of a Water-keeper—Improving a River—Weed- cutting on Salmon Rivers—A Weed-net	. 255—283

CHAPTER XIV.

Fishing a Strange River—Alterations in Rivers by Floods— Taking Places—Fishing the Water—An Amateur at Work —‘Potted Fish’—Water and Weather	. 284—292
--	-----------

CHAPTER XV.

Salmon-rods—Spliced Salmon-rods—Rings for Salmon-rods— Salmon-lines—Salmon-gut—Salmon-gut Casting-lines— Damping-box for Salmon-casts—Gut-tips—How to put on a Salmon-fly—Testing Salmon-tackle—Gaffs—Berthon Folding Gaff—Salmon-fly Box—Messengers	. 293—305
--	-----------

CHAPTER XVI.

The Action of a Salmon Fly—Necessity for fishing Down- stream for Salmon—How to hold a Salmon-rod—How to face the Water—Placing the Fly—Working the Rod— Picking the Line off the Water—Casting—Slack Line— The Value of Switching—Good Style—Length of Line to be used—Fishing a Pool, or Reach—Mr. Kelson’s Theory	
---	--

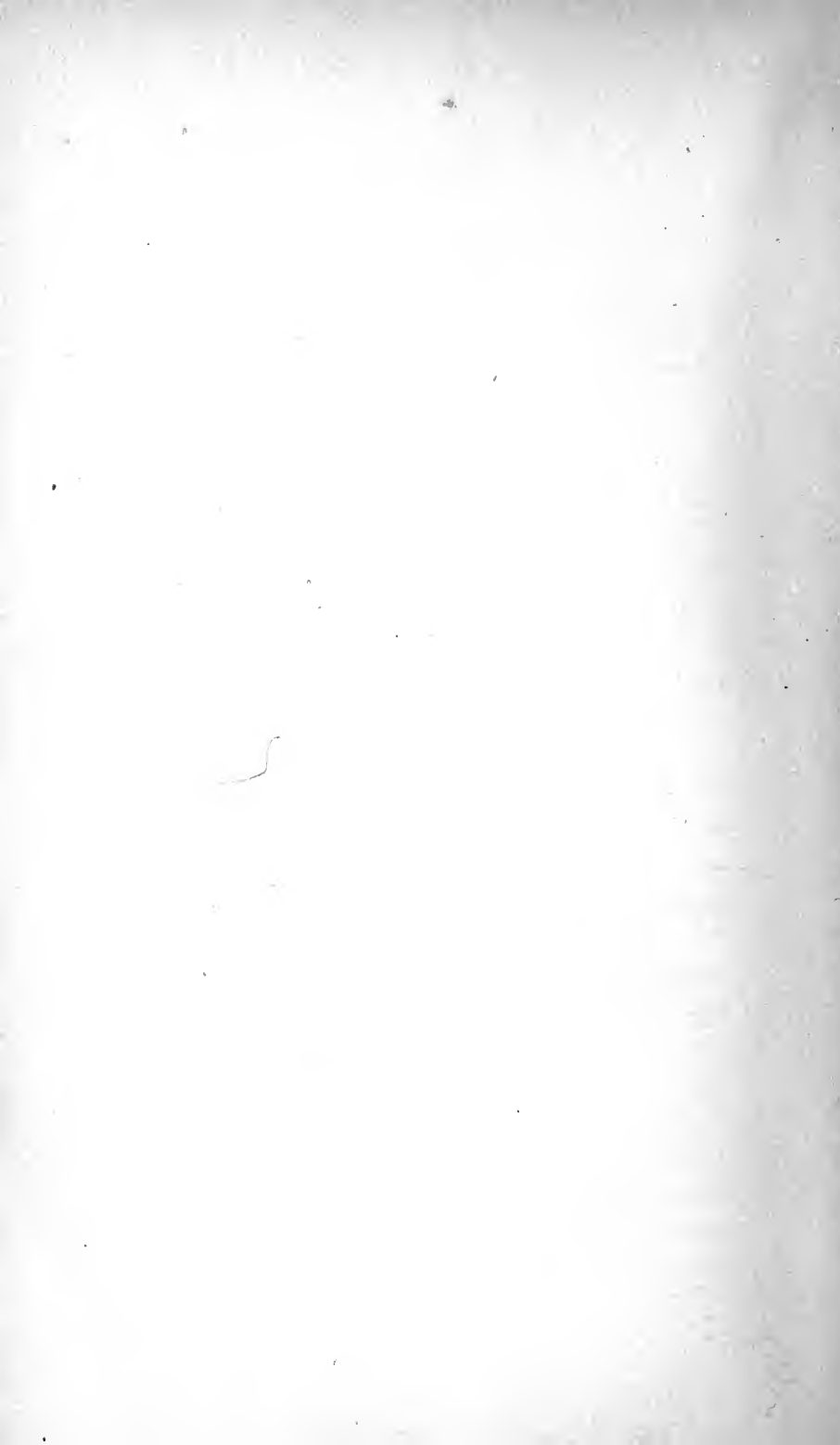
	PAGE
—The Use of Silver-bodied Flies—Small Flies for Low Water—‘Coming’ and ‘Refusing’—Changing Flies—Selection of Flies with reference to Weather, etc.—Old Standard Flies—‘Coming’ and ‘Taking’—Striking a Salmon—Playing a Salmon—Sulking—Gaffing a Salmon—Killing and Gaffing—Difference in Weight after Gilling—How to carry a Salmon	306—319

CHAPTER XVII.

Gut Loops <i>v.</i> Metal Eyes for Salmon-hooks—Double Hooks—Cholmondeley-Pennell Pattern of Hook—Parts of a Salmon Fly described—List of Useful Salmon Flies : Anonyma, Baron, Benchill, Britannia, Bruce (A), Bruce Variety (B), Butcher, Champion, Childers (A), Childers (B), Dirty Orange, Black Doctor, Blue Doctor, Silver Doctor, Durham Ranger, Dusty Miller, Brown Eagle, Yellow Eagle, French’s Fancy, Greenwell, Glow-worm, Grub, Spring Grub, Infallible, Jock Scott, Blue Scott, Kendle, Lion, Mohair Canary, Mystery (A), Mystery (B), Popham, Silver Gray, Stevenson, Thunder and Lightning, Wilkinson, Gitana, Phœbus, Nepenthian	320—356
--	---------

CHAPTER XVIII.

Hints on the Manufacture of Salmon Flies—Sea-trout Fishing—Useful Sea-trout Flies—Conclusion	357—368
--	---------



PREFATORY.



As long as there are rivers, and fish in them, so long there will be fishermen. The brotherhood of anglers is large, and the methods they employ to catch fish many and various.

It is my intention to treat of fishing for salmon, trout, and grayling only in the following pages, restricting myself to the consideration of these three varieties of the Salmonidæ, their capture by means of the artificial fly, and the natural flies which form food for trout and grayling.

Scores of books have from time to time been written on matters piscatorial, and it may be said, 'Still they come.' I have the audacity to add yet another volume to the long list of such works already existing.

Fishermen are ever ready to peruse anything new in the way of fishing literature, despite the enormous mass which has been and is ever being published for their behoof. They are, too, ever lenient and kindly disposed towards

their brethren of the craft, and so, trusting to their leniency, I make my cast, and try them with yet another fly in the shape of the present volume ; not a very large one, it is true, but one which I trust may be reckoned amongst the standard patterns.

Wherein lies the charm of fishing? It is a question I have often asked myself, and to which I have never as yet been able to make a satisfactory reply. It most certainly does not consist solely in the killing of fish, for if fish were to be caught all day and every day it would be wanting. I can only conclude that it must be the difficulty and uncertainty of the sport which form the attraction.

Then again, a salmon-river or trout-stream is nearly always situated in the midst of beautiful scenery ; such streams as both fish frequent are usually of a description which cannot fail to charm—deeps and shallows, rapids and flats alternating with each other as the river flows ever on over its gravelly or rocky bed. There is, too, a feeling of such perfect rest and peace by the riverside, to say nothing of the many objects of natural history and botany, which everywhere meet the eye of the observant angler, as, rod in hand, he rambles at will along its banks.

The best fishing month in all the year is 'leafy

June,' the most beautiful of all the twelve. Everything is out and about in June; flowers, birds, fish, all seem to revel in the sunlight of the summer's day. There are kingcups in the water-meadows, and by the riverside forget-me-nots in profusion; ragged robins, red and white campions, wild garlic (the latter best left ungathered), cow-slips, and here and there a yellow iris casting its golden reflection on the stream. Birds singing, fish rising, what more can the heart of man desire when all is so beautiful?

Later on in the summer the purple and yellow loosestrife, willow-herb, and meadow-sweet appear upon the scene. There may be a lack of sport, and fish may be disinclined to feed, but there is an amount of infinite pleasure to be derived from the mere fact of being in the midst of such things—a glorious feeling of freedom and independence—and there is always the chance of sport. The man who fails to extract enjoyment out of such things must be indeed hard to satisfy, and be altogether soulless, or in love. It is these and such-like beauties which invest the sport of fishing with such 'glamourie.' Is it to be wondered that it is so? Is it not rather a matter for surprise that everyone who can be is not a fisherman? I most heartily congratulate myself that I am one.

In conclusion, I can hardly do better than

quote the following passage from the 'Compleat Angler':

'And now look about you, and see how pleasantly that meadow looks; nay, and the earth smells as sweetly too. Come, let me tell you what holy Mr. Herbert says of such days and flowers as these, and then we will thank God that we enjoy them.'

ROD AND RIVER

CHAPTER I.

Ignorance of Fishermen regarding the Habits of Fish—Fishing Literature—Yarrell's 'British Fishes'—Yarrell's Classification of Salmonidæ—The Common Trout—Description of Rivers suitable for Trout—Fly-food Essential for Trout—Chalk and Gravel Beds—Varying Colour of Common Trout—Sensitiveness of Fish to Colour—Fish difficult to Discern—Fish visible from a Height above the River—Deterioration of Trout with Age—Overlarge Trout detrimental to a River—Loss of Sporting Qualities in Trout—Partial Cause of same—Overstocked Streams—Shelter for Fish necessary—Care of Spawning-beds necessary—Evils of neglecting Rivers—Positions for Fish-shelters—The Hampshire Wey—Pollution of same—Evil Effects of Watercress-farming—Inland Fisheries Act not duly enforced—Variation of Rivers as to the Spawning Season for Trout—Advisability of abridging the Trout-fishing Season—Objections to same—'Sport-spoilers'—Disappointed Anticipations—'The Weed-cutting Fiend'—Rocky Rivers and Small Trout—Beauty of Small Trout—Lochleven Trout—Experiment of Transportation of Small Trout to more Suitable Streams—Varieties of Common Trout in same River—Varieties of Trout in the River Test—True Test Trout—Early Condition of Brown Trout in Lower Test—A Ruined Trout-stream—Pollution of Rivers—Pollution of Rivers Act, 1876—Inactivity as regards the Act being enforced—Necessity for Cleanliness of Rivers and Spawning-beds—Plausible Pollution.

It is a somewhat singular fact that, despite the great and ever-increasing number of fishermen,

so few, comparatively speaking, possess any knowledge of what may be termed the natural history of the fish for which they angle, or of the flies which the artificials they employ are intended to represent.

Now, many of these individuals are keen enough so far as the mere sport of fishing is concerned, but they are often too apathetic to make any effort to acquire the little knowledge of ichthyology and entomology so far as the latter are connected with angling ; and so long as there are fish to be caught, and the local patterns of artificials are found equal to the occasion, they are content.

All this seems to me to be very lacking in what may be termed the refinement of sport. A master of hounds merely able to ride, and ignorant of the habits and many wiles of a fox, could hardly expect to be successful. He might now and again kill a fox, it is true, but the credit of so doing could not be due to any efforts or intelligence on his part, and he would utterly fail to give satisfaction to his supporters. So, in like manner, a man may be an excellent shot with gun or rifle, but unless the game is found for or driven to him, he would, if unacquainted with the habits and ways of the latter, make but a sorry bag.

Whether hunting, shooting, or fishing, the man

who can ride, shoot, use a rod, and knows most about the ways and habits of fox, game, or fish, as the case may be, will ever secure the greatest amount of sport. There is always something more to be learned; season after season reveals something new to the intelligent sportsman; and I fail to understand how it happens that so many men who are sportsmen at heart, and who would be utterly disgusted if they thought they were not considered to be such, can be content to go on in the same groove year after year, and yet know little more respecting the animals, birds, and fish, in pursuit of which they have spent half a lifetime or more, than they did at the commencement of their career. But so it is, and I have frequently observed that fishermen are peculiarly ignorant in this respect; although perhaps less so of late years than formerly, a very great deal of ignorance still prevails amongst them, and at least half of them know nothing whatever about the water-flies which are taken as food by trout and grayling. I think, perhaps, that long-winded treatises and long names serve to choke them off; there is too much theoretical instruction. There are no end of books on such subjects, but it is difficult to know which are the ones to read. One volume treats principally of one portion of the subject, another of a second, and so on, until it becomes necessary to purchase

half a dozen or more books before the very A B C can be mastered. I myself have read no end of such works. Some few are really good and valuable, many are but indifferent, and the majority are more or less useless. I desire to try and condense from the best works which have been published, such information as may serve to interest and instruct those who may hitherto have been ignorant of the subjects to which I have referred, and if I can succeed in exciting the interest of any reader who may have previously cared naught for such things, or instruct one who fain would learn, so much the better.

Of all the works which have been written on our British fishes, I consider that by Yarrell to be the very best, inasmuch as no other naturalist has ever taken the trouble to enter into such minute detail as he has done; and although it is now many years since he died, and so many other works of a similar nature have been published, I set the latter aside in favour of his.

He thus classifies the Salmonidæ :

1. Salmon.
2. Bull-trout, sewin, whiting.
3. Salmon-trout, sea-trout, white trout.
4. Samlet or parr (*vide* chap. xiii.).
5. Common trout.
6. Great lake trout, or great gray trout
(*Salmo ferox*).

7. Northern char.
8. Welsh char.
9. Smelt.
10. Grayling.
11. Gwyniad.
12. Vendace.
13. Argentine.

Thirteen in all. It is, however, only of the first six and the tenth to which I propose to refer. For the present we will devote our attention to the common trout.

There are comparatively few counties in the United Kingdom in whose streams trout are not more or less plentiful, nor is there any fish more beautiful than a well-conditioned trout—a fish whose very appearance bespeaks the character of the streams it loves to frequent; bold, vigorous, beautiful, and clean, it ever prefers those rivers which, possessing food enough for its sustenance, are unpolluted, rapid, and course over a hard, clean bed of gravel, chalk, or rock; and it is more especially in the two former of these that trout thrive best and attain to the greatest weight. Where the bed is rocky, the stream over-swift, and subject to extreme variation in height during excessive flood or drought, though trout may be plentiful, they rarely attain to anything like a good average weight, and they are mostly small. Since it has been

conclusively proved that fly-food is the best of all food for trout, I can only conclude that, from the very fact of such rivers being subject to heavy and sudden floods, and the extreme hardness of their beds, the fly is washed away before it attains maturity, and the fish are therefore stunted in growth by reason of the want of sufficient nourishment.

Where the bed is of chalk or gravel, the case is different, and fly-food is ever more plentiful; there is not only more lodgment for the eggs of the water-flies, but such rivers are more constant in height, and consequently more fly-eggs arrive at maturity. It is, as I say, in such rivers as these that trout attain to the heaviest weight, for these streams abound in fly-food.

That what is termed the ordinary brown trout, the common trout, varies very considerably in colour is indisputable; and, indeed, this may be observed in every stream, those fish which frequent the shadier and deeper portions of the water being of a fuller, richer colour than those in the other parts. Soil also has a very marked effect on the colour of fish, for in rivers which run through peat-bogs and such-like, the trout are deeper and yellower in colour. Fish are very sensitive to their surroundings, and possess the power of adapting their colour to that of the water. Anyone who has watched any of the sole

species must have been struck with the capability which they possess of assimilating their colour to that of the mud or sand upon which they may be lying. Hence, for this reason, it is often difficult for a person, who is unaccustomed to it, to discern the fish in a river, even though they may be pointed out to him, and it requires no little practice to do so, more especially, of course, in deep water. I have myself often failed for a long time to perceive a salmon lying in a pool, although the keeper has done his utmost to point it out to me, while he, being accustomed to the colour of the water, instantly detected its presence.

Once, when fishing in North Wales, near to Dolgelly, I had, in order to reach a higher portion of the river, to walk for some distance along a path at a considerable height above the latter. The day was hot and bright, and looking down on the river below me, it was curious to note the salmon, which from that height were plainly visible, and in considerable numbers. There they lay, motionless, nor in such weather would the most alluring salmon-fly have succeeded in moving one of them. I quite forget how many I counted in one reach, but I remember that they were very plentiful, and that the water, though deep, appeared from the high ground above too shallow for such large fish to lie in.

After they attain to a certain age and size, trout generally deteriorate and lose condition, and I do not think that many fish of over four or five pounds in weight are by any means an acquisition to a river, inasmuch as they do an incalculable amount of damage. They rarely rise at a fly until it is too dark to see to fish for them, and they not only make up for their abstinence from fly-food during the day by hunting and killing an enormous number of the smaller fish, but they are also the most inveterate spawn-eaters, and doubtless set a similarly bad example to the other fish, who, seeing them so poaching, learn the habit from them.

It is the complaint on many a river that the trout, which formerly rose freely at a fly, although every means may have been taken to secure the preservation of the river, year by year afford less and less sport. I am convinced that, though perhaps not the sole cause, such is, to a very great extent, due to the stock of large fish being too great. Such fish become almost as bad as pike, and their destruction is not only justifiable, but judicious, and any means may be taken to effect it, for they play havoc with a river. Nor should too large a stock of fish ever be permitted. There are limits to the supply of food in every river, and those limits should not only never be exceeded, but never reached. The fish will

thereby be not only of a greater average weight, but they will be better in health and condition. It is a somewhat difficult matter to induce owners of fishings to accept the truth of all this, and there are some points upon which they are often most obstinate. One person will insist upon cutting away all shelter afforded by bushes, trees, weeds, etc.; another going to the opposite extreme, and refusing to remove what is useless and detrimental to sport. In many rivers there is not sufficient attention paid to the spawning-beds. Rivers, especially those whose banks are soft and spongy, alter their course at times very considerably, and what one year is a spawning-bed may, through neglect, in the course of a year or two, become overgrown with reeds and rushes, especially if the summer is a dry one; and so, by degrees, the spawning-beds are insufficient for the stock of fish. Where such alterations take place, the channel of the river is for a time narrowed; but after a few floods the opposite bank becomes unduly worn away, and so the river takes from the one side what it loses on the other. The deep side invariably becomes deeper than it was previously, and so affords no compensation in lieu of the spawning-bed which has gone.

Trout must have shelter to hide in, and where they can lie unobserved without the undue

exertion of heading against a strong stream, and be protected from the heat of the sun. Such spots ought not to be too far removed from the shallows on which the fish come out to feed.

On a portion of the river Wey, in Hampshire, the fishing of which at one time belonged to a relation of mine, the trout would, in the evening, travel for nearly a quarter of a mile to their feeding-ground. I have often, when fishing, seen them pass close by me in dozens, one after the other, on their upward journey, and when they had apparently satisfied themselves, they would in like manner return. They were poor sporting fish, so far as their rising qualities were concerned, and it was necessary to fish for them with a large fly sunk deep under water. When hooked, however, they fought desperately, and were large and beautiful to look at, many of those I caught being nearly three pounds in weight. When cooked, although their flesh was of a lovely red colour, they were quite uneatable. We several times attempted to eat them, for their appearance was all that it should be; their flavour was, however, too disgusting. This was due, I fancy, to the filthy condition of the river, and its pollution by the paper-mills, etc. It is a sad pity, for in former years the fish were noted for their good qualities, both sporting and edible.

Such, alas! is the fate of many of our trout streams. In my own river, once full of good trout, the latter are year by year dwindling away in numbers and condition, despite all my efforts to preserve them and keep up a sufficient stock. The stream is small, but there is still a sufficiency of food for a good head of fish, and such there would be were it not that, unfortunately, during the last five or six years, two men have started watercress-growing about a mile above my boundary, and by reason of the filth which they are for ever sending down the river, when making, planting, and cleaning the beds, the channel is becoming blocked up, and where there was formerly a hard, clean bed of chalk and gravel, there is now, in many places, an accumulation of foul, oozy mud, of a foot or more in depth, overlying it; and this, when disturbed, emits the most disgusting stench. The spawning-beds are ruined, the fish blinded and sickened, and fishing is of course impossible. Last season, at such times as the water was clear enough to use a fly, I took out a few fish, but they were nearly all in very poor condition, and of a mealy, unhealthy-looking colour. The river, being a tributary of one which is under a conservancy, is also under the like protection, but I much fear that if, as they have threatened, the conservators take any decisive steps to abate the nuisance, one or other

of the owners of the watercress-beds will surreptitiously lime the river, and so destroy every fish in it, and it would be a matter of extreme difficulty to detect the offender, especially in the chalky colour of the water after rain.

The laws relating to fish and fishing are not only not sufficiently stringent, but they are not enforced as they should be. In the river I speak of there are nowadays not ten fish, where, before the watercress-beds were made, there were a thousand. Such work is heartbreaking and sickening, and in the course of a very few years there will be no fish at all. Formerly there was a good stock of mayfly; now such a thing as a mayfly is unknown. I conclude that this also is due to the same foul work. As I say, I fear the result of any decisive steps being taken by the conservators, but at the same time I very much doubt the latter having sufficient energy to do more than threaten, since, so far as this portion of the river is concerned, their own personal interests are not involved in the pollution of the stream. When the fish do spawn (such few of them as have the pluck and strength to do so), they work up to the head of the river where the watercress-beds are situated, and suffer hardly at the hands of the labourers employed in the latter, and but very few survive to drop down stream again.

All this may possibly be of service to some one or other of my readers, who may contemplate renting a stretch of water in a district similar to the one in which I live. Let him therefore be careful to make every possible inquiry before he signs any agreement, or he may, as I have done, find his hopes of sport ruthlessly frustrated.

Rivers vary very considerably as to the time in which the trout in them spawn. Some are much earlier than others, but as a general rule the fish begin to get about the spawning-beds towards the end of September, and actually spawn in October, November, and December. During the severe winter of 1890-91 the trout in some rivers had not spawned till February—at least, so I am informed, and I have no reason to doubt the assertion.

Although our trout-fishing season in Britain opens on February 1 and closes on September 30, these dates by no means imply that the fish are in a condition fit to allow of their being taken. There are very few rivers in which they have sufficiently recovered after spawning to afford sport or to be fit to eat before the end of March, for, as I have said, to thrive well, trout must have plenty of fly-food, and at so early a period of the season there is but comparatively little of the latter, and the fish, being weakened by spawning, require rest and plenty of food to enable them

to recuperate their strength. Anyone who has fished on a river on which there is mayfly, must have noticed how very great a difference there is in the condition and fighting powers of the trout, before the mayfly season has commenced, and a few days after a good 'rise' has been on.

The Legislature permits trout to be taken until the end of September, but I am most strongly of opinion that the season should, in most rivers, terminate by the 14th of that month; for, unless it becomes necessary to thin down an overstocked stream, it is a pity to take fish when they are growing heavy with spawn. Where the stock is excessive, the privilege of the extra fortnight might, on proper representation, be accorded. The year before last I noticed the trout on the beds, or I should say about them, quite early in September, and so I put away my rod. A season abridged as I have suggested would, it is true, allow but a very few months for the fisherman, and so my suggestion is one which would scarcely meet with general approbation, for, as all fishermen are aware, there are not many days during the entire season which may be termed really good fishing days. It is either too hot or too cold, rain is threatening or thunder is hanging about; nine days out of ten—nay, nineteen out of twenty—are by no means all that the fisherman could desire; and then, on the one

day on which he reckons to have sport, some energetic person higher up the river elects to cut his weeds, wash his sheep, or indulge in some such occupation, and on reaching the river, ere he has had time perhaps to make his first cast, to the fisherman's dismay, down come weeds or foul water, and the day's sport, on which he had so fondly reckoned, is knocked on the head. In Hampshire and Wiltshire, perhaps the two very best counties in all Britain for trout, such disappointments are very frequent. To the man who lives on or near to a river these contretemps do not so much matter ; but if perchance a friend, to whom a day's fishing is a rare treat, happens to be his guest, and he is anxious to show the latter all the sport he can, disappointment is peculiarly distressing. I fear that on such occasions one needs all one's Christian charity, and anger, hatred, and every evil feeling wage war against forbearance. There is nothing for it but to reel up and go home.

I always feel sorry for those who, being keen sportsmen, and who but very rarely get an opportunity of indulging in their favourite sport, have all their hopes dashed by reason of impossible weather, or some such calamity as the foregoing. The tackle so carefully got together, and looked over so many times before the arrival of the all too scanty holiday, is useless. The anticipation

of fish to be caught at such and such particular spots, on the perhaps well-known, well-remembered stream, is anticipation and no more. I have so often witnessed such bitter disappointments as these. Weather, of course, no one can alter; but it does seem too bad that at Whitsuntide, and such-like times, when so many business-men look forward to enjoying a few days' fishing, the farmers and others should have so little thought and consideration as to select that very time for cutting weeds, etc. Yet such is invariably the case in some districts with which I am well acquainted, and year after year, especially if Whitsuntide is at all late, the same thing occurs. The weed-cutting fiend is in truth a terrible bugbear to the fisherman. It may be that the latter has been fishing for an hour or two, when he notices a small green patch come floating round the bend of the river above him. He tries to put away the fears which present themselves to him, and to conclude that it is nothing—'a piece of lodged weed, perhaps.' As it passes him, however, he cannot help seeing that the stalks appear freshly cut, and on looking up the water again he sees another bunch appearing, and then more and more come down, and it is all too evident that the foul work has begun. A man in a cart passes over the bridge, and he asks him where the weeds are coming from.

'Up at Longbridge Meads,' is the reply.

'Will they be cutting there to-morrow?' he again asks.

'Yes; I reckon they'll be on at it the best part of the week between there and Stockley; they've a main bit to cut, for there's the little river as well. They ain't cut that yet.'

'All this week, and this is only Monday!' ejaculates the crestfallen angler to himself.

The carter goes on his way, and begins to whistle as he sees the sign of the roadside pot-house round the corner; and if our friend does feel inclined to go for the owners of Longbridge and Stockley Meads, jump on his rod or shy his fishing-basket, tackle, everything, into the stream, who can blame him? For months he has looked forward to this annual outing. It has cost him some hard work, trouble, and no little expense, to get away even for the few wretched days he can spare or be spared from business. The river is well stocked and in good order, the weather perfect, for a wonder; and now these confounded weeds have spoiled everything. There is absolutely nothing for it but to go, and so he sadly and wearily returns to his lodgings or inn, packs up his belongings and departs, much to the dismay of his landlady, who is thereby also a loser.

There are, of course, plenty of rivers in which such troubles are unknown—rivers where they

never cut weeds because there are no weeds to cut, and where sheep-washing does not mar one's sport ; but such streams are for the most part rocky, small, or shallow, and the fish in them are insignificant specimens. Where, however, the stream is strong, even though the trout be small, they can afford no little fun on light tackle ; and it requires some careful handling to land so small a fish as one of only a quarter of a pound, especially if the banks are wooded, for such troutlets jump and tug hard in the rough water-way, and can make a stiffish rod bend as much as would a two-pounder in a more placid river. Such trout, too, are brilliant, healthy little fish, and the very best of good eating ; they have to work hard for their living, and are quick to seize every opportunity of obtaining it, and so, if the fisherman can keep out of sight, and cast his fly deftly over them, they will dash at it and hook themselves almost before it has reached the water.

No trout are, perhaps, more beautiful in colour and form than these liliputians, and the weather must indeed be unsuitable for fishing when an experienced hand cannot secure several brace of them, not including those which he may return to the river as being too small to retain. Now and again a fish of half a pound, or even one of a pound weight, may reward his efforts. Such captures, are, however, by no means frequent, and

he will have to be content with quarter-pounders. No one who calls himself a fisherman should hesitate to return to the river any fish of less than this weight.

Of recent years many of our rivers have been stocked with Lochleven trout; nor for shape, dash, and edible qualities can they be surpassed. The shape of a true Lochleven fish is, I consider as perfect as it can be, and there is as much difference between the lines of such fish and those of the ordinary trout as there is between those of a racing-yacht and a coal-brig. They are very bold and fight hard, though after the first brilliant rush, which is more like that of a salmon, they speedily give in. Many a time I have hooked one of these fish in our Hampshire streams, and for the moment believed that I had caught some veteran monster; but on reeling up and landing it, have been not a little surprised to find a fish of but a pound and a half or thereabouts. When they first feel the hook they will at times spring high into the air and try one's tackle sorely, especially if they are of any size and in good condition. In colour they differ considerably from the brown trout, and are more silvery; the red spots, too, are absent. Their flesh is as pink as that of a sea-trout, and the flavour peculiarly delicate. Nor do I think that, although the original fish come from Lochleven itself—a loch in which there are

no less than four thousand acres of water—they are, when laid down in rivers suitable for their well-being, any better in the former than they are in the latter. Indeed, I am almost inclined to the belief, judging from my own experiences of both, that they are, in many instances, inferior.

Doubtless they exercise a very powerful influence for good in those streams where fresh blood is required, and in which the fish have become dull and wanting in dash and vigour. But good as they are, and well as they thrive in streams which are suitable for them, I should, I think, were I desirous of importing the breed to any particular river, and the distance and expense were not too great, prefer to get the ova or fry direct from the Leven fishery, to obtaining it, so to speak, secondhand from fish imported thence, though it is quite possible that the adult fish from which such ova or fry may have been bred, may be more fully developed in the latter case than in the former. I do not positively assert that the trout in the loch are better as regards their sporting capabilities, etc., than their river descendants, but I do know that they are very brilliant fighters and rise freely, and so large an expanse of water resembles the sea rather than an ordinary fresh-water lake; and indeed I have known the waters of the loch so rough as to preclude a boat from going out for any ordinary

purpose, the waves curling and the 'white water' dashing about like a miniature sea. Fish bred and brought up under such conditions as these must surely be as hardy and bold as any of their species can well be. And so I should give the preference to such parentage.

I do not know if the little trout which inhabit our more rocky streams, and the moor and other brooks in these islands, were to be transported to any of our rivers, such as the Test, Itchen, Hampshire Avon, etc., which are prolific in fly-food, would, provided they were young enough for the experiment to be made, grow to the size of the fish which belong to the latter rivers? But I am of opinion that they would not; their descendants of the second or third generation perhaps might do so, but it is my belief that the species, if such it may be termed, has, by reason of scarcity of food, etc., become dwarfed and stunted. They would doubtless improve rapidly, and if not fully matured when moved from the one river to the other, would attain to greater size than if left in their own stream.

I believe these fish to have been always small of their kind. True it is that here and there one of a respectable size may be taken; such fish are doubtless 'master-trout,' old stagers which keep all other fish which are inclined to trespass on the territory which they have annexed, on the

principle of 'might is right,' at a respectable distance, and so ever secure the lion's share of such food as there may be, to say nothing of their indulging in a little occasional cannibalism.

In some rivers there are as many as two or three distinct varieties of the common trout, and in one river on which I used to fish many years ago, and which, not very far from its mouth, is joined by another smaller river, the trout are strangely different; those in the main stream being in colour and markings unlike those in the tributary. There is no apparent reason for this dissimilarity, inasmuch as the conditions of both rivers are precisely alike. A similar difference also exists between the trout in the Test. There, however, the Lochleven variety may be included. There are this latter kind, the ordinary brown trout, and what are called the Test trout. The last-named are devoid of red spots, somewhat plain, and flatsided, but very game and sporting fish, rising well at the fly, fighting hard when hooked, attaining to great size, and of the most delicate flavour when cooked. It is quite possible that these fish may have been the result of intermarriage between the brown and the sea trout, the latter, together with the salmon, having a nearly free run from the mouth of the river at Redbridge up to Romsey, where there are mills, and beyond which a salmon can but rarely ascend; some few

fish in a season may perhaps succeed in doing so if the water is high enough to admit of their making the attempt during the spawning period ; but at the same time, so far as my experience of the river above Romsey extends, and for several years I fished both above and below the latter town, I do not think that the brown trout is as plentiful as the Test trout. This may be accounted for by the latter being the more powerful and pugnacious of the two, and their having thinned out the former. However, as I have no statistics to produce in favour of such an argument, this is purely theoretical, and merely my own idea as to what may have caused the difference between the two fish. The Lochleven trout are a more modern innovation in the river, and whether they have joined forces with the other trout during the breeding season, since their introduction, I cannot say. Such may perhaps be the case, but the varieties of which I speak existed prior to the introduction of the Lochleven fish.

I have noticed during several seasons, when salmon-fishing in the Test early in March, that a few brown trout are annually caught with the salmon-fly, which they have had the audacity to take ; and these fish have invariably been in the most perfect condition. But it is always the brown trout ; the others do not show so early in the season, and in the upper portions of the same

river, neither variety is in a condition fit to take before the first or second week in April, nor even then are they any too forward or strong.

The very term, 'a trout stream,' conjures up all sorts of pleasant thoughts and fancies. How many streams there are which are falsely so called, and must be numbered with the 'have beens'! A trout-stream devoid of trout is, like an empty stable, an altogether sad affair. In former days every stream suitable for the habitation of trout was doubtless more or less well stocked with fish. Apart from the depressing picture presented by a stream denuded of its natural tenants, from the fisherman's point of view, much of the charm which such a river would otherwise possess for everyone must be wanting. The life and soul of the water is dead and gone; here and there, perhaps, some slimy eel may send a few bubbles to the surface, but the latter is no longer, as of yore, broken with the circles made by rising fish. The very kingfishers, those (I grieve to say) lovely pests to a trout-stream, have also deserted it, and the water itself, instead of being clear and sparkling, wears an unpleasant tinge; the stones, too, on the shallows look dull and lustreless. If the pools are in any way disturbed, the water is at once blackened, and a foul stench arises. Yet this was, and not so long ago either, a well-known trout-stream. It is hard to believe it, but such

was, nevertheless, the case. In the village over the fields there are many who can tell you that when the old squire owned the property things were very different ; but when he died and the estate was bought by the company which set up the works, the hideous chimney of which is visible for miles round, the fish rapidly disappeared, by reason of the filth from the manufactory, and it is now many a day since a trout has been seen.

Nor is the foregoing at all an exaggerated description. Scarce a county in England which does not possess one or more rivers in a more or less similar condition from similar causes. I may go much further, and at once state that I do not believe that there is one single river in England which is not to a certain extent polluted. And yet there is an Act entitled the 'Rivers Pollution Act,' and its terms are, roughly speaking, as follows :

'Every person who puts, or causes, or permits to be put, or to fall, or to be carried into any stream, so as to interfere with its flow, or to pollute its waters, the solid refuse of any manufactory, manufacturing process, or quarry, or any rubbish, cinders, or waste, or any putrid or solid matter, will be guilty of an offence against the Act.'

The Act also contains prohibitions against allowing solid or liquid sewage matter to be put,

or to flow into any stream of water. (*Vide* the Rivers Pollution Prevention Act, 1876.)

That a coach-and-four may be driven through any Act of Parliament is a saying as true as it is old. What, I ask, is the good of the foregoing Act if it is permitted to be so flagrantly and generally ignored? Can any farce be more truly farcical? It is about time that something were done to put matters straight. I cannot at the present moment, though I have tried to do so, call to mind any one single river in England, out of the many with which I am acquainted, and have fished in, which is not polluted in a greater or less degree, and I could, moreover, give the names of rivers, and where and how they are so polluted. Everybody who knows them is aware that such is the case, but then, when it comes to taking any active part to prevent the nuisance, everybody becomes nobody.

Salmon, trout, and grayling must have clean water in which to live and thrive, and clean beds on which to spawn. It is not much to ask, yet this reasonable request is denied them. Where trout are dwindling in a stream, one is informed that it is the work of 'otters,' 'Jack herons'—(why always Jack, I know not)—everything, anything, but what it really is. When I am so informed I invariably view my informant with some considerable suspicion. Ten to one but

he has a finger in the pie, or he would not be so ready with his explanation. Otters and herons are, doubtless, capable of inflicting very considerable damage on a river ; so also are kingfishers (these latter must ever be free of the stream); but otters and herons have always existed, and yet there used to be plenty of trout also. How is this argument to be overcome? Again, do otters and herons discolour the water, and choke up the bed of the river with filthy slime? No, my friend, it is the doing of the chemical works or manufacturing company over there, in which you have a share, or which you are well aware are now in treaty with you for the purchase of those fields upon which they want to build; and well you know it too—no one knows it better—but the truth sticks in your throat and cannot escape you.

CHAPTER II.

Trout-spawning—Perils of Spawning Fish—The ‘Water-drowner’—Process of Spawning—Spawning-beds—Late-spawning Trout—Early Condition of Spawn-eaters—Large Trout in Lower Test—Mr. Kendle’s Specimens of such Trout—Mr. Butt, Taxidermist—Growth of Trout—Experimental Feeding of Trout—Thames Trout—‘*Salmo Ferox*.’

It had been my intention to refer to the spawning of trout in the previous chapter, but as I found that the latter was growing somewhat over-long I decided to leave it for the present one.

Trout spawn in October, November, or December, the time varying very considerably in different rivers, and according to the season. As a rule, however, they begin to draw up to the spawning-beds about the second or third week in September. At first they appear to content themselves with darting about around the latter, and selecting a suitable spot for the transaction of their family affairs. At these times they are somewhat indifferent to the charms of an artificial fly, and such food as they consume is for the most part taken under water. At this period, and later on,

they are very easily secured by poachers and such unscrupulous folk, for they are so intent upon the business they have in hand as to be easily approached, and if they are scared for the time will very quickly return and play about in an all too confident manner.

Those fish which eventually elect to thread their way up the smaller streams and ditches, as a great number do, are very much at the mercy of any evil-disposed person ; and where rivers are not carefully watched, numberless fish are poached out. At times these small streams and ditches run dry, and the wretched fish are helplessly stranded.

Where the spawning-beds are insufficient or unsuitable, the inducement for fish to leave the main river is very considerably increased, and the small side-streams in which the flow of water may be fairly constant, and which can be well watched, are an advantage to a river, for such not only form quiet, suitable spawning places, but it is ever at the mouths of these streams, where they enter the main river, that the best fish are to be caught during the season.

In districts where there are water-meadows, unless the water-keepers are on the alert, the trout are apt to suffer considerably from the mal-practices of the individuals called 'water-drowners,' who have charge of the various hatches, for these

men have every facility for taking fish both in and out of season, and nothing is easier than to draw off the water by raising a hatch. The result may be well imagined. It matters little to these people whether the fish are in season or not, they can always get sixpence or a pot of beer for a good fish, and, failing such remuneration, they can consume it themselves. Where there is an efficient water-keeper, the hatches should be padlocked, and the keys of them kept in his possession.

After they have spawned, trout drop downstream again to their former stations. The process of spawning is a somewhat interesting one. The fish, which are at this period in pairs, after they have found a suitable place to spawn in, set to work to clean and prepare it as best they can; and when they consider it is to their satisfaction, they rush at the bed, both fish taking their turn at the work, and hollow out a grooved channel in it. They then for a time lie parallel to each other a few inches apart, now and again closing sideways together. The female then deposits her spawn in the groove which has been made, and the male milts on it. They then cover the groove over, and the action of the water does the rest. The due preparing of the bed and covering up of the spawn occupy some considerable time. While the female is busy in depositing her spawn the

male fish keeps watch and ward over her, and will at once attack any other fish which may chance to be prying about. It is curious to note what trouble fish will take in order to make a suitable spawning-bed, and marvellous how large a quantity of gravel or sand they contrive to collect. These mounds are, when the river is low in the summer, very plainly visible. A person ignorant of such matters would not recognise them. To a fisherman they are welcome indications of the prosperity of the river. The places selected for them are generally at the head of some pool, in the shallower water, or on what are termed the 'flats' of a river in contradistinction to the more rapid portion. Francis Francis states that there are some rivers, of which he quotes the Wandle as an instance, in which the trout do not spawn until February, and that there are a few in which they may be found spawning as late as March. These latter are, however, very exceptional cases; nor do I know what is the cause why these rivers should be so very much later. Of course the fish are in such cases correspondingly backward in getting into condition.

Yarrell mentions a case where two specimens of the common trout, which were taken early in January, were found to be full of the roe of the bull-trout, which they had been eating, and as these two fish were in unusually good condition

for the time of year, and very brilliant in colour, such was believed to be due to the fact of their having availed themselves of such food, which is of an albuminous nature. In the previous chapter I made mention of the fact of some few brown trout being annually taken in the lower Test by salmon fishermen early in March, and of their invariably being in good condition; whereas in the upper portions of the same river it is not until many weeks later on that the fish are in any condition at all. Now, as the lower Test is a salmon river, and a well-stocked one, the reason is not far to seek why these trout are so forward in their condition. It is my belief that it is because they have been fattening themselves on the salmon-spawn.* Since, as I have observed, but very few salmon ever ascend the Test above Romsey, by reason of the mills there, the fish in the upper portion of the river, not obtaining the same free living as their brethren of the lower waters, are longer in recovering their strength. Very beautiful and sporting, too, are these brown trout of the lower Test; and no wonder, when they have the advantage of such aldermanic fare. They are unfortunately by no means as plentiful as they might and used to be, for since the salmon fishing has been better preserved and more generally

* My friend Mr. Kendle will not allow that this is the case. He may be right; I only state my own ideas on the subject.

cared for—it now being a salmon river of some note—the trout have most certainly either become less plentiful than they were formerly, or have given up rising as freely, and taken rather to feeding under water.

Such trout as there are in the river are of considerable size, and I have seen some which could rival a salmon in proportion. One which I saw on several occasions, but could not succeed in capturing, must have been quite twelve pounds in weight. My friend Mr. Kendle, the agent to the estate, has two of these large trout, which were taken some two or three seasons ago, one by himself and another by a friend, of nine and ten pounds respectively. These fish, which, despite their great size, were in the height of condition and beauty, were stuffed by Mr. Butt, of Wigmore Street (formerly Mr. R. Ward's foreman). Nor could anything be more perfect than the way in which they have been set up and mounted. The work of the true naturalist is very apparent, and yet the accessories are so few and simple. The fish appear alive, and ready to dart off at the slightest alarm. Both fish are in the same case. Mr. Butt also stuffed a large trout for me, and performed the work so admirably that he received the order for these two fish. I can most strongly advise any of my readers who may desire to have specimens of fish stuffed, to send them to Mr.

Butt, for his work is so very good. But at the same time I may as well take this opportunity of stating that I have the greatest objection to recommending any tradesman, save for the benefit of the reader. I do not wish to make this work a medium for advertisements. When I know and have proved such and such a shop to be the best with which I am acquainted for the purchase of any article, I consider it to be my duty to the reader to inform him, but solely and entirely for *his* benefit, in order that he may rely on procuring what he may require, and the best of its kind. Nor do I intend to study economy, for fishing-gear is one of those things which must be good, and nothing but the best is reliable.

All this, however, is, I fear, digression, but the present opportunity seemed a fitting one, and I am anxious to be able, thus early in the work, to clear myself from the possibility of being accused of any unworthy motive in mentioning the names of tradesmen. I shall therefore feel freer to do so, now that I have had my say on the subject. Although I may make such mention, I do not wish it to be inferred that such firms as I may refer to are the *only* ones where the requisite may be obtained, but those with which I am best acquainted, and whose work I know to be unimpeachable.

As regards the growth of trout, there is but

little to be said further than what I have already remarked, viz., that fly-food (salmon-roe, perhaps, excepted!), is the most suitable and the most nourishing. In proof of which statement it may be of interest to quote the results of an experiment which was made many years ago in the South of England, with a view of ascertaining the value of different foods. Yarrell makes mention of it as being recorded by Mr. Stoddart in his 'Art of Angling as practised in Scotland,' and I quote from him :

'Fish were placed in three separate tanks, one of which was supplied daily with worms, another with live minnows, and a third with those small, dark-coloured water-flies which are to be found moving about on the surface under banks and sheltered places. The trout fed with worms grew slowly, and had a lean appearance ; those nourished on minnows, which, it was observed, they darted at with great voracity, became much larger; while such as were fattened upon flies only, attained in a short time prodigious dimensions, weighing twice as much as both the others together, although the quantity of food swallowed by them was in nowise so great.'

Roughly speaking, it takes, under favourable conditions, three years for a trout to grow to a pound in weight. It is therefore quite possible to arrive at a tolerably accurate conclusion as

regards the age of such fish. As I have before explained, after a certain age trout deteriorate in size and condition. Some fish will grow to a great size before they show any signs of such deterioration, while others again will never reach more than two or three pounds weight; and in the rocky streams of the North and elsewhere they may never attain to more than a pound or a pound and a half, everything depending upon the food they obtain during their youth.

The great size to which Thames trout grow is well known, but I do not intend to refer to these fish, since, as they can hardly be included in the list of fish which rise at a fly, their capture being invariably effected by spinning or trolling, they do not come within the limits of this work, which I desire to confine solely to fly-fishing.

I think I have for the present given enough consideration to the ordinary trout, somewhat disjointedly, perhaps, but I am desirous to avoid treating the subject in anything like a stereotyped fashion, trusting by such digressions as I may make from time to time to carry the reader along with me, rather as if we were strolling together beside the banks of the stream, than by trying to string a number of facts together, and having made the mass as dry and unpalatable as possible, to cram them down his throat. I know full well, from my own experience, the strong inclination

which arises to pitch such a work, be it ever so good, or even valuable, into the fire, out of the window, anywhere, rather than to have to wade through it and take it all in.

Of salmon, bull-trout, sea-trout, etc., I intend to treat later on. Such fish are migratory, and require a portion of the work to themselves. There remains but one other variety of fresh-water trout for me to refer to, viz., the great gray trout, or the *Salmo ferox*, a fish which is to be found in very few of our lakes, viz., Lochs Awe, Luggan, Shin; Loyal, and Assynt, in Scotland, Lough Neagh in Ireland, and Ullswater in Cumberland. They are *said* to be found in all these lakes, and there may, for all I know to the contrary, be others which they also inhabit; my own belief, however, is that they are extremely rare anywhere. If I remember rightly, I think that both Windermere and Derwentwater lakes are also believed to possess them.

These fish run to an enormous size at times. One captured in Ullswater is declared to have scaled between fifty and sixty pounds. They are very voracious, and play havoc with the smaller fish, and will, like the pike, seize a bait and permit themselves to be dragged by it, and if they miss it, again rush at it. Although, when comparatively small fish of a pound or two in weight, they

will rise at a trout-fly, when they are matured they are only to be caught by spinning with a trout, or a night-line. They are, when full grown, very handsome fish, despite the extreme size of their heads. In colour they are a deep purple-brown, shading off into a red-gray, and of an orange-yellow hue on the belly; but the colouring, like that of the mackerel, rapidly fades after death. When cooked the flesh is yellowish, and is by no means as good eating as might be expected.

I fancy but few of my readers have had the fortune to secure a good specimen of this fish. Should, however, such luck be theirs, and they should obtain one of large size, I should advise their sending it to Mr. Butt for preservation as a curiosity. Fortunately the species is not often met with. I say fortunately, because were they abundant in any of the lakes which they inhabit, no other fish would have the ghost of a chance of living in the same water, for they are the most insatiable cannibals, and are capable of inflicting more damage in the way of the wholesale slaughter of other fish than any two pike of the same size, their activity being superior to that of the latter, and with their terrible teeth there is no hope of escape for any unlucky fish they may chance to seize.

The name *Salmo ferox* far better expresses

the general character of this fish than that of the 'great gray trout.' I must admit that I have never had the luck to catch one of these lake sharks, though I have seen specimens of them, and such knowledge as I possess respecting them has been acquired from what I have heard and read; but the authority from which I quote is reliable, and may prove of service to the reader, and enable him to recognise the fish should he at any time be fortunate enough to catch one in good condition.

CHAPTER III.

Fishing-gear—Trout Rods—Greenheart—Material and Workmanship of Rods—Washaba—Blue Mahoe—Hickory—Cane Rods—Wear and Tear of Rods—Shape of Rods—Selection of Rods—Mr. Foster's Steel-centred Rods—The 'St. Lucas' Rods—Length of Trout Rods—Castle-Connell Rods—Spliced Rod *v.* Ferruled—Rod Fittings—Ferruling—Rod Rings—Winch Fittings—Spears—Spare Tops—Waxed Silk, etc.—Binding a Rod when Broken—How to Wax Silk—Patience under Difficulties—A Broken Line and how to Splice it—A Reel gone wrong—Self-help in Difficulties—Use of Cutting-pliers—How to extract a Hook.

THE list of what may be termed fishing-gear is, even for a fly-fisherman, a somewhat long one, and it is, moreover, absolutely indispensable that each and all of the several articles should be not only practically good, but as good of their kind as it is possible. There is an old saying which I have learned to detest, *viz.*, that 'a bad workman finds fault with his tools,' for while it is possible that a good workman may be able to make shift with indifferent tools, the reverse is the case in hands unskilful. Nor can a good workman, be he ever so skilful, make as good a job with bad tools as with good; it is rather the

good workman who finds fault with bad tools, and from not being used to them, will give up the labour before him in sheer disgust at having to use them.

The difficulties of fly-fishing are quite enough without their being further increased to a beginner by reason of his being handicapped with rubbishing tackle. Good tackle is extremely difficult to procure; even an old hand may at times be deceived into purchasing an article which can, by means of varnish, etc., be made to appear good, and yet prove utterly worthless when put to the test. The fisherman, therefore, is very much in the hands of his tackle-maker, and, as in every other trade, there are tricks in that of fishing-tackle manufacture. Good work and materials are never cheap, and good both must be. The fish are in the river and the angler is on the bank, and it is the desire of the latter to secure the former. His tackle being the means he proposes to employ, it stands to reason that forming, as he hopes and intends it may, a link between him and the fish, that link must, from the rod in his hand to the hook in the mouth of the fish, be as perfect as it well can be, and free from any flaw, or else it must break, and he be left lamenting.

The rod must be our first consideration, and it is necessary to go into the matter of material,

shape, and proportion. Of the woods generally in use for the manufacture of rods at the present day, greenheart is perhaps the most common. It is a somewhat heavy wood, capable of bending freely, and yet possessing the power of regaining its shape the instant the tension on it is relaxed, properties which render it very suitable for the purpose; but at the same time it is extremely brittle, and a fall may shiver it, even in so light an article as a trout-rod. It is nevertheless the wood which I myself prefer to any other, for despite its weight, which latter *is* a matter for some consideration (especially for dry-fly fishing, when the arm is at work unceasingly), it has great power, and if duly seasoned and made, a greenheart rod can force a line against the wind as no other rod can. It possesses what may be termed 'backbone,' and yet, if properly handled, permits of the greatest delicacy in casting. But there are rods and rods, and there is greenheart and greenheart; nothing but the best and most flawless wood should be used for the purpose, and it *must* be well seasoned. It cannot be too perfectly seasoned, and this remark holds good regarding any wood which may be used for fishing-rods. Let the reader but remember how slender a thing a trout-rod is, even the strongest, and reflect how perpetually it is in motion when being used (in dry-fly fishing

especially), the strain which it is called upon to bear, and the combined effects of wet, wind, and sun, to say nothing of rough usage; and yet this slender slip of wood is expected to bend and never break, and to retain its original rigidity and truth of shape for an indefinite period. Material and manufacture must indeed be good to stand all this. Varnish won't do it. The latter serves to preserve the wood, etc., of a good rod, and may help a dishonest maker to sell a bad one, but there its uses end. It is the material and workmanship which underlie the shining surface which are the chief points to be considered. Varnish is cheap enough, but, as I have said, good work and good material are not to be had for nothing. Of the two, I should feel inclined to lay the greater stress on the necessity for good material, for that will last, and perhaps make up again; but no skill can convert bad material into good, and if the wood is not thoroughly seasoned, no matter how beautifully fitted the mountings may be, in process of time it shrinks away from the ferrulings, and the rod falls to pieces, or breaks by reason of the undue play at the joints.

Some people advocate the use of washaba wood, and I believe it is excellent; but as I have had no experience of it, I cannot express an opinion. I think it is inclined to be heavy,

more so even than greenheart. Blue Mahoe is also another excellent wood for rods, and has of late years been much used for the purpose.

Hickory is, of all such woods, the lightest; but if ever so well seasoned, it fails to preserve its shape as perfectly as the other woods. It is otherwise most charming for rods. This one drawback is, however, an insuperable one. I have a salmon-rod made of hickory in my possession, and it is excellent for grilse; but it is all shapes, and I detest the sight of it. It is, however, so light that I can use it throughout a long day without feeling the least tired.

Of the four woods which I have enumerated, I pin my faith to a good honest greenheart; and if I cannot kill fish with such a rod—provided it is well made—as well as and better than with any other, the fault is my own.

Though I have not included it in the list of woods used for rods, there is another material which has of late years found general favour, viz., cane. I do not own a cane rod myself, for two reasons: firstly, because such rods are very costly; and secondly, because, though I have frequently used them for a short time, at the solicitation of friends who have now and again requested me to try their rods, I have, with but two exceptions, never found any of them quite to my liking. One of these excep-

tions was a salmon-rod by Macdougall, the other a twelve-foot trout-rod by Messrs. Eaton and Deller. Both of these rods were very beautiful to handle, and, though extremely light, very powerful. Whether they would stand the same amount of wear and tear as a well-seasoned greenheart, I am not prepared to say; but I must admit that when rods cost as much money as did these—thirteen guineas having been paid for one, and seven or eight for the other—I could not feel the same pleasure in using them as a more moderate-priced one, and I should, I am sure, be afraid to try any very dangerous cast with them for fear of a smash up. When testing the latter of these two rods for a friend, who eventually purchased it, I succeeded in making some sensational casts, the distance being measured from the reel to the end of the line, over grass. If I remember rightly I think that I covered some twenty-six or twenty-seven paces, with ease; the line I was using being also one of Messrs. Eaton and Deller's patent lines, to which I intend to refer further on.

As regards the price of cane rods, I am well aware that they, of all rods, cannot be made cheaply. Mr. Halford, in his book on dry-fly fishing, explains very clearly how they are manufactured, and why they must of necessity be expensive. First of all there is the cane itself,

the selection of which requires the very greatest care, and canes suitable for the purpose are extremely difficult to procure. Then there is the seasoning, and this latter process takes some considerable time; then comes the splitting or rending the canes, which requires great skill and care, each joint of the rod being composed of no less than six such strips laid together in the form of a hexagon. These are then glued together, and the glue requires a very considerable time to set and harden, often many months; and after all this trouble the rod is probably unsatisfactory to the maker, and it has to be laid aside. When the reverse is the case there is the ferruling, fitting, and binding, the latter being at every two or three inches throughout the entire length of the rod. The rings are then fitted, and the whole is varnished. Now such a process is tedious, and the reader may well imagine how many rods must be reckoned as failures by the maker to every one which is satisfactory to him. Therefore, seven or eight guineas is not too much for him to ask for a perfect rod; but it will be readily seen that all this work cannot, even by the aid of the best machinery, be turned out cheaply. Many of the cane rods which are sold at low prices are not only made of inferior, unseasoned canes, but instead of being split up into parts of a hexagon, and none but the very

soundest and best portions of cane retained, good, bad, and indifferent pieces are all glued up together, and if the balance of the rod is imperfect, the *outside* of the cane is shaved down in order to remedy the defect. Now since it is the outside of the cane, its enamel, which gives the chief strength to the wood, the evil of removing it is manifest, and no amount of varnish can ever replace it, save as regards the appearance when new. Cane rods, even the best, require to be varnished annually, and the tyings well looked to, otherwise the joints are apt to spring open, the wet to get in between them, and the rod is thereby, of course, rendered useless.

I find it no easy matter to obtain a solid wood rod, even the best of its kind, which will last me more than two or three seasons. I may as well state that during the season I use my rod almost daily, and it is subjected to very heavy work in dry-fly fishing; for it requires certainly four or five false casts in the air to dry the fly for every cast which is delivered, and this, with a considerable length of line out, in wind, wet, or hot sun, as the case may be, is a severe trial to a rod. After a season or two it loses its elasticity, or rather, I should say, rigidity, for it becomes weak, and unable to sustain the same length of line as at first. For ordinary fly-fishing, where the casting required is less frequent and a wet-fly is used, a

rod may last a lifetime, and for such fishing the line may be lighter than when fishing up-stream with a dry-fly. For mayfly fishing in the latter style, where the feathers of the fly require a great deal of drying, the strain on a rod is very heavy, and I may also add the strain on the arm of the fisherman ; for it is trying work, and can make the strongest and most supple wrist ache intensely. So trying is it, that one person of my acquaintance—who, by the way, is one of the very best of our Hampshire fishermen, and famous for his skill with a rod—prefers to change his fly for a fresh one, when wetted, to the labour entailed by having to dry it, and the strain to which his rod is subjected. He certainly kills a tremendous quantity of fish, and I am told that he is one of the few men who can *cast* a natural fly, not merely a mayfly, without flicking it off ; such a feat is difficult enough with a mayfly on a blow-line, but with an ordinary midge-fly, such as an olive-dun, etc., it requires an unusual amount of delicacy and skill.

The more modern trout-rods are somewhat different in shape to those of former days. Greenheart is more extensively used than it used to be, and being a heavy wood, demands that the rod should be lightened proportionately, and no more wood retained than is absolutely necessary. The lightening of the rod is effected by reducing

the butt above the portion where it is grasped by the hand.

The chief point to be attended to in the selection of a rod is to secure sufficient power from the butt to the middle, with a due regard to the necessary elasticity. A top-heavy trout-rod may be very powerful, and allow of longer casts being made against a wind, but its own weight wears it out, and tires the user. On the other hand, the reverse will not do, for there is then a lack of power, and the strain is over-much for the top joint, which is necessarily too tapered. The play must extend from the top to the lower half of the middle joint, and the balance in the hand should be so perfect, that in the motion of bringing the rod back after a cast there should be no undue strain on the hand and wrist of the user.

I may be thought peculiar or stupid, or peculiarly stupid, but I find it most difficult to select either a rod or a gun for myself in a shop. I cannot make sure of getting what will suit me until I have tried them, and tried them well—the result being that I have often wasted a considerable amount of money in such purchases, and been consequently disappointed. I would almost prefer to get a friend to make the selection for me, and I have not infrequently, when choosing a rod in company with a friend, who was also purchasing at the same time, afterwards come to the

conclusion that his selection has been better than my own, though I may have had the advantage of far greater experience in such matters. I could wish that the case were otherwise, for, although I can never resist the temptation of purchasing a new rod if it appears what I like, I often get disgusted with it after a short time, and probably end by giving it away.

Like many fishermen, I possess a considerable number of rods. Some of these are excellent, or, I should say, have been so, but many are much the worse for wear. I have killed a great many heavy fish on them, and they have done me good service. Some few are still as good as they need be. If I entertain a preference for any, it is for one which is a four-jointed, ferruled trout-rod. I draw the attention of the reader to this fact because I intend to refer to it later on. I have killed no end of heavy fish on this rod, and I have used it for some eight or nine seasons. It has certainly been done up twice during that time, but as far as its power and elasticity are concerned, it is as good as ever. When I first purchased it it was over-stiff, but I persisted in using it, and thereby sprained my elbow-joint, and have never completely recovered from it. In order to make the rod more supple I scraped it with a piece of glass. This had the desired effect, but it was a risky measure to adopt,

and the merest piece of luck that I did not completely ruin it.

I possess two trout-rods which are steel-centred. This plan is the invention of the late David Foster, of Ashbourne, in Derbyshire, a noted angler and fishing-tackle maker, and the father of the Messrs. Foster who still continue the business.

Mr. Halford states that he is of opinion that cane-rods, steel-centred, cannot last, inasmuch as the unyielding nature of the metal, and the yielding texture of the cane, cannot act in unison, and he still further expresses his belief that such would be the result if ordinary wood were used instead of cane, and that the steel-centred cane rods are considerably more expensive than the already somewhat costly ordinary cane-rods.

This may be so, but as regards Mr. Foster's invention of steel-centring ordinary wood, I must beg to differ with him very decidedly. It is the one only point to which I could possibly take exception in either of the two works which he has written, and which I have found to be as valuable as they are practical and useful. The two rods I have, made by Mr. Foster, are simply perfection, and they have had work enough to try any rod which was ever made, and in all weathers. Their power is extraordinary, and yet they are very sensitive, more so than any other rods I ever handled, and this quality is very apparent when playing a

fish on fine tackle, the slightest movement being communicated to the hand. I have not only no fault to find with them, but nothing save the highest praise to award them. In price they are moderate, some 55s. or 60s. I, however, prefer those which are made with fittings for an ordinary reel, and would advise the reader, should he think of purchasing such a rod, to mention this in his order. If I required a new rod I should prefer to purchase one of these, and would sooner do so than any other description of rod with which I am acquainted.

I also possess another—a most wonderful little rod. I believe that the maker, Dr. Lucas, lives, or used to live, at Nottingham. It is the work of an artist and a sportsman: plain and unpretentious to a fault, but of perfect balance and wonderful power. The rings are very large, the top ring of steel, and the fittings of gun-metal. It is but a tiny rod, yet I can cast from eighteen to twenty yards with it. In small streams it is invaluable, and it is equally good for 'switching' as for casting. I only wish that it were a longer, larger rod, as for the work I require it is too small to be of general service to me. I have recently seen a fishing-reel also made by Dr. Lucas, and it appeared to me to be as practical and good of its kind as the rod. It is my intention to try and purchase one at the first opportunity.

As regards the length for a trout-rod there are a great many opinions. I speak, of course, of single-handed rods. The fashion of late years has been to reduce the length of rods very considerably, and I think that this has been carried to an excess. In my opinion no trout-rod, to be a good, all-round, serviceable rod, should be less than eleven feet six inches in length, and I prefer, for my own use, one of twelve feet. With any rod under the former length a long line becomes a nuisance, especially in high grass, and when it comes to long casting, the extra six inches make all the difference between reaching a fish easily or not reaching it at all, and if a rod of such a length is well made and well balanced, it is just as light to handle as a shorter rod. One might just as well advocate the driving a coach with an Australian stock-whip instead of an ordinary four-in-hand whip. The former would doubtless be a nuisance to one's self and everybody else. I am not fond of such toys myself, and dislike too short a rod as much as I do too short a gun. A short rod is all very well where long casts are never requisite, but when, as I say, it comes to long grass and a trout rising far off, the bother and exertion necessary to keep the line going and to prevent the fly catching in the surrounding obstructions are very great.

There is a description of rod very much used

in Ireland, called the Castle Connell, inasmuch as they are made at the place of that name. Of all abominable things to fish with these rods are, I consider, the most unsatisfactory. Those people who like them, and can use them, swear by them, and for switching, and a switch style of casting, they may be all very well. But they are, at the best, but limp, wobbly rods. It takes a considerable time to get into the way of using them, and I fail to see what possible advantage there is in taking the trouble to learn how to manage them ; for any good rod can perform all that they are capable of, and a great deal more which they cannot. They are made to splice in two pieces, and are excessively awkward to carry about by reason of their length.

And now, while referring to spliced rods, I may as well state that opinion is very much divided as to the merits of spliced rods over those which are ferruled. I hold to my own ideas on the subject, and I do not wish to influence my readers, but would prefer their forming their own judgment. Personally, I must say that I have quite failed to recognise the advantages claimed for spliced rods. I have owned several of them, and am forced to admit that I infinitely prefer ferruled rods. Setting aside the trouble of splicing the rod when required for use, and its awkwardness for carrying about, I do not like the action of spliced rods. I have

been frequently told that there is nothing like a spliced rod, and I have tried hard to believe it, and to like them. But each time I use them I am more confirmed in my opinion regarding them. There has been no fault in the splicing, for such has been most carefully done, and every chance has been given to the rod to work its very best. They always seem to me to be wanting in recovering power ; they are too pliant. They are very sensitive, and whether made for salmon or trout, are first-rate when a fish is hooked, and they exhibit great power ; but there ever seems to me to be something wanting when it comes to using them, and especially in heavy wind. I may be called a rank heretic for having such opinions, still more so for ventilating them. Nevertheless that for casting I prefer the ferruled rods, I am well aware that they do not and cannot last as long as spliced, and whenever there is a ferrule there must be a certain amount of weakness. I grant such is the case, and also that a ferruled rod when bent cannot describe as perfect an arc as one which is spliced. But all the same these very joints seem to me to afford the rigidity which I miss in a spliced rod. I will go even further than this in my heresy, and state that I actually prefer a four-jointed rod to one with three joints. I hope my reader will not infer that I should therefore prefer

one with five joints to the latter, because I do not consider that more than four are advisable. However, we may take it as a general rule that three are sufficient. As I say, the best rod in my collection is a four-jointed rod, and it is one of the very best rods I ever handled. I wish I knew the makers' name. I fancy it may have been Messrs. Allcock, of Redditch, but I do not know for certain. I regret that Mr. Cox (from whom I purchased it) has left business in Winchester, though he is very ably represented by Mr. George Currell, the well-known fisherman and tackle-maker.

It is essential that all the fittings of a rod should be as good of their kind as possible. Nothing is a greater nuisance than a badly-tempered ferrule, or one which is badly fitted. The ferrules, both male and female, should fit exactly, and in a well-finished rod the brazing should be double, *i.e.*, the whole of the male ferrule should be brazed, and the fitting should be so exact, that although it should be easy to take the rod to pieces, without the joints sticking, the latter should never work apart when put together, and though it is always advisable to tie the joints by means of the eyes, which are bound on the ferrule for this purpose, there should be no fear of their working apart, if the tying is at any time omitted.

There are several kinds of patent joints which

are made to obviate the necessity for tying, one of them, the 'Lockfast,' being especially good ; but I prefer the older-fashioned principle when it is well carried out.

The rings for a rod should be large enough. Nothing is gained by their being too small ; and whether they are 'standing' rings or 'lay-down,' the metal and the soldering should be of the best. Where standing rings are used, those which have the inside of the eye made to revolve, so that the parts of the rings which are most subject to move can be shifted from time to time, are the best. And there is also another kind of standing ring, the 'Snake' pattern, which is excellent. But standing rings are awkward for travelling, and are very apt to get knocked about. Were it not for this drawback they are preferable, but they must be made wide in the neck, as otherwise the line may twist round them. This, in the snake patterns, they cannot do. The top ring should be of steel ; brass wears out too soon, and a very few weeks' hard work will suffice for the line to cut clean through it, to the annoyance of the fisherman and the detriment of the line. I have on several occasions, on finding that my line failed to run freely, discovered that the top ring, being of brass, was worn quite through, and the line running through the second ring of the top joint. Of course, it is an easy matter to rig up a make-

shift top ring by means of a bent pin, etc. ; but all these things take time, and are a great nuisance, especially when fish are on the rise and every minute is of consequence, and it is, of course, always at such times that things will go wrong if they can.

The winch-fittings require to be as good and as carefully put on as the ferrules. Messrs. Hardy, of Alnwick, have patented an excellent winch-fitting. Some of the Irish rods are made with merely a hole drilled through the butt of the rod, the latter being furnished with a spike with a screw at its end, on which a thumb-nut is placed in order to keep it tight ; but they are always in the way, and are for ever fouling the line.

Every trout-rod should be furnished with a spike made to screw into the end of the butt ; it is most useful, and enables the rod to be kept upright when not in use. It is thus out of the way of danger, and is also handy for fitting on the line, cast, flies, etc. ; but this spear should not be made too pointed.

A spare top, where one can be carried either in the landing-net handle, or the hollow butt of the rod, is a luxury. I prefer to carry it in the former ; but I will warn the reader to be very careful respecting the description of screw or cap with which either rod or landing-handle is fur-

nished, if he elects to carry a spare top, for such screws and screw-caps have a playful habit of coming off, and the result is that they are not only lost, but the spare top also. For this reason, having lost several tops, I have given up carrying a spare top about with me, and prefer to trust to my being able to mend a broken top with a piece of waxed silk. The latter should always form a part of the fisherman's equipment, as also a small file to level any splicings which it may be necessary to make in such a case. If the smash is not too bad, it can be easily repaired by the river-side; but I would caution my reader, if he has the misfortune to have to so make good a damaged rod, to be careful to cut the splices long enough, and above all to see that they are cut so that the rings of the rod are true above each other. A little cobbler's wax put between the new splices will serve to still further secure them, and hold them while the waxed thread is being bound round.

The way to bind a rod is to lap a few turns of the silk round it, and then, placing the foot on the silk, to turn the joint in the hands, allowing more silk to pass under the foot as required. A long piece of silk goes a very short way in so binding a rod, and it is well to wax a good bit more than the estimated quantity, and to wind it on a piece of stick.

In waxing silk, the best plan is to double it

backwards and forwards three or four times over a nail, or anything of the kind which may be handy for the purpose, and to wax all these strands together as one, carefully unwinding and separating them afterwards, and working the wax well between the fingers before using. If the fingers are wetted the wax will not adhere to them. Nothing is more uncomfortable or likely to raise a blister than a piece of wax adhering to one's hand, for the rod becomes sticky, and every movement of it tends to create a gall.

I would urge the reader, whenever things seem to be going all wrong, as they do sometimes, to make up his mind to be as resolutely slow in his endeavours to put them straight as he possibly can be ; to quietly and deliberately fill and light up a pipe first of all, and if the fish are rising, and so increasing his vexation, to turn his back to the river, or walk away from the latter to where he can neither see nor hear them rise. It is doubtless a nuisance, but he must ever remember that it is his own fault, and that he has to make the best he can of it, and this he will never do if he is to lose his temper and allow himself to be flustered and hurried. Let the tangle appear never so inextricable, five minutes will suffice to clear it with the aid of a pin. It is but rarely that a rod is so hopelessly broken as to be incapable of being

made serviceable enough to fish on with during the rest of the day.

It happens at times that a line may be broken, and broken at a spot which apparently completely spoils it. Yet even this damage can be made good, and in the following way. Take the two broken ends and pick each one into two parts with a pin for about an inch. (Any line can be so unpicked.) Wax these ends slightly, and then, opening the picked-out portions, lay them into each other in the manner in which the thumbs and forefingers of two people cross when shaking hands, and then bind them carefully and tightly with fine waxed silk. When they are bound, roll the bound part on any hard substance, the butt of the rod will do if there is nothing better at hand. Such splicing will last a long time, and if varnished and allowed to thoroughly dry and harden, will run as perfectly through the rings as any other part of the line. The binding silk must, however, be fine.

Perhaps one of the worst things which can happen is when a reel gets out of order. But a little ingenuity and the blade of a strong knife will generally succeed in putting it to rights, and if not, there is always the alternative of cutting a stick, binding the line round it, and, by means of a slit in the top of it, making shift for a reel.

In the greater portion of the foregoing contre-

temps waxed silk will be found, if properly applied and well waxed, equal to the occasion. But it is always as well to carry two or more sizes of silk, from coarse to the finest procurable, and plenty of each, and the pale-yellow will ever be found the strongest. Pearsall's gossamer and coarser silks are among the best for fishing purposes

It is wonderful what one can do by means of a little waxed-silk, a pin, a knife, a file, and a little coil of fine copper-wire, in the way of repairing damages when fishing, and they are all so easily carried that there is no excuse for the fisherman ever being without them. I myself carry a small leathern case which contains a few such necessaries, and I cannot recount the times I have had occasion to congratulate myself on having this with me. Accidents will happen even to the most careful person ; but with the means of repair at hand one can rise superior to them.

I would add that a small pair of strong pliers, with cutting-sides, may be most useful, for it does at times happen that a hook may catch the fisherman and go into the flesh beyond the barb. The best way to extract it, if not too deeply lodged, is to cut off the gut, feathers, etc., and to carefully clean the shank of the hook ; then, with the pliers or fingers, force the barb still further into the flesh, but turning the point so as to again come out through the skin. If the hook is an eyed one,

and well tempered, no scissors will cut through it. Nothing but pliers will do so, as the eye must, of course, be removed before the hook can be forced through. If any wax, etc., is left on the shank, before pushing it through, it is very likely to cause a great deal of after irritation, as some of it is sure to be left in the flesh as the shank passes through. I have several times had to extract a hook in the manner above described, and on one occasion, not having my pliers with me, was forced to walk a long distance to borrow a pair. So I decided in future to always carry a pair with me.

I trust the reader may not think these trifles above his notice ; but since it is the smaller troubles which cause the greatest annoyance, I think it may be of possible service to him to know how, if he cannot avoid getting into trouble, to, at all events, make the best of a bad job.

CHAPTER IV.

Trout Reels—How to take a Reel to Pieces—Trout Lines—Messrs. Eaton and Deller's Patent Lines—Tapered Lines—Silk and Hair Lines—Necessity for drying Lines after Use—Messrs. Farlow's Patent Line-winder—How to uncoil a New Line—Use of Red-deer Suet—Caution respecting use of same—Trout Gut—Varieties of same—Mr. Ramsbottom, Manchester—How Gut is manufactured—How to make a Taper Cast—Selection of Gut—Horsehair Casts—How to knot Gut—Soaking Gut—Damping-box for Gut-casts—Damping-box for Gut-flies—Cutting-out Knots in Gut—Landing-nets—Shape of same—Utility of Long Staff to Landing-net—Short-handled Nets—Material recommended—Fishing-bags *v.* Baskets—Plan of Fishing-bag—'Freke' Bags—Wading Garments—Danger of not using Waders—Danger of Waders—Fishing-sockings and Socks—Brogues—Messrs. Cording's Wading-boots—Mackintosh Coat and Square.

THE reel, or winch as it is termed, is an article of no slight importance. Many people are far too apt to think that any reel will do, so long as it will wind and run freely, and that any size or weight will answer the purpose. As a point of fact, the reel requires to be perfectly adapted to the rod, and just any reel will not do. It seems a very inconsistent proceeding to take so much trouble, and to be at such expense, to procure a

well-balanced, well-fitted rod, and then to mar the whole, and upset the balance completely, by fitting on a cheap, worthless reel, which is either too light or too heavy. Where rods differ much in weight, they should have their own reels; and it is far better, when purchasing these, to get the best and simplest. The wear and tear in a reel is very considerable, and the internal mechanism needs to be very perfect and well tempered. There is a very great deal of difference between the price of a good reel and a common one. I myself am strongly in favour of metal reels as opposed to vulcanite. The latter are very light and nice to use, but a fall on a stone will shiver them to pieces; and this is too serious a calamity to run the risk of incurring. Multiplying reels are an abomination; but I think that the ordinary 'check' or 'click' reel is advisable, inasmuch as the check prevents the line overrunning and so fouling; and the sound, too, is far from unpleasant when a good fighting fish makes play from it. By all means let the reel be as large as the rod can carry to balance well; and it is a good plan to fill it about a third full with an old line, in order that the one in use can be more speedily wound up by reason of the circumference of the axle being thus increased. When purchasing a reel I would advise the reader to be very careful to see that the fitting of the inner plates, which are made

to revolve, is very accurate, and that there is not the slightest space between them and the outer plates. If there is, be the space ever so slight, the line is very likely to get in between them, and the most dreadful trouble is thereby caused, for the reel must be taken to pieces to get it out. In nearly all well-made reels there is a small hole which is left for the purpose of dropping in a little oil from time to time. Care should be taken to use suitable oil—that sold for sewing - machines or gun-oil is the best for the purpose, as these oils do not clog.

Should it be found necessary to take a reel to pieces, the following is the way :

Lay a piece of white paper or a handkerchief on the table or ground, unscrew the outer plate-screws on the handle side, and then, holding the inner and outer plates firmly with the fingers to keep them from moving, turn the handle the reverse way ; the screws which hold the bars can then, if necessary, be taken out, and the work is completed.

A good trout-rod reel cannot be purchased much under half a guinea, or even twelve or thirteen shillings ; and it is money well spent, and should not be grudged, if a good article is obtained.

Lines may be purchased for almost any price, from a penny a yard, up to twelve or thirteen shillings for thirty yards. Of course, it cannot be expected that the cheaper lines can possibly wear

as well or be as satisfactory as the best. A proper trout-line should be all silk—the purest and best silk. There are no end of lines to be purchased which are warranted pure silk—so they may be, but bad silk is as bad as any other inferior material; and there are, moreover, a great number of these lines which are warranted to be of silk in which there is very little, if any, silk at all. I have as yet, despite the number of lines I have bought at different times from different makers, never succeeded in finding any, save one description, what I consider a trout-line should be—and that is Messrs. Eaton and Deller's patent. Mr. Halford, in his book on Dry-fly Fishing, explains very fully the process of its manufacture. Suffice it to say that this line is of pure silk, the oil with which it is dressed being forced into it by means of an air-pump. It is then baked, and when thoroughly dry, rubbed down; the process of dressing with the oil and baking, etc., is repeated several times, and the result is a line not only perfectly dressed and well-nigh imperishable, but as supple as the softest kid, and very heavy for its size; the advantage of this latter being that a much finer line can be used, and that greater casting power is obtained than with one which, though perhaps much more bulky, is considerably lighter. I believe that the price of these lines for trout-rods is about twelve and sixpence, nor is it

at all excessive. They will wear out two or three cheaper lines, and instead of being hard and kinky when first taken into use, they run as smoothly and perfectly through the rings the first day as the last, and it is by no means easy to foul them, whereas the generality of lines are for ever getting into curls, and kinks, and knots, thereby wearing themselves out in no time.

Many of the best trout-lines are now made tapered at either end, with a view of greater casting-power being thereby obtained. Frankly speaking, I do not like them; they are, as a rule, made to taper far too suddenly.

Moreover, the ends of all lines must wear out sooner or later, and so the taper becomes shorter and shorter, until by degrees the line is done for. Again, when it becomes necessary to use a long line, the weight of one tapered is too great; the increased length is quite sufficient for the rod to sustain without the additional thickness. With a line dressed on Messrs. Eaton and Deller's principle, taper should be unnecessary. Such fads are all very well in theory, but they are not as practical as they ought to be, and it is never advisable, in all sporting requisites, to make use of anything which is not thoroughly so. I cannot too strongly caution the reader against the purchase of such an abomination as a line composed of silk and horsehair; such lines kink and stretch,

and require to be well soaked every time before they are used ; they have absolutely nothing to recommend them, not even economy, and are of all lines perhaps the very worst. A ball of common string would be preferable.

It is absolutely essential for the preservation of all fishing-lines that the part which has been used should never be allowed to remain on the reel wet. Nothing tends to rot them more quickly. It is but little trouble to run a wet line backwards and forwards for a few yards of its length between a couple of nails driven into the wall. A small wooden bracket, on which to rest the reel while the line is drying, is very useful.

Messrs. Farlow sell a capital little arrangement for drying lines. It is very portable, and consists of a strong wire reel with a handle and a clamp to secure it to the edge of a table, etc. It is also very useful for changing lines from one reel to another, preventing their getting into a tangle, and the operation is very speedily performed. It is also made so as to fold up and pack away into a small compass.

Lines are usually sold in round coils, and a new line is often troublesome to unwind and gets hopelessly tangled before it can be put on the reel. The following very simple plan will obviate this annoyance : A roll of music or stout paper should be passed through the coil before the tying-strings

are cut ; the tendency of the roll to uncurl itself will cause it to fit tightly into the coil, which can then be unwound without any fear of its getting entangled.

Some people advocate the use of red-deer suet, not only as a preservative for fishing-lines, but also as enabling the latter to be cast more cleanly, and be more readily picked off the water. The two latter conditions it doubtless fulfils, but I would caution the reader to be very sparing in its use ; indeed, never to use it all, unless he is most careful to dry his lines after fishing, or he will speedily find that the dressing will become softened and sticky, and the silk be utterly ruined. I have for this reason abandoned its use, except occasionally, since I do not consider that its advantages are commensurate with its drawbacks. I have completely spoiled two lines by its use, and so state my experiences.

We have considered the rod, its fittings, the reel, and the line : it now remains for me to say something respecting fishing-gut. As I remarked, good articles are not to be obtained cheaply, and gut is no exception to this rule ; moreover, it is no easy matter to procure really good gut at any price. It must be long and strong. If really strong, the longer it is the better ; and the finer the last few links of a trout casting-line, the

greater will be the chance of sport, especially in clear, low water.

There are two kinds of fine trout-gut—viz., ‘natural’ and ‘drawn,’ the latter so-called because, in order to fine it, it is drawn through a gauge. Such gut as this does very well for a time, and with small fish; but it will not answer where the fish are large and in good condition. ‘Drawn’ gut can be easily obtained from almost any tackle-maker; but good, long, ‘natural’ gut is extremely difficult to procure, save at the very best shops, and at a high price—certainly not less than 7s. 6d. a hundred strands; and even at that price it cannot always be relied on, and it will be found that the strands differ very materially in substance, even if they are all equally good and sound throughout their length.

Mr. Ramsbottom, in Manchester, is perhaps the principal gut-importer in England, and he sends a list to his customers annually of the gut he has purchased. Seasons vary very considerably as regards the quality of the gut imported.

As my readers are doubtless aware, it is procured from silkworms, which latter are soaked in vinegar (I think), and then pulled apart, the gut thus obtained being allowed to dry. Thus each strand of gut represents the inside of a silkworm; nor can it be wondered at that gut is a somewhat expensive article when good.

The following plan of making a gut casting-line was shown to me some few years ago by a friend and brother-fisherman. Having purchased three gut casting-lines, each of three yards long—viz., one fine grilse cast, one medium cast, and one fine—cut each into three lengths of a yard. By joining one coarse, one medium, and one fine length together, three taper gut-casts are obtained. To these I would further add one or two lengths of the finest 'natural' gut. Though I am of opinion that it is unnecessary for a trout-line to taper, I am equally so that it is absolutely essential—for clean, light casting—that a gut casting-line should do so. If it does not, it is certain to fall in loose, untidy, fish-scaring folds on the water, and is, moreover, very apt to tangle in a wind; nor can the fly be as lightly cast. Of course, where more than one fly is used, a taper-cast is useless, inasmuch as the upper part is too coarse to attach the flies to; and they, being tied on fine gut, have every inducement to swing round and catch in the coarser gut of the upper portion of the casting-line. However, on streams where more than one fly is used, the fish are generally small, the water rapid and rough, and long and delicate casting is unnecessary; and such rivers are frequently fished down, or across and down stream, and unless the water is very clear, the use of extra fine gut is needless.

It is always an easy matter to select gut, and provided each strand is of uniform thickness, round, and shining, it may be assumed that it is good ; but where the reverse is the case, and it is dull and lustreless, it is unreliable, and will probably not even stand knotting together.

It is a pity that horsehair cannot be more generally used, for there is nothing which is so charming to cast with ; its great length, also, is an advantage, inasmuch as so few knots are necessary. It will not, however, do for anything but small fish, and even in the most skilful hands is bound to go in the rushes made by a heavy fish. It also has the advantage of but rarely tangling when used single. It is, nevertheless, by no means easy to obtain good horsehair. The white is the best and most suitable, and the more transparent the hair the better. It is said that stallion's hair only should be used for fishing purposes. This I very much doubt, inasmuch as I have obtained excellent hair from geldings and mares.

In knotting a gut-cast, the simplest and best knot is that formed by placing both ends of the gut together side by side, and then making a simple loop with each piece round the other ; when they are pulled, the two loops slide together, and meeting, form a knot which is small, neat, and strong, and it is also an economical method,

inasmuch as there is but very little gut wasted in the tying. Where more than one fly is used on the cast, the gut of these can be advantageously inserted before the strands are pulled together, and a common knot being made in the fly-gut will prevent its slipping through.

Whether gut or hair is adopted, it is absolutely imperative that it should be well soaked previously, and if time is pressing, warm water may be used for the purpose. It is not a fair test to gut to use it before it has been soaked. Passing it through a piece of india-rubber will serve to straighten it, but it will not render it less brittle ; and when the india-rubber is used, care should be taken not to work it ruthlessly up and down the gut, as the latter is very easily frayed. The india-rubber should be pressed firmly but lightly against the gut, and not drawn from it with a jerk, or otherwise the very object of using it will be frustrated, and the gut will curl up.

A common round flat box with two pieces of spongiopiline fitted into it, and kept moist, will serve to damp any casts or gut which may be required for use during the journey to the river-side. The gut and casts should, however, be taken out at the end of the day, or they will become rotten. If flies are placed in it, the gut only should be between the layers of spongiopiline, the flies being turned over the top of the upper layer.

The same friend who put me up to the dodge of making taper-casts also showed me a most excellent little arrangement for carrying flies tied on gut, and keeping the latter damp without interfering with the flies. It consisted of a tin box, about ten inches long, four or five wide, and half an inch thick. It was lined on both sides inside with spongiopiline, and made to open like a book, so as to admit of the flies being placed lengthwise, the gut only being between the layers of spongiopiline, the flies themselves protruded at either end, being arranged alternately head and tail. The box, when closed, was fastened by means of a catch, and the two ends were furnished with hinged tops, which protected the flies. Thus when a fly was required, the cover at either end was thrown back, and the kind wanted was visible, and could be drawn out, the gut being perfectly straight and damp, and ready for tying on. The wings were by this means kept unruffled, and as sprightly and well set up as when they left the tackle-maker's shop. It is the best thing of the kind I have ever seen. My friend did tell me who was the inventor, but I forget. They are doubtless to be bought at one or other of the leading shops.

I may as well here caution the reader, if his gut casting-line by chance becomes knotted, never to trust it, but to at once either unpick the

knot, or cut it out and make a proper water-knot such as I have described, for the gut is certain to break there, and this, especially with salmon-gut, is a point to which it is necessary to pay very careful attention.

As I propose to deal with flies both natural and artificial in a separate chapter or chapters later on, I will forbear from making any reference to them at present ; and as we have discussed the requirements of rod, reel, line and gut, I may as well turn my attention to the other portions of fishing equipment which are necessary.

A landing-net is a *sine quâ non*, for no fish of any size can possibly be landed without its aid, especially on fine tackle. There are ever so many different varieties of nets made and sold, some few of which are really good and practical. The great fault of the majority of landing-nets is that they are too small in the bow, and the net itself not deep enough. It is not so easy as it may appear to land a large fish, even with a good net, and the difficulty and risk of losing it is considerably increased if it is too small and shallow. The proper shape for the bow of a landing-net is that of a pear, rather than circular ; and it should also be of wood in preference to iron, as being more convenient to carry. There are several descriptions of folding-rings, amongst

them one which consists of two thin pieces of very strong iron spring which, when not in use, are straight. When it is required to put the net together, the two upper ends, which are furnished the one with a socket, the other with a tongue, are fitted to each other. The springs are bent, and the other ends are fastened by slipping the eye at the end of the spring on the side over the screw at the end of the other; the latter being fixed into the handle secures the whole, and a very nice portable net is produced. For real hard wear and tear, however, there is nothing better than, or as good as, the wooden bow made of ash.

In rivers where wading is necessary, whose beds are rocky, or in which loose stones abound, it is well, and indeed necessary, to use a good stout landing-handle, unjointed, and *at least* five feet long, the end of it shod with iron, and fitted with a strong spike in order to enable the fisherman to feel his way amongst the rocks under water, and to act as a stay against the force of the stream. Without some such assistance wading is frequently dangerous work. In rivers which do not necessitate wading, the net can be carried on the strap of the fishing bag or basket, the handle being furnished with a joint and spring catch, the latter to hold the net in place when the joint is opened. There are many joints which have been designed

to meet this requirement, but I would advise the use of those with the least possible amount of mechanism as being less likely to get out of order.

As regards the shape of the actual net itself, it should be deep, and fuller at the bottom than at the top, so as to prevent a fish jumping out after it has been netted, a by no means impossible or unusual thing when a net is shallow and small. The material used for the netting should be fine and very hard, and dressed with oil like a line; if this is not done the flies are certain to catch in the strands of cord at each and every possible opportunity, and cause the very greatest annoyance and trouble; added to which, unless the net is perfectly waterproof, after it has been used it becomes a wet, flabby, hanging mess, capable of wetting one's clothes very considerably. The cord also shrinks up, and things are, generally speaking, altogether uncomfortable. Such nets, too, wear but badly, and it is therefore more economical, as well as more comfortable, to pay the higher price for material which is waterproof. The mesh need not be as small as is frequently the case; the weight is doubled in the excessively small mesh, and no one is desirous of catching fish the size of sardines.

The use of fishing-baskets is now a thing of the past. A basket is doubtless a very picturesque-

looking affair, but it possesses no one other advantage. It is heavy, it lets the wet in, is perpetually swinging round just at the very time it is most desirable to be free and unhampered, as when getting over a fence, etc. ; and unless it is large and furnished with divisions, fish, tackle, and luncheon must all jostle about together, and, as may be expected, agree as well as three tom-cats in a sack. The tackle-book is smeared all over with the blood and scales off the fish, sandwiches are rendered uneatable, and the fish get bruised and knocked about. The convenient little hole with which baskets are furnished, is useless for anything but the smallest of fish to be passed through, and in wet weather the rain of course finds ready entrance through it. Moreover, unless baskets are constantly scrubbed out, they are apt to smell most disgustingly.

The best arrangement instead of a basket is a good-sized oblong bag, made of strong twilled, waterproofed canvas, furnished with a broad webbing strap and buckle. The strap should at either end be provided with a stout brass hook, the bag being fitted with brass eyes for the latter to fit into. Outside the bag, a pocket made of netting, with one or two leather tabs to button on to the former, is by far the best way to carry the fish, which latter are easily shielded from the sun by cutting a handful or

two of long grass before putting them into the netting. Inside, the bag may be furnished with pockets and divisions as required, and a good deep flap, also made to button, will serve to keep tackle and luncheon dry. Nothing can be better than this arrangement, which is both light and waterproof, and also free from any one of the objections which can be urged against the use of a basket. What is termed the 'Freke' bag is an excellent arrangement. It is, however, somewhat heavier than the bag which I have described. It is useful for carrying very large fish, but it is rarely necessary to carry such about in a bag all day, and there are other means of carrying them, which I will explain later on when treating of salmon fishing.

There remains but one more necessary which may at the present time claim our attention, viz., wading garments. The height of fishing-waders must of necessity be very much determined by the depth of the stream to be waded. Where it is necessary to wade far out, or into deep water, they should be made to reach close up under the armpits; otherwise up to the waist, or even thighs only, may be high enough. They are hot things to wear at any time, and unless made to reach to the upper thigh only, are most miserable to walk in; but they are necessary evils, and I would urge my readers never

to run the risk of wading, especially in cold spring water, without them. Many a keen fisherman has ere this had to pay the penalty of so doing, in after-life, by becoming paralyzed. I myself, at one time, scorned to use waders, until a medical man informed me how great a risk I incurred; for, as he explained to me, the spinal cord is affected by the continuous action of the cold water on the surface nerves, and (if the practice is persisted in) paralysis is induced. Am I correct in believing that the late Francis Francis was one of the many who succumbed to the latter malady? If so, it was doubtless hastened, if not brought about, by carelessness in wading, etc. Since I have known better—thanks to my friend's advice—I have either used waders or forborne to enter the water. Waders may be very dangerous, especially if the fisherman is unlucky enough to slip into a pool and so get them filled, the chances being very much in favour of his difficulties being serious. They are also dangerous in another respect. Being waterproof, they check the perspiration, and so it is very easy to contract a chill, especially when driving home after fishing. Where circumstances admit, it is a wise plan to change one's clothes entirely before starting on the homeward drive. A cottage is generally at hand, and the necessary change can

easily be brought in the carriage. Where this is not practicable, the waders had better be kept on, and a thick overcoat added to the ordinary clothing, no matter how warm the weather may be. With ordinary thigh-waders these precautions may be unnecessary, but when they reach up to the waist or arm-pits, a chill in the loins may be but too easily contracted, and the above preventive should be made use of. All waders should be worn over thick, long woollen stockings, and their feet protected from being cut by the stones which wash in over the brogues by means of coarse, heavy worsted socks pulled over them. Brogues made of mail canvas and leather, and well hob-nailed, are by far better than those of india-rubber. They can easily be kept soft by means of grease or dubbing, and will last for years with ordinary care.

Mr. Cording sells an excellent description of wading-boot, which comes up to the thigh, and is made of india-rubber lined with leather. These boots save a great deal of trouble, and are useful for snipe-shooting, walking in deep snow, etc., as well as for fishing, and wear for years, and will stand any amount of knocking about. They are also light. Their price is necessarily somewhat high (four guineas), but they are well worth that sum. A pair I possess have been

in constant wear for nearly four years, and bid fair to last me nearly as long again. I almost live in them during the fishing season. When they are at all hard, a couple of minutes' soaking in water renders them perfectly soft and pliant. The legs never get stiff. Mr. Cording will also furnish, if requested, material for quickly mending the india-rubber should the latter get torn or cut ; but I am forced to admit that though I have had occasion to push my way through many a thick bush and fence, I have never found the india-rubber sustain any serious damage. I may as well remark, for the reader's benefit, that the Mr. Cording I refer to is Mr. J. C. Cording, 19, Piccadilly.

With waders and a light short mackintosh, the latter well ventilated, one can defy a very considerable amount of rain and bad weather, and be utterly independent. A small piece of twilled mackintosh, about a square yard, is a very handy adjunct to one's fishing-gear, whether to sit on or kneel upon when casting on wet ground. It is easily carried in the fishing-bag, and weighs but a trifle.

CHAPTER V.

Trout-hooks—Requirements of a Good Trout-hook—Shape of Trout-hooks—Bends of Trout-hooks—Limerick and Kirby Bends—Necessary Strength of Hooks—A Bad Batch of Hooks—Lightness Essential—Pennell Hooks—Eyed Hooks *v.* Hooks tied on Gut—Eyed Hooks recommended by Wade—Advantages of Eyed Hooks—Disadvantages of Eyed Hooks—Shape of Eye for Eyed Hooks—Mr. Hall's Pattern *v.* Mr. C. Pennell's—How to tie on an Eyed Hook—Prejudices against Use of Eyed Hooks—Sizes of Trout-hooks.

IF it is necessary that the rod, line, and gut should be good, equally so is it that hooks should be as perfect, both in shape and temper, as it is possible to make them. To many people a hook is a hook, but whether it is a good or a bad one they are unable to determine; they use it, and so long as it catches a fish every now and again, they are perfectly satisfied. It will be as well, perhaps, if I try to describe the requirements of a good hook.

Firstly, it must be of a good shape; secondly, it must be strong; thirdly, there must not be one particle of superfluous metal in its construction. It may appear to the reader that I am

entering too minutely into detail by thus arguing on the merits and demerits of such an apparently insignificant article as a fish-hook. It is, nevertheless, a by no means insignificant matter, for what is the use of anything else in the way of fishing-tackle being good and carefully selected, if the hook is not equal to the occasion? I commenced my remarks, so to speak, from one end of the link between the angler and the fish—the rod. I might just as reasonably have commenced at the other end of it—the hook; for from the hand of the fisherman wielding the rod to the hook in the mouth of the fish, rod, line, gut, and hook form, as it were, one link; and it is of the greatest consequence that that link should be as perfect as possible throughout its entire length; it is therefore by no means a matter too trifling to overlook, as to whether a hook is good or bad. When fish are small, it perhaps matters but little; where, however, the reverse is the case, and they are big and strong, bad hooks tell their own tale soon enough, and a sorry tale it often is.

Now, the shape of a hook should be such that the point will readily enter the mouth of a fish, and by means of the barb, retain its hold when once the latter has passed through the flesh. Trout-hooks are invariably small, and the smaller they are the greater the necessity for their being

good. As a rule, the largest, wariest fish are only to be taken by means of the smallest flies and the finest gut. What, therefore, would be a substantial hold in a small fish, would be but a very small one in a trout of two or three pounds ; and the little hook must be so shaped as to be capable of fixing itself firmly in the tough mouth of a trout. Much here depends on shape. It will be observed that trout-hooks have, for the most part, a side-twist, *i.e.*, the barb and shank are not in the same plane. This side-twist is given for two reasons : firstly, that the barb may more readily hook the fish ; secondly, that a larger, deeper grasp may be secured.

Hooks also vary very much in the shape of the bend—what is termed the Kirby bend being somewhat square, the Limerick bend being rather of an oval shape ; and in the latter the side-twist is slight, as compared to that of the former. Both bends are good ; but personally I prefer the Limerick, the Kirby being to my mind a weaker form, less suitable for large fish, and more apt to break or bend than the other. Both bends vary more or less from the standard shape. The point of the Limerick is very frequently thrown too much towards the shank at the barb, and the point is made to turn too much outwards again. Perhaps the best form of hook is one with the Limerick bend, the portion from

the bend itself up to the point being almost straight, and the side-twist but very slight. If the barb is not too wide in the cut, and yet wide enough to act perfectly, a hook thus made is very quick in its action, and at the same time does not make an unduly large hole in entering, consequently there is less chance of its working out when a fish is being played. I consider that if a hook is thus shaped there is no necessity for the side-twist, which, after all, is and must be conducive to weakness. When a hook breaks, it invariably does so at the bend, its weakest part ; it therefore stands to reason that the side-twist must weaken the iron still further. Salmon-hooks have no side-twist, or, if they have, it is well-nigh imperceptible, and the strain on them is correspondingly as great as that on a trout-hook. Therefore, why the side-twist at all ?

I have said hooks must be strong. Their strength is dependent on the temper of the metal. Steel which is overtempered is brittle, and that which is insufficiently hardened will bend. Neither of these will do. It is the combination of both which is requisite, and without this a hook is useless. At times whole batches of hooks are worthless ; worse than useless, because not only is sport spoiled by their breaking or opening when a strain is put on them, but fish are lost, and go away pricked and scared, and will probably refuse

to rise again at a fly for a considerable time. The tempering of metal is at all times a task which requires much skill and care; and in so minute an article as a fish-hook, the skill and care demanded are necessarily very considerable. We will suppose that a fisherman purchases a dozen or two flies. The first one he hooks a fish with breaks or bends, and he loses the fish. Let him be very sure that all the other hooks will serve him the same trick, for all were doubtless tied from the same packet, and the whole batch purchased by the flymaker was bad. If a hook is good, it will neither break nor bend, be it ever so small, unless very extreme force is used. On the other hand, if it is bad, it can be readily bent or broken with the fingers. I therefore recommend my readers to make experiment for themselves when purchasing flies. They will avoid very much disappointment, to say nothing of expense, by following out my advice, which is very simple. I may also here observe that it is ever a good habit to examine the hook, and also the gut-cast, each time a fish is landed. To do so is no trouble; not to do so is to perhaps run the risk of losing a fish and a cast also.

The metal in a hook should be no more than is absolutely necessary. The hook is not the lure. It is the hook and gut which rather

tend to militate against the success of the lure. If anyone doubts the statement, let him make experiment for himself by trailing his fly from a bridge or any such-like place, and where he is not visible to the fish beneath. They will very probably take no notice of it. Let him then break off both the hook and gut, and drop the fly over the bridge. The chances are that it will be speedily taken by a fish, though doubtless as speedily rejected. Fish can see in the water a great deal better than we can out of it, and rest assured that the hook itself is by no means invisible to them, and the larger and heavier the metal, the less chance there is of catching them. Moreover, for dry fly-fishing, where it is absolutely essential that the fly should float well on the top of the water, a hook must be either very light, or else the amount of hackling on the fly must be excessive in order to support it.

The best shaped hook with which I am acquainted is what is termed the Cholmondeley Pennell pattern. I consider that this pattern of hook is difficult to improve upon, save in one particular, to which I propose to refer a little later on. The bend, point, barb, etc., are, to my mind, just what they should be.

And now comes a question regarding which there is a great difference of opinion—I mean' as

to whether eyed hooks or hooks tied on gut are the better. Eyed hooks are, where a single fly is used on the cast, very much in favour nowadays, and they have very much to recommend their adoption. They may be said to be an innovation of recent years ; yet in a very excellent little work, entitled ' Halcyon ; or, Rod-Fishing in Clear Water,' by H. Wade, published over thirty years ago, the author recommends that eyed hooks should be used for salmon-flies. He, perhaps, little thought, when he advocated their adoption, that they would come into so general use.

The advantages which may be claimed for eyed hooks are as follows :

1. There is no gut to perish, and unless the dressing is worn out, the flies, therefore, last for an indefinite time.
2. They are not so readily flicked off.
3. Flies tied on them are very portable ; a stock sufficient to last a season may be carried in a small box which would easily fit into a waistcoat-pocket.
4. There is no gut to tangle.
5. They are also, as a rule, better made.

Against these may be set the following disadvantages :

1. They are heavier, and require more hackling to keep them afloat.

2. They do not fall quite as lightly on the water as those tied on gut.

As regards the eye of the hook, it depends very much as to whether it is turned up or down. In Mr. Hall's pattern it is turned up ; in Mr. C. Pennell's it is turned down. I prefer to use Mr. Hall's pattern ; but, at the same time, I believe Mr. Pennell's is more correct, both in theory and practice, the chief drawback to the latter being that the eye is so small that it is, with very small flies, difficult to thread the gut through it, especially at dusk. In his salmon-hooks, it is so small as to be absolutely useless ; only single gut, and that fine of its kind, can be passed through, and it is utterly impossible to double the gut back in the ordinary way. For trout-flies, however, if I could but thread them as quickly as those hooks of Mr. Hall's pattern, I should always use them in preference, for I find that fish will rise better at flies dressed on them. Good as my sight has been, I do not think that at any time of my life I could have seen to thread them in a failing light (the best time in all the twenty-four hours for fishing) without great difficulty.

All kinds of knots have been devised to facilitate the firm tying-on of eyed hooks, the best of which is one shown me by a friend, Major Turle. It is very simple, and is as follows :

1. Pass the gut through the eye from its under side.
2. Make a simple loop with the end so passed through round the other part of the gut, but leave the loop somewhat open.
3. Draw the gut gently until this loop slides down towards the fly and has passed over the head ; then pull it tight, and cut off the spare end of gut.

Nothing *can* be simpler, and this knot has the advantage of being less liable to break or fray, and it *never* comes undone, though, if it is desired to untie it, a pin passed under any portion of the knot and lifted up will at once detach the fly.

A friend of mine, an excellent fisherman, is very much opposed to the use of eyed hooks, and will not use them, for he asserts that the old-fashioned plan of tying the hooks on gut is more killing. Certainly the ordinary hook is lighter, and, as I say, falls more lightly than the eyed hook. But, for all that, the advantages of the latter are so great that I should be sorry to have to return to the use of the former ; and I find that when fish are rising, and it is possible to put a fly of any kind over them, the eyed hooks answer well enough.

Trout-hooks run in regular sizes. These are 000, 00, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6—000 being the smallest. Anything larger than No. 6 is unnecessary.

From 0 upwards they are made long and short in the shank ; 000 is, to my mind, too small for use. I have used them, and have killed big fish with them ; but they are too tiny, and by reason of their being so very minute, it is most difficult to tie a fly really well and neatly on them ; 00 and 0 are quite small enough for all ordinary purposes, and no fly, save the black gnat, requires the smallest size. The size I prefer is 0 or 1. It is surprising how very much larger than it really is a hook appears when the fly is tied on it, especially the various duns, which have upright wings and long tails. It would seem to be almost impossible to kill a fish of any size on so small a hook as even No. 1 ; yet that and 0 may be reckoned as being the most killing sizes. A hook need be well made and tempered, when it has to sustain the severe strain to which it is so often subjected.

CHAPTER VI.

The Right Fly and the Wrong—Wasted Time—Science and Sport—Beauty of Water-flies—Artificial and Natural Flies—Wings *v.* Bodies—Mr. Richardson's Flies—The Water-flies—Ephemera and Trichoptera—Quotations from 'Homes without Hands'—The Ephemera—The Trichoptera—Duration of the Larval Period—Transportation of Mayfly—Duration of Life of Ephemera—Ephemera casting their Skins—Quotation from Kirby and Spence.

THE mere possession of a stock of fishing-tackle, be it ever so good, and the ability to use it, is insufficient to make a fisherman. Something further than this is requisite. A knowledge of the habits of fish, and of the natural flies which the collection of artificials in his book are intended to represent, is essential, and without this latter his fly-book is but a sealed one to the would-be successful angler. The larger his stock of flies the more helpless and bewildered he must be as to which to select from it. A little knowledge is better than none. Let us take, for instance, the case of a man who is altogether unacquainted with the natural water-flies. He has, perhaps, been accustomed to fish

on a certain river, and to use the local patterns, which are but too frequently the poorest misrepresentations of the natural flies. He has pinned his faith to some two or three of these patterns, having had more or less success with them. He finds himself on a river with which he has had no previous acquaintance, and which differs very considerably in character from that to which he has hitherto been accustomed. The weather, water, everything, are all that could be desired. Fish are rising; and good fish, too. He puts on one of his standard flies, but to no purpose; he tries another, and yet a third, with the same result. Though deftly cast, they pass over the fish unheeded. Still the latter keep rising—a flop here, a suck there. It is maddening to him; he cannot make out what is the special fly which is attracting so much attention, for the wind is from him, and the fish are feeding under the far bank. In despair, he determines to try them with yet another imitation; and just as he has completed the operation of changing, he espies, during a temporary lull in the wind, a natural fly sailing down within reach of him. He succeeds in slipping his landing-net under it, and congratulates himself on having, as he thinks, secured it; but, alas! there is nothing to be seen save the drops of water as the latter hang on the knots of the meshes. The tiny ephemeral was

too wary to be captured by such means, and has given him the slip; nor does he get another similar chance, for the light wind has again risen. If he could but catch one fish, even a small one, it would be something; but no, it is not to be.

Much valuable time has been wasted; the rises are gradually becoming less frequent, and ere long the surface of the water is unbroken, save where a moor-hen or a water-rat comes out to feed. There is probably no rise again during the day—at all events, not for some hours; and so, after more fruitless exertion, he gives the whole thing up as a bad job and a fraud—blames the fish, the river, everything, and wends his way moodily homewards. It may happen that he overtakes, or is overtaken by, some brother-sportsman, whose well-filled basket excites his admiration, the latter feeling, possibly, and not unnaturally, dashed with a suspicion of jealousy. ‘What were they taking?’ he asks. ‘I tried everything I could think of, but could do nothing with them.’ On being shown the fly, and referring to his book, he discovers that he has a goodly stock of that identical pattern, which he had never even thought of trying, as they looked too insignificant and unattractive, and so had passed them by. He, however, resolves to make full use of them on the next occasion. A few days later

the opportunity may offer for his doing so, and he again tries his luck, with but little better results ; and he comes to the conclusion that his acquaintance of the previous day was not truthful, and had purposely misled him. Not so, however ; that one particular fly with which he had all day long flogged away so unremittingly had not been on the water at all—another, totally different, had captivated the fish to the exclusion of every other—and it is not until he has humbly condescended to admit that he knows nothing about fishing, and has taken the trouble to learn something regarding this very essential portion of the art, that he is rewarded by success. Then, indeed, a fresh and increased interest is opened to him, and he begins to rise superior to the very second-rate style of things which had formerly served to satisfy him. Thenceforward his career as a real fisherman may be reckoned ; the sport possesses a threefold charm for him, and he is able to realize, not only how little he knew before, but how much there is for him yet to learn, and that a lifetime spent by the river-side will not suffice, even though his entire energies may be devoted to the sport, to teach him all and everything connected with fishing. It becomes more than mere sport ; it is a science.

Those who have taken no interest in them have but a slight conception how very beautiful

the water-flies are, even to the naked eye. Inspection under the microscope reveals indescribable beauty and wonders. Thus, seen alongside of the most exquisitely tied artificial, the latter appears but a gross caricature. What material or what skill could ever imitate so marvellous a structure? How could so coarse-looking a lump of feathers, bound together by such cart-ropy-looking stuff as even the very finest of silk appears, ever serve to deceive so lynx-eyed a fish as a trout? It is surely little matter for surprise that on rivers which have been much fished the trout grow shy, and scorn the lures presented to them in the shape of artificial flies, or that in the crystal waters of our chalk streams they are so capricious and dainty in their choice. The wonder is rather that they are ever deceived. On my own river, where the fish are exceptionally shy, it is a matter of difficulty, and one which requires the greatest care and caution, the use of the finest tackle and the most carefully-dressed flies, to capture them.

I had for a long time been exercised in my mind as to which of the two following details in artificial trout-flies is of the greater importance—viz., the wings or the body of the fly. Now, it is well-nigh impossible to imitate, even coarsely, the exquisite gossamer-like transparency of the wing of a natural fly. There is no material which

can be employed that is at all similar to the latter. That which is used for the majority of the best-dressed artificials is a pinch out of a starling's wing-feather ; yet there is no more actual resemblance between this and the natural wing than there is between the coarsest sail-cloth and the finest gauze. Nevertheless, fish do take flies so dressed, and goodly baskets are obtained by their use. The bodies are not so difficult to deal with, and by the aid of strips of quill, natural and dyed, can be very fairly imitated, so far as their appearance to the naked eye is concerned. Here, then, was my difficulty.

As I have said, the fish in my own river are most fastidious and difficult to catch, and on anything like a bright day it is hopeless to try for them.

Some two or three seasons ago a friend gave me some half-dozen small trout-flies, which he said had been sent to him by the inventor for him to try, stating that they were dressed with the *natural* wings of water-flies, prepared in some manner so as to render them strong enough to stand the wear and tear of fishing. I did not look at them very closely at the time, and, being occupied in discussing other matters, put them into my book and forgot all about them. The following season, when searching for a suitable fly, and being unable to see what I

required, I came across them, and examined them. Two were dark-coloured duns, two yellowish duns, and two a kind of red-spinner. The dressing of the bodies seemed to me to err on the score of sparseness; they were rather too under-dressed to please me; but the wings were marvellous. I examined them by the aid of a pocket-glass, and could see that they were evidently what they were stated to be—viz., *natural wings*, coated over, apparently, with some thin, transparent preparation. I determined to try one of them. The fish were not rising at all freely; but every one I succeeded in casting over I took, and so long as my little stock lasted, I never failed to hook, and generally to land, those I could reach. I gave one of the six to a friend, and I lost another in a bush; the remaining four lasted me far longer than the ordinary feather-winged artificials would have done, and, strange to say, never failed to do their duty, even though the bodies of the latter were more like those of the natural insect. Hence I came to the conclusion that the winging of artificial trout-flies is of greater importance than the body.

This method of preparing natural wings is the invention of a Mr. Richardson, and flies so dressed by him are to be obtained at most of the principal tackle-shops throughout the country. I

can but advise my readers to try them for themselves. They are rather more expensive than the ordinary feather-winged artificials, but I consider that they are well worth the price charged for them.

Mr. Richardson also dresses salmon-flies on the same principle; but though I have never tried them, I do not for an instant suppose that they would be found to answer, for inasmuch as a salmon-fly is not supposed to represent any fly, and is merely a lure in which the opening and closing of the fibres of the feathers forms the chief attraction, the use of natural wings cannot be of the least advantage. In the case of trout-flies, however, it is altogether different; and with the natural wings so prepared, and the bodies carefully dressed, I do not think that imitation could be more exact, and such should, in skilful hands, prove well-nigh infallible.

It is not my intention to treat of matters entomological further than is absolutely necessary to give the reader such information respecting the water-flies taken by trout for food as may be essential for him to possess and suffice to interest him.

The water-flies are divided into two classes, viz., the Ephemera and the Trichoptera — in other words, 'those whose lives last but for a day,' and 'those which are hairy-winged.' That

the former actually live but for so short a period as one day is not really the case, for as a matter of fact they exist for some three or four days, unless they are laid low by over-severe weather, or fall a prey to bird or fish.

For a description of the two, I can surely do no better than quote the words of the Rev. J. G. Wood in his interesting work 'Homes without Hands,' and I feel that I should otherwise utterly fail to express myself as I could wish ; and though I dislike quotations as being frequently wearisome to the reader, no one could ever fail to be charmed with his writings, nor could I quote a better authority. It was my good fortune as a boy to know him, and I well remember his showing me the blocks which he was then preparing for the illustrations of his well-known work on Natural History.

As regards the Ephemera he writes :

' . . . The greater number of insects are wholly or entirely burrowers at some period of their existence. It frequently happens that the very insects which we most admire, which are decorated with the most brilliant colours, and which soar on the most ethereal wings, have passed the greater portion of their lives beneath the surface of the earth.

' Take, for example, the well-known mayfly, or ephemera, so called because its existence was

once thought to be comprised within the limits of a single day. How delicate are its gauzy wings; how wonderful are the iridescent tints which play over their surface with a changeful radiance, like that of the opal on the pigeon's neck; and how marvellous is the muscular power which enables the new-born being to disport itself in the air for a period which in comparison with our own lives is equal to at least forty years! It never seems to weary. It wavers up and down, up and down in the air, together with myriads of its companions, and for the greater portion of its terrestrial existence is an inhabitant of the air; yet its life has not altogether been spent in amusing itself, for it has passed an existence of some three years or more hidden from human gaze.

'To-day it is a bright denizen of the sunbeams, exulting in its beauty, and dancing in very rapture in the air; yesterday it was a denizen of the mud, a slimy, crawling, repulsive creature, breathing through the medium of the water, and feeding greedily upon any prey that might come within its reach. Yesterday, had it been removed from the water and laid in the sunbeams, it would have died as with poison, and in an hour would have been reduced to a dry and withered semblance of its former self; to-day, were it to be plunged beneath the waters, it would quickly

perish, and be shortly eaten by its former companions. For it is fitted for a higher position and a purer atmosphere, so that the element which but a few hours ago was its very life has now become a present death, and the food in which it so lately revelled can no longer be received into that etherealized form' (Homes without Hands,' page 120).

On page 381 he refers to the Trichoptera as follows :

'There is an order of insects which is especially dear to anglers—not so much to fly-fishers as to those who like to sit and look at a float for several hours. This order is scientifically termed Trichoptera, or hair-winged insects, and the various species of which it is composed are classed together under the familiar title of caddis-flies.

'These insects may always be known by the peculiar leathery aspect of the body, and by the coating of hair with which the wings are covered, the long hairs being spread over the whole surface, and standing boldly out like a fringe round the edge. They all have long and slender antennæ, and in some genera, such as *Mystacida*, these organs are nearly three times as long as the head and body, reminding the observer of the lovely Japan moths (*Adelæ*), whose delicate antennæ wave and glitter in the sunbeams like

stray threads of spider's web. For the perfect insect the angler cares comparatively little. Imitations in hair, feather, and silk are useful to the fly-fisher, and are known to anglers by the eccentric nomenclature by which such imitations are called. It is the larvæ in which the angler delights. . . . We will now trace the life of the caddis-fly from the egg to the perfect insect.

'In the breeding season the female may be discerned to carry about with her a double bundle of little greenish eggs, probably in order to expose them for a certain time to the warm sunbeams before they are immersed in the water. This curious bundle is a long oval in shape, and is bent sharply in the middle, its extremities being attached to the abdomen of the insect. When her instinct tells her of the proper time, she proceeds to the water and attaches the eggs to the leaf of some aquatic plant, often crawling down the stem for several inches. The caddis-fly is quite at home on the water, and, unlike the dragon-flies, which are quite helpless when immersed, can run on the surface with considerable speed, and on occasion can swim below the surface with scarcely less rapidity.

'They may often be observed in the act of running on the water, and while they are thus employed, they often fall victims to some hungry fish, which is attracted by the circling ripples

occasioned by the movement of the limbs. Fly-fishers who are acquainted with the habits of fishes and insects take advantage of their knowledge, and by causing their imitation caddis-fly to ripple over the surface, or even to sink beneath it, like the veritable insect, delude the unsuspecting fish into swallowing a hook instead of a fly.

‘In process of time the eggs are hatched, and the young larvæ then proceed to construct houses in which they can dwell. These houses are formed of various materials, and are of various shapes, and, indeed, not only does each species have its own particular form of house, but there is considerable variety even in the houses of a single species. . . . The materials of which the nest is made depend greatly on the locality in which the insect is hatched, and in a rather large series of caddis nests now before me there are some very remarkable instances of the manner in which the insect has been obliged to adapt itself to circumstances. The most common style of case is that which is composed of a number of sticks and grass-stems laid longitudinally upon each other, like the fascies of the Roman consuls. Of these I have specimens of various sizes and shapes, some being barely half an inch long, while others measure four times that length, the sticks being placed sometimes so irregularly that the home of the architect is not easily seen. The

creatures are not at all particular about the straightness of the sticks, but take them of any degrees of curvature. . . . Another case is made of the hollow stems of some plant, apparently that of a hemlock, to which are attached a few slips of bark from the plants. Next comes a series of cases in which the caddis larva has contrived to secure a great number of cylindrical grass-stems, and arranged them transversely into several sets, making one set cross the other so as to leave a central space in which the little architect can live.

‘One or two cases are made wholly of bark, apparently the cuticle of the common reed, a plant which is very common in the Cherwell, whence the cases were taken. In all probability these strips of cuticle have been dropped into the river by the water-rats while feeding on the reeds.

‘Several cases are made entirely of leaves, mostly taken from the whitethorn, which grows in great quantities along the banks of the above-mentioned river. Then there are cases which are entirely composed of sticks and leaves, these materials generally occupying opposite ends of the case. There is another series of cases made up of fine grass, apparently the débris of hay which has been blown into the water during the summer, and having the materials laid across each

other like the needles of a stocking-knitter. Most of these cases are balanced by a stone.

‘Next come a number of cases which are composed of small shells, those of the *Planorbis* being the most common, and having among them a few specimens of the *Limnæa*, or pond-snail, and many separate valves and perfect shells of the fresh-water mussel. The caddis larva is an incorrigible kidnapper, seizing on any shell that may suit its purpose, without troubling itself about the inhabitant. It is quite a common occurrence to find four or five living specimens of the *Planorbis* and *Limnæa* affixed to the case of a caddis larva, and to see the inhabitants adhering to the plants and endeavouring to proceed in one direction, while the caddis is trying to walk in another, thus recalling the well-known episode of the Tartar and his captor. In these cases the cylindrical body is made of sand and small fragments of shells bound together with a waterproof cement, and the shells are attached by their flat sides to the exterior.

‘There are several cases which are made entirely of sand cemented together, some being cylindrical, and others tapering to a point, like an elephant’s tusk. There are also examples of mixed structures, where the caddis has combined shells with the leaf and twig case, and in one of these instances the little architect has bent back the

valves of a small mussel, and fastened them back to back on its house. Beside these, there are one or two very eccentric forms, where the caddis has chosen some objects which are not often seen in such a position. The seed-vessels of the elm are tolerably common ; but I have several specimens where the caddis has taken the operculum of a dead pond-snail, and fastened it to the case ; and there is an example where the chrysalis of some moth, apparently belonging to the genus *Porthesia*, has been blown into the water from a tree overhanging the stream, and seized upon by a caddis as a unique ornament for its house. These latter examples were found in a stream in Wiltshire, and the tusk-like sand-cases were found in a disused stone-quarry in the same county.

‘ Various experiments have been tried upon the larva of the caddis, in order to see its mode of building. A lady, Miss Smee, has been very successful in this pursuit, and has forced the caddis larvæ to build their nests of the most extraordinary substances, such as gold-dust, crushed glass, and other substances. They would not, however, use beads, or anything where the surface was smooth and polished.

‘ In this remarkable sub-aquatic home the caddis larva lives in tolerable security, for the head and front of the body are clothed in horny mail, and the soft white abdomen is protected by the case.

The food of the caddis is generally of a vegetable nature, though there are one or two species which live partly, if not entirely, on animal food. When the larva has lived for its full period, and is about to change into the pupal condition, it closes the aperture of its case with a very strong net, having rather large meshes, and lies securely therein until it is about to change into the winged state. It then bites its way through the net with a pair of strong mandibles, comes to the surface of the water, breaks from its pupal envelope, and shortly takes to flight. The larger species ascend up the stems of aquatic plants before leaving the pupal skin, but the smaller merely stand on the cast skin, which floats raft-like on the water.

‘There are one or two species whose cases are not movable, but are fixed to the spot whereon they were made. In order, therefore, to compensate for the immobility of the case, the larva has a much larger range of movement. In the ordinary species, the creature holds itself to the extremity of the case by means of hooks at the end of its body, which can grasp with some force, as anyone knows who has pulled a caddis larva out of its house. But when the case is fixed, the abdominal claspers of the larva are attached to a pair of long foot-stalks, so that the creature can extend its body to some distance from the entrance of the tube.’

I feel sure that I need not apologize to the reader for the length of the above extracts, inasmuch as the subject, especially as treated by its author, is one of such great interest.

In writing of the Ephemera, Mr. Wood states that they remain in the larval state for at least three years; but on referring to his work 'Insects at Home,' I find that he assigns a period of two years. I conclude that, as the latter work was written some time after the former, the shorter period may be taken to be the more correct.

I have consulted all the leading works on entomology, and have also, in the absence through illness of Professor Westwood, made inquiries at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford—indeed, done my utmost to try and ascertain if the period is definitely known—but I can obtain no positive information. Suffice it to say that two years may be taken to be the average time. There was, some few years ago, a considerable amount of discussion on the subject. At that time attempts were being made to transport the mayfly (of course in its creeper stage) from rivers where it was plentiful to those where it was unknown. Hence the controversy. On reference to the Ashmolean Museum, I was informed that the results of these efforts proved successful, but that it was a matter of some difficulty and trouble to acclimatize the

creepers so transported, and that it is necessary for their well-being that the mud in which they are found should be taken with them. Where this had not been done the experiment had failed, but where it had been attended to it had been successful. The mud so taken had, by degrees, been incorporated with that taken from the river into which it was desired to introduce the creepers; and so, by gradually and increasingly adulterating the former with the latter, the creepers had become accustomed to it and fitted to take up their new quarters.

Kirby and Spence state that the lives of the Ephemera vary in the creeper state from one to three years, the several varieties differing considerably in this respect. De Geer states that he experimented with the larvæ of mayflies, in order to test the duration of the period in which they remained in that stage, and with the following results: Some, which he kept in Brittany, remained in the larval condition for between one and two years; while others in North Holland required three years to hatch out.

In his work on the 'Classification of Insects,' Professor Westwood states that De Geer succeeded in keeping some Ephemera alive for eight days, and that a Mr. Stephens contrived to do so for over three weeks; adding that, if they had been left to live in a natural state, they would

probably have died as quickly as do the rest of their species. Yet another quotation, from Kirby and Spence, which will, I feel sure, prove of interest to the reader.

In vol. iii., p. 296, the writer says :

‘Some species of the . . . Ephemera are distinguished by another peculiarity, unparalleled, as far as is known, in the rest of the insect world. After being released from the puparium, and making use of their expanded wings for flight, often to a considerable distance, they have yet to undergo another metamorphosis. They fix themselves by their claws in a vertical position upon some object, and withdraw every part of the body, even the legs and wings, from a thin pellicle which has enclosed them, as a glove does the fingers; and so exactly do the exuviae, which remain attached to the spot where the Ephemera disrobed itself, retain their former figure, that I have more than once at first sight mistaken them for the perfect insect. You can conceive without difficulty how the body, and even legs, can be withdrawn from their cases; but you must be puzzled to conjecture how the wings, which seem as thin, as much expanded, and as rigid as those of a fly, can admit of having any sheath stripped from them—much less how they can be withdrawn, as they are, through a small opening at the base of the sheath. The fact seems to be

that, though the outer covering is rigid, the wing enclosed in it, notwithstanding it is sometimes more than twenty-four hours before the change ensues, is kept moist and pliable. In proportion, therefore, as the insect disengages itself from the anterior part of the skin, the interior, or real wings, become contracted by a number of plaits into a form nearly cylindrical, which readily admits of their being pulled through the opening lately mentioned; and as soon as the insect is released from its envelope, the plaits unfold, and the wing returns to its former shape and dimensions.

‘Thus one little animal, having bid adieu to its shirt and drawers, becomes, but in a very harmless sense, a genuine *descamisado* and *sansculotte*. It does not seem improbable that the pellicle we have been speaking of is analogous to that which, in addition to the outer skin, encloses the limbs of Lepidoptera, etc., in the pupa state, but which they cast at the same time with the puparium, and leave adhering to it.’

And again, in a preceding paragraph, where the process of the expansion of the wings of flies when emerging from the pupa, and the time taken to perform the operation by them, is referred to, he says:

‘In a few genera, however, as the gnat . . . and the Ephemera, this process is so rapid and instantaneous that the wings are scarcely dis-

engaged from the wing-cases before they are fully expanded and fit for flying. These genera quit the pupa at the surface of the water, from which, after resting upon it for a few moments, they take flight. But this would evidently be impracticable, and immersion in the fluid, and consequent death, would result, were not the general rule in their case deviated from.'

CHAPTER VII.

List of Flies for Trout-fishing—The Stone-fly—The Mayfly—The Spent Gnat—The Virtues of the 'Wickham'—Varieties of Artificial Mayflies—Mr. Green's Pattern—Drying the Mayfly—The Blow-line—True Sport—Patterns of Mayflies—The Gray Drake and Spent Gnat—The March Brown—The Blue Dun—The Olive Dun—Four Useful Flies—Detached Bodies—The Yellow Dun—The Iron-blue Dun—The Jenny Spinner—The July Dun—The August Dun—The Little Pale-blue Dun—Spinners—Dressings of Spinners—Local Names of Flies—Theakstone on 'British Angling Flies.'

I PROPOSE to devote the present chapter to the consideration of the artificial flies which I have placed on the following list.

The various dressings are taken from the best authors on the subject. I have selected only those flies and those patterns which I have proved to be really reliable, and which I deem to be indispensable. The list is *apparently* a long one. Such, however, is not really the case, if it be compared with the lists usually given, and I have endeavoured to curtail it as much as possible. In most instances the letters W. F. will be observed against one of the dressings given for each fly ;

these letters I have put to indicate that it is, of the two or three different patterns there referred to, the one which is most suitable for down-stream work with a wet-fly.

The authors to which I refer are Francis Francis, Ronalds, Halford, Theakstone, etc. Halford's patterns, save where they are dressed hackled, are more suitable for dry-fly work.

Where either author makes mention of any points of interest regarding any particular fly, I have added such observations, as also anything which I have myself noticed from time to time, which I think may be of service to or interest the reader.

LIST OF TROUT-FLIES.

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. *The stone-fly. | 12. The July dun. |
| 2. *The mayfly. | 13. The August dun. |
| 3. *The gray drake. | 14. The little pale-blue
dun. |
| 4. *The spent gnat. | 15. The great red
spinner. |
| 5. *The march-brown
(male and **female). | 16. **The red spinner. |
| 6. **The blue dun. | 17. *The brown spinner. |
| 7. The blue quill. | 18. The claret spinner. |
| 8. **The olive dun,
dark, **medium and
**light. | 19. **The red quill. |
| 9. The yellow dun. | 20. **The alder. |
| 10. **The iron-blue dun. | 21. Large silver sedge. |
| 11. The jenny spinner. | 22. **Small silver sedge. |
| | 23. **Orange sedge. |

- | | |
|--|--|
| 24. Dark sedge.
25. **The grannom (male
and **female).
26. **The needle-brown.
27. The silver horns.
28. The hawthorn fly.
29. The peacock fly.
30. **The gold-eyed
gauze-wing.
31. The black gnat. | 32. The red ant.
33. The cowdung-fly.
34. Coch-y-bonddhu.
35. **The Wickham's
fancy.
36. The red tag.
37. The coachman.
38. The governor.
39. The orange bumble.
40. The claret bumble. |
|--|--|

Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 15 are, of course, only indispensable on those rivers where they have their several seasons. The other flies are to be found more or less on all rivers. The angler cannot well do with a less number than those which I have marked *. Those marked ** are specially necessary; indeed, all which I have enumerated may well find a place in his stock-book.

I have given several different dressings of each fly. Those given with the yellow dun are numerous, the dressings in many instances being variously styled.

All the dressings named are the best of those quoted by the first authorities, and I have been careful to exclude any which I am not well assured by experience are unrivalled. The reader can therefore make his selection without fear of going wrong, since all are good and reliable.

THE STONE-FLY (PERLA).

This fly is more frequently to be met with in the Northern counties than elsewhere. To anyone unacquainted with the peculiarities of both flies, it is at first sight not unlike the mayfly; and, indeed, in some parts of Yorkshire it is so miscalled. As, however, the mayfly and the stone-fly do not make their appearance at the same time, the latter being on the water in May, the former rarely before June, it would be unlikely for anyone who is well acquainted with the mayfly to make the mistake.

When the stone-fly is well on the water, the fish take it as greedily as they do the mayfly in the stream where the latter abounds. I do not think that it is otherwise than rare to find both mayfly and stone-fly inhabiting the same river. I do not desire to positively assert that such is never the case; but, judging from my own experiences, I think that I am not wrong in expressing such an opinion.

The artificial representation of the stone-fly does not appear to find much favour amongst fishermen, the latter, as a rule, preferring the use of the natural fly, wading up stream and casting with it into every likely spot. By pursuing this method, and using fine tackle, a great number of fish may be taken. It is, however, with the creeper

of this fly, during the month of April, that the Northern fishermen make their heaviest baskets. The creeper is fished with under water, being sunk by means of a small split shot or two ; it is one of the most deadly baits which can be employed to catch fish. To my way of thinking, all such baits savour very much of the wriggling worm, and I have little or no sympathy with such a style of fishing. Nevertheless, I do not desire to run down those who differ with me : ' Chacun à son goût,' and there is no accounting for tastes ; but, as we have seen, even a creeper is a thing of life, and possesses a certain amount of intelligence, though hideous to behold, and it must experience but a sorry time of it when impaled on a hook.

Like many other flies, the male of the stone-fly is smaller and darker than the female. Fish generally prefer the latter sex in the case of all flies, by reason of the extra nutriment to be obtained from the eggs with which they are laden.

The wings of this fly are four in number, and are coarser and stronger than those of the mayfly. The under wings are very much larger in proportion than is the case with those of the latter fly, which are singularly small as compared with the over wings.

The motion of the stone-fly on the water is peculiar, and markedly different to that of the

mayfly. The latter flutters over the water; the stone-fly hops and runs about on its surface.

The tails of the stone-fly are two in number, those of the mayfly three, and are longer and more delicate.

I consider that the dressing which Ronalds, in his work entitled 'Ephemera,' gives of this fly is the best, so I append it :

Body : Hare's ear mixed with yellow worsted, ribbed with yellow silk, leaving most yellow at the tail end of the body.

Wings : From a quill feather of the hen pheasant's wing.

Legs : A hackle stained greenish-brown (I conclude he means by a *hackle* a pale dun hackle), or of a natural dark grizzle.

Hook 4 or 5 (long).

THE MAYFLY (EPHEMERA).

This is by far the largest of the Ephemera. In the extract which I have quoted from 'Homes without Hands,' I have said very nearly all there is to say respecting this fly. As has been remarked, it, in common with the rest of the tribe, casts its skin.

There is some difference between the male and the female fly, the latter being preferred by the fish. When first hatched, both male and female

are styled 'green drakes.' After the casting process has taken place the female becomes the 'gray,' and the male the 'black,' drake. In this stage they may be said to have attained to the perfect state—the imago. In this state they breed, and, having performed their duty, fall on the water and die.

As I have observed, the mayfly is rarely on the water before June. Towards the end of May, here and there one or two stragglers may be seen; but it is not till the first week in June, save under very exceptional conditions of weather, that the angler's carnival—for this it may be termed—really commences.

At first the fish do not appear to take to the mayflies, though why this should be I have never been able to understand. Certain it is, however, that at this time there is better sport frequently to be obtained with the alder, or some such fly, than with the mayfly. In the course of a day or two, when the 'rise' is on, the fish race eagerly at the fly, and go nearly mad, and, as may be supposed, there is sport to be had.

There are generally two or three 'rises' during the day. (By the term 'rise' is meant the hatching out of a batch of flies.) The first of these usually takes place about ten o'clock, the second about two or three, and the third a few hours later. These times are apt to vary, the

weather, of course, having a marked influence. If, as not infrequently happens, a cold, dull day intervenes, there may be scarcely any rise at all worth speaking of. Again, it may be observed, the times of the rise grow somewhat later day by day.

A perfect summer day will suffice to bring the mayfly out in full force. Of course, a succession of such days necessarily shortens the mayfly period, for inasmuch as there must be a limit to the number of flies waiting to be hatched out, the more favourable the weather the more rapid the process will be.

The fly rarely remains on the water longer than a fortnight or three weeks. There are, of course, exceptions to this, as to everything else, and some three or four years ago, when I was fishing in Hampshire, the fly lasted for a whole month.

I would caution those of my readers who may not have had experience of mayfly fishing not to be too sanguine regarding their anticipations of the sport they may obtain. In those districts where the mayfly prevails, every fisherman looks eagerly forward to its approach, and great are the preparations made annually.

Too often, alas! are their hopes frustrated by reason of unsuitable weather. It is a time of year when, despite the bright sunshine, easterly

winds are frequently the order of the day, and the artificial fails to do its duty. On the best portions of the river the wind is often adverse, and renders casting extremely difficult, and at times well-nigh impossible. Fishing under such circumstances is very trying to one's patience and temper, more so than if the fish were not rising at all. All the best fish in the river may be out on the feed, despite the fact of the wind being from the east, and yet to get the fly over them is so difficult a matter. On such occasions, too, the fish come short at the artificial fly, and will not allow themselves to be fairly hooked, but get off 'pricked,' and in consequence are rendered all the more shy for the future. At such times the water appears over-transparent, the finest and most carefully stained gut *will* glitter, and no amount of wetting or use serves to moisten it, for the instant it is off the water it is dried by the grasping east wind. Things go wrong altogether, and the results of a hard day's work, trying to angler and rod alike, are under these circumstances bitterly disappointing. The worst of this kind of weather is that it generally continues for several days, and not unfrequently during the whole of the month. Let the wind but shift to south or west, or a mild drizzling day intervene, and many a goodly trout will find its way into the basket of the fisherman.

Perhaps the best sport of all is to be obtained with the spent gnat, a term used to describe the mayfly when it is exhausted after laying its eggs, and floats dead or dying on the water. After the fly has been some few days on the water, the spent gnat may be observed towards evening, and then a good imitation of it will often prove most successful.

Mr. Wood states that the mayfly lives but a few hours only. Now, if this is so, it surely appears somewhat strange that, although there may have been a heavy rise of fly for some few days, the spent gnat does not appear, except very occasionally, on the water during those days. When, however, it is on, it is, in my opinion, more killing than the fly in its former stages.

In the list of flies which I have given, I have named 'the Wickham's fancy,' so called from its inventor, Dr. Wickham, of Winchester. It is perhaps one of the very best all-round flies known to fishermen. It is a description of red spinner, ribbed with a red hackle and gold twist, over a flat gold body. When fish are to be caught, it is rarely that the 'Wickham' fails to do its duty. I refer to it here because, as I have before remarked, there are times during the mayfly season, even when the rise is heavy, when the fish are not to be taken with the artificial mayfly. On such occasions, my

advice to the reader is to try the Wickham, and he may rest assured that if it also fails he will have to be content with but a poor day's sport.

There are all sorts and descriptions of artificial mayflies. A pattern which will do well on one river may be found to fail elsewhere. It is difficult to account for this being so; still more strange is it that it at times happens that on different portions of the same river it is necessary to use a different pattern. On a river, one of the best of our English trout streams, with which I am very well acquainted, formerly renting a small fishing on it, either of two or three different patterns will kill equally well, except in a portion, some two miles above my own fishing, and for a distance of perhaps another two miles, where these patterns were utterly useless, and another, totally unlike them, was the one, and only one, to be relied on.

For general use there is, perhaps, no better pattern of mayfly than 'Hammond's champion,' so called after its inventor, the well-known gun and fishing-tackle maker in Winchester.

For my own use I prefer one which I procured from Mrs. Brocus, Rochester Row, Victoria Street. When ordering it from her, I always describe it as 'Mr. Green's pattern,' because it was given to me by a friend of that name, a well-known

Hampshire fisherman. It is somewhat small, and therefore, not being overburdened with feathers, is more quickly dried than the larger patterns. Artificial mayflies with cork bodies are also excellent on some streams. I think, however, that I must give the preference to those dressed with straw bodies. It is, however, for the reader to decide for himself, for it is impossible, for the reason I have given above, to lay down any hard and fast rule on the subject. It must depend on the river, and experience alone can tell him which pattern best suits the stream for which he requires it.

In mayfly-fishing it is the drying the fly which is the trouble; the wings are necessarily large, and it takes a deal of whisking about to dry them thoroughly, and this is not only very tiring work to the fisherman, but very trying to a rod. I would here impress upon the reader that it is far better to go to the trouble of changing a mayfly which has become too soaked to dry quickly, than to strain his rod and probably his arm also, unless he has two rods, and an attendant to carry the one not in use, whom he can trust to do the drying part of the work for him whilst he is using the other rod. It is a great mistake to attempt to use a mayfly before it is properly dried; to do so only increases trouble in the long-run, for the wings must be upright,

and the fly must float well, otherwise it presents the appearance of a flabby, tangled mass of feathers to the fish, who, as may be supposed, turn up their noses in derision at the palpable imposture. Moreover, if the cast is made when the wings are wet and hanging round the hook, the fly will very probably be ruined.

Fishing with the 'blow-line,' *i.e.*, a light floss-silk line, and the natural fly, is practised on some rivers, and is especially in vogue on the lakes of West Meath, in Ireland. I have never tried it, but I am given to understand that excellent sport may be thus obtained. Perhaps if I were to go there I might be induced to take to it; but the artificial fly ever possesses the greater charm for me, and seems to be so much more sporting a method. It is not the number of fish caught which affords the pleasure to the true sportsman, so much as the way they are caught, and the difficulties which have to be encountered to circumvent them. This system of blow-line fishing requires some little skill and practice, so I am given to understand. That is, at all events, one point in its favour, for the more the chances are equalized the truer the sport, whether the quarry be fox, fish, or game. Any fool can kill a fox by foul means, if he is scoundrel enough to try, but such would not be sport. Why, then,

should a fish be treated less fairly? Of all sporting quarries, a fox, a snipe, and a trout hold the place of honour in my estimation. All these require no little science and skill to circumvent honestly and fairly, and the man who can lay himself out to encompass the destruction of any one of them by illegitimate means cannot be considered a true sportsman.

The following may be of use to those who adopt the blow-line system. It was told me many years ago, by a namesake, a very good fisherman, and, as it has the merit of being humane, I here mention it. If, instead of impaling the mayfly, a tiny piece of bird-lime is placed on the bend of the hook, and the latter, thus prepared, between the wings of the fly, not only is the cruelty of impalement avoided, but the fly will last much longer, and be infinitely more attractive by reason of its being thus kept alive.

The following are dressings of the mayfly. The dyes referred to by Mr. Halford are those which he treats of in his book on artificial fly-making, and which were prepared for him by Messrs. Crawshaw. The numbers are those by which he designates the several colours, of which he gives a table from No. 1 to No. 9. I have selected those which I consider the most suitable for general use:

HALFORD.

Wings: Rouen drake (dyed in No. 9).

Head: Bronze peacock herl.

Throat-hackle: Gray partridge, dyed in strong tea.

Ribbing-hackle: Pale ginger cock's hackle.

Body: Straw or maize, ribbed with crimson tying-silk.

Tails: Brown mallard.

Hook 2, 3, or 4 (long).

HAMMOND'S CHAMPION.

Wings: Mallard, dyed a yellowish olive.

Throat: Gray partridge hackle, dyed as above.

Ribbing: Lightish-red hackle and fine gold-wire.

Body: Lemon or buff chenille.

Tails: Very dark blue hackle.

FRANCIS FRANCIS.

Wings: Drake or teal, dyed in Judson's canary, and afterwards in Judson's slate dyes.

Throat: Two turns of sandy-red hackle, and over this three turns of bright speckled florican, or a light speckled partridge-feather dipped in onion dye.

Body: Straw, ribbed with burnt-sienna-coloured silk.

Tails: Three whisks of brown hen or pheasant.

RONALDS.

Body : The middle part of pale straw-coloured floss-silk, ribbed with silver twist ; the extremities of brown peacock's herl, tied with light-brown silk thread.

Tails : Three rabbit's whiskers.

Wings and legs : Made buzz from a mottled feather of the mallard, stained a pale greenish olive. W. F.

Hook 5, 6, or 7 (long).

THE GRAY DRAKE.

RONALDS.

Body : The middle part of white floss-silk, ribbed with silver twist ; the extremities of brown peacock's herl, tied with brown silk.

Tails : Three rabbit's whiskers.

Wings and legs : Made buzz from a mottled feather of the mallard, stained a faint purple. W. F.

Hook 5, 6, or 7 (long).

THE SPENT GNAT.

HALFORD.

Wings : Four blue ginger - pointed Andalusian hackles.

Head : Bronze peacock herl.

Throat : Gray partridge.

Ribbing : Badger cock's hackle.

Body : White floss-silk, ribbed with a strand of peacock's herl, which is cinnamon-coloured at the root, and dark at the point, the dark portion being worked at the tail end.

Tails : Brown mallard.

Hook 2, 3, or 4 (long).

THE MARCH BROWN (EPHEMERA).

This fly is not to be found on all rivers, and I have never seen it on those in Hampshire. Where it is met with it affords great sport.

Here, again, there is a marked difference between the male and female. The latter is the larger and lighter in colour, especially as regards the wings.

Like the mayfly, it rarely appears in the month from which it takes its name, and is not usually on the water before April, except in a very early season. It is termed the 'cob-fly' in Wales.

There is another fly, which makes its appearance in August, called the 'August dun,' and which is very similar to the March brown—so much so as to induce the belief that it is a second, later edition of that fly. It also is an excellent fly. I shall refer to it later on.

No fisherman should be without two or three sizes of the March brown in his book, for it is one of the most useful of all flies, and will often kill fish when nothing else will, especially if fished

wet, and at all times of the season. Why this should be so I cannot say. In one river on which I formerly fished, the only fly which fish could be induced to take was a large March brown. After days of fruitless efforts, I was advised by an old hand on the river to try a pattern of fly he gave me, which proved to be a large March brown. I followed his advice, and with very considerable success; the fish were large and fairly plentiful. I had previously tried them with every fly in my book, save this one. Now, why they should have manifested such a decided preference for this one particular fly to the exclusion of any others, I fail to understand. I most certainly never saw any fly at all resembling a March brown on that river at any time of the season.

For either river or lake fishing this fly is equally useful. I have never seen a salmon-fly of this description that I can remember, but I dare say such a pattern would be found equally efficacious for salmon as for trout. It is a very sporting, 'varmint'-looking fly, and I see no reason why, if trout and sea-trout take it, as both do, their grander relations should consider it beneath their notice.

This fly casts its skin, and becomes the 'great red spinner,' which in some districts is known as the 'light mackerel.' It is a good evening fly, and bears a high reputation amongst anglers.

Personally, I prefer this latter fly dressed rather small than over-large. If tackle-makers would but put a little less dressing in their trout-flies, and a little more in their salmon-flies, I am of opinion that fishermen generally would be the gainers.

The dressing of the great red spinner will be given elsewhere with that of the red spinners. Those for the March brown are as follows :

MALE FLY (RONALDS).

Body : Fur off hare's face, ribbed with olive silk, and tied with brown silk

Tails : Two strands of a partridge-feather.

Wings : Quill feather from the middle of a hen pheasant's wing, which may be found of the exact shade.

Legs : A brown mottled feather from the back of a partridge.

Hook 2, 3, or 4 (long).

I conclude that the feather from which the tails are to be taken is a brown partridge hackle.

FEMALE FLY.

Body : Pale olive-green silk, ribbed with fine gold twist.

Legs : A honey dun hackle that is less bright than a golden dun.

Wings: Upright—the same as for the male fly; but the hackle will impart a lighter shade.

In Wales it is dressed hacklewise, with a brown mottled partridge-feather, and ribbed with pale-green silk.

The above dressings of this fly may be used with success again in July.

MALE FLY (FRANCIS FRANCIS).

Body: Dark-brown fur from hare's ear or face, ribbed with tawny yellow silk.

Legs: Hackle from a partridge's back.

Tails: Two strands of a partridge's back.

Wings: The dark, mottled, and blurred feathers from a cock pheasant's wing.

FEMALE FLY.

Legs: From a partridge's breast-feather.

Tails: From a partridge's breast-feather.

A few strands of any olive-coloured fur may be introduced amongst the hare's ear, and the wing a shade lighter than that used for the male fly. The rest of the fly the same as that for the male.

I think that there should be a *very* marked difference between the colour and size of these two flies, and that the wing of the female fly should be, in the latter case, taken from the

lightest quill feather in a partridge's wing. The size of hook should be, for general use when the fly is on the water, No. 1 for the male, and No. 2 for the female—anyhow, there should be the difference of a size between the two.

I consider the dressings given by Francis superior to those given by Ronalds, whether used wet or dry.

THE BLUE DUN (EPHEMERA).

The 'blue dun,' 'blue upright' as it is called in Devonshire, is one of our best and most important flies, and is to be met with on nearly every river, and at every season throughout the year. Ronalds, Theakstone, and other good authorities, identify this fly with the olive dun. I am well aware that the latter varies very considerably in colour, from dark purple to palest olive, according as the weather is cold and dark, or the reverse.

Theakstone says that 'the "blue drake"' (as he terms this fly), 'which hatches in cold weather, appears to cast off three protective skins. After the first, she is of a lighter shade, and a smarter fly; second, she is orange; and the third or last, when in a state of nudity, or stripped to the (true) skin, a lemon or straw colour.'

There is a very great difference of opinion regarding this fly, many people nowadays in-

clining to the belief that the different coloured duns are no more or less than one and the same fly, the variety of colour being due to the influence of the weather. Now, it is not for me to gainsay the dictum of such authorities as have so stated their opinions that this is the case ; but if it is so, I fail to understand how it happens that so many spinners, evidently of the dun tribe, and so varying in colour, are to be seen on the water at the same time ; and if, as is generally admitted, the blue dun changes to a red spinner, and is the same fly as the olive dun, whence comes the 'olive spinner' ? The latter is a fly well known to all Hampshire fishermen, nor is it peculiar to that district, for I have seen it repeatedly elsewhere. My own impression is that the blue dun, olive dun, and yellow dun are three distinct flies ; the first changing to the red, the second to the olive, and the third to the pale-yellow spinners. Again, if the blue dun or the olive dun are the same fly, it is surely strange that the fly known as the blue quill, a hot-weather edition of the blue dun, should be on the water on the same day as the olive dun. I may be wrong, but the conclusion I have come to is, that while all the olive duns are the same fly, varying in shade according to weather, so, in like manner, the blue dun and the quill gnat, the yellow dun and all its paler shades, are severally the

same flies. I have no desire to state this as a positive fact, because I have no right to be positive regarding a subject which I have neither proved nor am able to prove. I only express my belief. Perhaps some one of my readers may be able to solve the problem.

There are various dressings of the blue dun, the wings in nearly every instance being taken from the wing-feather of the starling, light or dark-coloured, as may be desired. The body is at times represented by fur from the hare's ear, at others by a strip of quill taken from the wing-feather of the starling, or a feather of similar colour and texture. These two dressings are the most common, and I think the best; nor can there be any better fly, for general use, than the hare's ear, whether ribbed with gold tinsel or without. Mr. Halford is loud in its praise, and quotes a case where a friend of his, a noted fisherman, uses scarcely any other fly throughout the season. I think I know to whom he refers, and if so, he is certainly one of the best and most successful of our Hampshire anglers. I myself also owe this pattern of fly many a debt of gratitude, and can vouch for its attractive powers, when other flies have proved useless.

Ronalds calls this fly the 'cocktail'; he states that it lives some three or four days in its first,

the pseudimago state, before changing to the red spinner. He dresses it thus :

Body : Fur from hare's ear or face, spun very thinly on fine yellow silk, and wound on thickest at the shoulder. Some of the hare's ear is picked out to form the legs.

Tail : Two fibres of a dun hackle.

Wings : From a quill feather of the starling's wing, which may be slightly stained in onion dye. If a sufficient quantity of the hare's ear cannot be picked out for the legs, two or three turns of a ginger dun hackle may be added, and will help to keep the wings upright. Put these on last, whipping them on the *bare hook*, and finish at the tail.

Hook No. 2 (grayling).

Another dressing which he states to kill well till June is thus made :

Body : Yellow silk waxed, with a *very little* blue dun fur, from rat, mouse, mole, or rabbit, spun upon the silk, so that the yellow shows through the body, tapering from shoulder to tail.

Legs : Four or five turns of a honey dun hackle.

Wings : From a starling's wing-feather, put on last on the bare hook, so as to stand up boldly. (The silk to be waxed lightly.)

I am somewhat surprised that so good an authority as Ronalds should advise, as in the

first of these two dressings, that the hackle should be put on last. It is at best but a clumsy arrangement, and utterly unworthy of one whose patterns are so generally perfect.

FRANCIS FRANCIS.

Wings: Light or dark starling wing-feather, as required.

Hackle: Blue dun.

Body: Two or three strands from the long drooping feathers of the heron's breast, ribbed with fine straw-coloured silk, for a light-coloured fly. For a darker one, the strands to be taken from the *wing* of the heron.

Tails: Blue dun.

He decries the use of silk for bodies of flies, as being liable to vary in colour. He objects to the use of hare's ear for the body as being too rough, and prefers the use of a strip of quill to the above dressing of heron's feathers, also suggesting that the hackle would be improved by being stained in slightly yellow dye.

HALFORD.

Wings: Light starling or snipe.

Body: Pale mole's fur, or fur from a water-rat, spun on primrose silk.

Hackle and tails: Pale-blue dun.

Hook o, oo, or ooo.

GOLD-RIBBED HARE'S EAR.

Wings : Medium or pale starling.

Body and legs : The body is formed of dark fur from a hare's face, ribbed with fine flat gold, and the hare's fur picked out at the shoulder to form the legs.

Tails : Red cock's beard hackle.

Hook o or oo.

BLUE QUILL.

Wings : Light starling.

Body : Peacock's quill (stripped).

Hackle and tails : Pale-blue dun.

Hook o, oo, or ooo.

A dressing of the Devonshire 'blue upright.'

The three last dressings are, in my opinion, the best. Either can be used wet or dry, as may be desired.

THE OLIVE DUN (EPHEMERA).

There are several dressings of this fly, viz., dark, medium, and light. The bodies of the first two are at times made with wool instead of quill, either material being dyed, as are also the hackles. When dressed with wool, they are frequently ribbed, or tipped, with gold tinsel. The latter will be found advantageous for grayling, these fish having a decided predilection for a little

finery. Many people object to the use of wool bodies for this fly. Flies so dressed certainly do not look as smart, nor are they *apparently* as good imitations as those made with quill. 'Experientia docet'; I have myself found them kill the better of the two.

If I were restricted to the use of four flies only, I should make the following selection, viz., olive dun, hare's ear, red spinner, and iron blue, stipulating, of course, to be allowed two or three shades of the first; and unless any special rise, such as the grannom or mayfly, were on the water, I think I could safely back myself to kill fish with these as well as with a larger selection.

The pale olive is a very good fly in bright weather, especially during the early part of the day in June.

Mayflies, duns, and spinners are nowadays frequently dressed with what are called detached bodies, and very beautiful and life-like such imitations are when well made — so much so that it would seem impossible for a fish to refuse them. Indeed, the fish rise well at them. I fear, however, that they are not otherwise as successful as they might be, and my own experience is that fish more often get pricked than hooked with them. Nothing is more detrimental to a fishery than to constantly prick fish, as it scares them

and makes them shy. So assured am I of this, that when fish are 'coming short,' as they often do during east winds, etc., and I find that they are consequently going away pricked, I prefer to stop fishing rather than spoil future sport. Were it not for the reason I have stated, I should most certainly use detached bodies in preference to those dressed in the ordinary way.

Francis links the olive dun with the blue dun, and considers it merely a variety of the former. He mentions two kinds of olive, the large and the small, the body of the large olive being yellower than that of the smaller. He states that the quill of the eye of the peacock's feather dyed and stripped gives the best imitation, the wing of the larger fly having less of the brown dye in it, or without it altogether, and the legs lighter. The latter dressed on a 9 or 10 hook, the smaller on an 11 or 12.

He also gives another dressing, as follows :

Body : Dark olive silk, with a turn of gold tinsel at the tail end, ribbed with yellow silk or fine gold wire.

Hackle : Darkish-blue dun, stained olive.

Tails : Two strands of blue dun, stained olive.

Wings : Dark or light starling (as required).

Hook 10 or 11.

I would inform the reader that Francis measures the sizes of his hooks inversely to Halford or

Ronalds. Thus a hook of 10 or 11 would represent an ordinary 2 or 3.

DARK OLIVE (HALFORD).

Wings : Dark or medium starling.

Body : Peacock quill dyed in Crawshaw's No. 1.

Hackle and tails : Dyed in Crawshaw's No. 3.

Hook 0, 00 or 000.

Halford recommends, as the best of all hackles for dyeing, duns shaded or flecked with yellowish or ginger points. These feathers are obtained from the lighter-coloured Andalusian fowls.

MEDIUM OLIVE (HALFORD).

Wings : Light starling.

Body : Peacock's quill dyed in No. 8.

Hackle and tails : Dyed in No. 2.

Hook as above.

PALE-OLIVE QUILL (HALFORD).

Wings : Palest starling.

Body : Quill from young starling's wing, or pale condor dyed slightly in No. 2.

Hook as above.

DETACHED OLIVE (HALFORD).

Wings : Light starling.

Body : A thin strip of indiarubber, worked over an undyed doubled bristle.

Hackle and tails : Dyed in No. 2.

Hook, 0 or 00.

Mr. Halford states that he considers this fly to be the best imitation of the natural olive extant.

OLIVE BADGER (HALFORD).

Hackle : Badger cock.

Body : Peacock's quill dyed in No. 2, with flat gold tag.

Tails : Pale-cream colour.

This is the dressing of the olive spinner.

HACKLE OLIVE QUILL (HALFORD).

Hackle : Pale silvery dun cock.

Body : Peacock quill dyed in No. 8.

Tails : White cock's head hackle dyed in No. 2.

Hook o or oo.

Should the reader be desirous of making his own flies, he cannot do better than follow the directions given in Mr. Halford's work, 'Floating Flies, and How to Dress Them.' Indeed, he would not be able to follow the dressings which I have extracted from the latter without its assistance. The patterns which I have taken therefrom are given rather as a guide to him when purchasing.

THE YELLOW DUN (EPHEMERA).

The body of the yellow dun is generally represented by means of silk, but it must be borne in mind that many of the materials used in the

manufacture of artificial flies present a very different appearance when wet to that when dry. There are so many different dressings of this fly that it is a matter of difficulty to make selection. The natural fly rarely comes on the water before June, and then only in warm weather. It is a fly of less importance to the angler than many others. My own experience goes to prove that since it is required only occasionally, it might be almost dispensed with. Aldam's Indian yellow is, however, an excellent grayling fly for use during August and September. The dressings given below are all shades of the yellow dun.

Ronalds states that the yellow dun lives for some three days before casting its skin; that it is generally on the water between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., and that it is one of our best flies. He thus dresses it :

Body : Yellow mohair mixed with a little pale-blue mouse's fur, or yellow silk thread waxed, and with the smallest quantity of blue rabbit's fur spun upon it, and ribbed with yellow silk.

Wings : Upright, from the lightest part of a young starling's quill feather.

Legs : A light-yellow dun hackle.

Hook 2 (graylings).

To dress it buzz, he uses a lighter dun hackle; in either case the body is made delicately with primrose silk.

The spinner is of rather a lighter and yellowish-brown than that of the blue dun. It is of about the same size as the spinner of the latter, and lives some nine days. It should be used on warm evenings. The materials used to represent this spinner are somewhat similar to those for the red spinner, but rather lighter in shade.

He further states that a cock's hackle is to be preferred for grayling, and that from a hen for trout, when it is dressed buzz; the body being ribbed with unwaxed yellow silk, as for the yellow dun.

When the feathers of a dotterel are used, it is called the 'dotterel dun,' and is a far-famed fly.

The buzz dressings will be found most suitable for use with a wet fly.

Francis gives this dressing of the yellow dun :

Wings : Medium starling.

Body : Yellow silk.

Hackle : Medium honey dun.

He states that this pattern may be varied to the palest colour by the use of silk, and dun hackles from the pale-blue feathers of the sea-swallow or rosy tern.

'WHITCHURCH' (HALFORD).

Wings : Pale starling.

Body : Primrose floss silk.

Hackle and legs : Pale sandy ginger.

Hook o, oo or ooo.

(Messrs. Eaton and Deller's pattern.)

FLIGHT'S FANCY.

Wings : Patent starling.

Body : Very pale yellow floss silk, ribbed with fine flat gold.

Hackle and tails : Pale buff Cochin cock's hackle, or pale honey dun.

Hook o, oo or ooo .

ALDAM'S INDIAN YELLOW.

Wings : From the inside of a young goose or pale coot's wing.

Body : Russia-leather-coloured floss silk, ribbed with bright lemon-coloured tying-silk.

Hackle and tails : Pale buff-coloured Cochin cock.

Head : Three or four turns of orange tying-silk.

Hook o or oo.

An excellent grayling fly, invented by Mr. Aldam.

LITTLE MARRYAT.

Wings : Palest starling.

Body : Fur from the flank of the Australian opossum.

Hackle or tails : Pale buff Cochin cock.

Hook oo or ooo.

HARE'S EAR.

(A hare's-ear dressing of the yellow dun.)

Wings : Pale starling.

Body : Pale primrose silk.

Legs : The lightest fur from a hare's face, spun on pale-yellow tying-silk, and worked as a hackle.

Tails : Four or five strands of a ginger cock's beard-hackle.

Hook o, oo or ooo.

(Messrs. Ogden's original pattern.)

THE IRON-BLUE DUN (EPHEMERA).

This fly is by no means one of the least importance ; on the contrary, I may remark that it is perhaps the one fly which, when on the water, the fish take to the exclusion of any other. At first sight it is a somewhat sombre-looking little insect, but a closer inspection of it will reveal a beauty of form and colouring in nowise inferior to its brethren. It is one of the most difficult of all flies to imitate, and no material, whether natural or dyed, seems capable of adequately representing the exquisite blue-black of the gauzy wings, that which most nearly approaches to it being the tail feathers of the bottle-tit, and these are almost too blue. The coot-feathers are too opaque and lustreless, though often used for the purpose. I have never seen what I consider a really good imitation of this fly.

The iron-blue is a brave little creature, and the cold, biting wind, from which others of its relations so shrink, fails to deter it from putting in an appearance ; it prefers to come forth when

the north or east wind prevails. On such occasions they come sailing down the stream in merry little groups, which are soon sadly thinned by the trout, which hail their advent, and hasten to the banquet while they may, for the rise does not last long, and so, if the fisherman desires to take advantage of it, he must make the best use of his time.

Ronalds states that the iron-blue lives about two days before it changes its skin, and that it is on the water from the end of April to the middle of June. He also asserts that the jenny spinner—the spinner to which this fly changes—lasts all through the summer. I fail to reconcile the former statement with the latter, for if the one is on the water, the other must be so.

My own experiences are that the iron-blue, and consequently the jenny spinner, is on the water more or less throughout the season. What is termed the July dun is so very similar, that it is supposed to be a later edition of the iron-blue. The same artificial will do duty for both flies.

Ronalds dresses it as follows :

Body : Blue mole's fur.

Head : Reddish-brown floss silk.

Tail : From a yellow dun hackle.

Wings : From the under-side of a cormorant's wing, or a feather from the breast of a moorhen (the

tip only to be used), or the upper end of the wing-feather of a tomtit when in full plumage. If procurable, a feather from the wing of a merlin hawk may be advantageously substituted.

Legs : A very small yellow dun hackle.

Hook o (short).

He says that it is difficult to find a hackle feather of the proper tint to make this fly buzz.

Francis gives the following dressing :

Body : Dark slate. (I suppose he means mole's fur.)

Wings : A dark-blue feather from the wing of the cormorant, tail of tomtit, or breast of the moorhen.

Hackle : A shade or two lighter than the body. (This would be, I conclude, a medium-coloured blue dun.)

Tail : Same colour as the hackle.

Theakstone's pattern is follows :

Head, shoulders, and three last joints of the body :
Dark-brown silk.

For the middle of the body : Light blue-gray silk.

Hackle : Water-rail or water-hen's small leady breast-feather, with a few fibres of light blue-gray fur from the fox-cub. W. F.

HALFORD.

Wings : Tomtit's tail.

Body : A strip of quill from the outside small feather of a coot's wing.

Hackle and tails : Dark-blue Andalusian.

Hook oo.

Halford gives two or three dressings of this fly, the one I have selected being, in my opinion, as good as any, and simple.

THE JENNY SPINNER (EPHEMERA).

This is the spinner of the iron blue. Of all the transformations which this family undergo, surely none is so complete as is the case with this fly. The sombre crape-like garb is cast aside, and thereout steps the most exquisite little fairy bride which can be imagined, clad in a robe of dazzling, purest white. Theakstone terms this fly the 'pearl drake,' to my mind an infinitely more appropriate name than that of jenny spinner or spinning jenny. If it is difficult to imitate the iron blue, it is ten times more so to frame any artificial at all comparable with its imago. Nay, it is a matter of downright impossibility to do even the scantiest justice to the beauty of the natural fly. Every material seems dull and opaque beside the filmy, ethereal little insect. The fish feed on it eagerly enough, but I have

never heard of anyone having any particular success with any artificial imitation of this fly, doubtless by reason of the latter being always so inadequate.

Ronalds assigns it a life of some four or five days, and thus imitates it :

Body : White floss silk.

Head and root of tail : Brown silk.

Tail : Light-dun hackle.

Wings and legs : Best imitated buzz, and with the lightest dun hackle procurable. W. F.

This dressing is as good as any.

FRANCIS.

Body : A watery whitish floss silk, with a turn of brown at the head and the tail.

Wings and legs : A pale silvery blue hackle.
W. F.

HALFORD.

Hackle : Badger cock.

Body : Detached, of white horsehair, worked on an undyed bristle, with four or five turns of crimson tying-silk at both ends.

Tails : Pale-cream colour.

Hook oo or ooo.

I do not like the use of the badger hackle for this pattern. It fails to give the appearance of lightness, so peculiar to the natural fly, and is, to my mind, a trifle too yellow.

THEAKSTONE.

Body : Fine coffee-brown silk for the brown, and white for the pearl parts.

Wings and legs : A glassy silvery cock's hackle.

The jenny spinner is a fly I never use myself. I have given it up as hopeless.

THE JULY DUN.

The dressing as for the iron blue, but a trifle larger and lighter, will serve for this fly. It changes to a dark claret - coloured spinner. Ronalds gives the dressing of it as follows :

Body : Mole's fur and pale-yellow mohair, mixed and spun upon yellow silk.

Tails : Two or three whisks of a dark-dun hackle.

Wings : Dark starling wing-feather stained in strong onion dye, or from a wing-feather from the merlin hawk.

Legs : A dark-dun hackle.

To make it buzz, use a lighter-coloured hackle. This style of dressing will be found preferable for wet-fly fishing.

THE AUGUST DUN.

I have already referred to this fly when writing of the March brown. It is very similar to the latter, the only differences being that it is, perhaps, a trifle smaller, and the ribs somewhat yellower in colour. In the spinner stage it is rather of

an orange red than red, probably caused by warmer weather and brighter sun than when the March brown is on the water, for I share the views expressed by some writers, viz., that this fly and the March brown are the same.

Ronalds gives a dressing of the fly, to which Francis takes exception as being too stiff. As I consider his amendment the better pattern, I give the reader the benefit of it :

Body: Light-brown floss-silk ribbed with yellow silk.

Legs: A red hackle stained brown.

Tails: From hackle stained brown.

THE LITTLE PALE-BLUE DUN (EPHEMERA).

This is at times termed the 'willow fly.' It is a most exquisitely graceful little insect, and most delicate in colour, and is a very good late summer and autumn fly. I give Ronalds' dressing of it as being the best, save that he forgets to add the tails :

Body: Very pale-blue fur mixed with a very little yellow mohair.

Wings: From the sea-swallow (wing-feather?).

Legs: The palest-blue hackle procurable.

Tails: From palest-blue hackle procurable.

If dressed buzz, a hackle feather from the sea-swallow only should be used, instead of wings and legs as above.

The metamorphosis is too delicate to be successfully imitated.

Hook 1 (grayling).

It will be found most suitable for wet-fly work dressed buzz.

SPINNERS.

As has been observed, the spinner is an insect in its perfect state—*i.e.*, the fly after it has cast off its first covering, what may be described as its 'great-coat.'

It was, as has been shown, when in the creeper stage, a hideous, repulsive little creature. On its quitting the ooze and slime of the river-bed for its aerial existence, it rises from the water a being of exquisite beauty and colour, which latter are increased tenfold when it has divested itself of its enveloping mantle.

As was explained when reference was made to the mayfly, it is in the spinner stage that the ephemerals breed. This duty having been completed, they fall helpless and dying into the element which gave them birth.

The change of skin can very easily be witnessed. Let any one of the Ephemera be placed under a wineglass, care being taken to insert a piece of paper under the edge of the latter to prevent the little creature being stifled to death. In a short time the operation will take place, and the slough will be apparent. It will then be

noticed that, in addition to the other marked differences which exist between the now perfect insect and its appearance before the skin was laid aside, the tails are considerably lengthened, and the body and wings are very transparent.

The motion of a spinner in the air is different to the flight of the fly in its former state, when it was somewhat slow and weakly. In its perfected condition it dances up and down, never ceasing, never tiring, and seeming to revel in its beauty and lightness, over-full of joy, and reckless of its 'little day' so soon to close, or of the hungry trout which so eagerly await its downfall.

Experienced fishermen are well aware that when any of the Ephemera have been out in force during the day, their spinners are almost sure to be on the water during the evening rise, and a red or orange spinner rarely fails to do its duty on such occasions. I think it is Francis Francis who, in his book on angling, quotes a case where he was utterly nonplussed as to what fly the fish were so eagerly rising at one evening when it was growing too dark to ascertain. The water was literally boiling with rising fish, and he had tried one artificial after another, but to no purpose. Eventually it transpired that it was a small red spinner. Needless to remark, he made

a note of it, and profited by the discovery on future occasions.

It is not only during the evening that this fly can be used to advantage, for it is most valuable on warm, drizzling summer days, especially if fished wet.

Although some of the spinners are termed 'red'—as, for instance, those from the March brown and the August dun—the colour may be more correctly described as a ruddy chestnut.

Ask for a red spinner at a tackle-shop, and the chances are that the pattern produced will be dressed with red wool, ribbed with gold wire, and winged with a starling's feather. When wet, this dressing very fairly represents the red spinners of the two flies above-named; but, as a rule, the bodies of such artificials are made far too full and fat, whereas transparent slimness of body is one of the most marked characteristics of the spinner. For wet fly-fishing this dressing answers very well; but where it is necessary to use the fly dry, a dyed quill or horsehair body is more suitable. The wings of a spinner are also so gauzy and ethereal in texture that it is most difficult to imitate them. The starling wing-feather is far too heavy and opaque, and altogether unworthy of representing so exquisite a structure. Francis Francis and others advise the adoption of the

points of dun hackles for use as wings, and such are far more realistic. In Mr. Halford's work, the wings of spinners are, in nearly every instance, dispensed with, the fly being dressed hacklewise; and this appears to me to be by far the best plan, and my own experiences go to prove such to be the case.

Mr. Halford gives a dressing of the red spinner which he has christened the 'detached badger,' the body being detached, and the wings represented by what is termed a 'badger hackle'—*i.e.*, a pale-yellow dun hackle, with a black stripe running down its centre; and this pattern, though his own invention, he, with becoming modesty, states to be the best imitation of the red spinner yet produced. And a very excellent fly it is; I could only wish it were not detached. It would, I think, as would all flies so made, be better when, as is sometimes the case, semi-detached.

DRESSINGS OF SPINNERS—THE GREAT RED
SPINNER.

This is the imago, or perfected state, of the March brown after it has cast its skin.

Ronalds seems to be a little uncertain about this fly; for he states that, although the March brown is not seen on the water after the middle of May, nevertheless the great red spinner still

continues to come into existence. Indeed, he admits that he is not at all sure that it is not a distinct, though similar, species of the genus *Bætis*.

I think it will suffice for our purpose if we treat it as one and the same. It is more useful as an evening fly.

Francis gives no special dressing of it. He, however, advocates the use of hackle points for the wings of all spinners, as being more delicate and transparent. Such are, doubtless, more suitable than any wing-feathers from the starling, etc., but I prefer to dress all spinners hacklewise without wings. My experience is that they not only kill better, but dry more quickly, last longer, and float better than when they are winged.

Ronalds thus dresses the red spinner :

Body : Pig's wool dyed red-brown, or orange and brown floss-silk mixed ; spun on brown silk, and ribbed with fine gold twist.

Tail : Two long whisks of bright amber-red hackle.

Wings : From an under covert-feather of the starling's wing.

Legs : A bright amber-red hackle.

Hook 2, 3, or 4 (long).

LIGHT MACKEREL.

Body : Thin, and of bright-brown silk, ribbed with fine gold twist.

Tail : Two whisks of a red cock's hackle.

Wings : Upright, from a mottled gray feather of the mallard, stained to match the colour of the natural wings.

Legs : Red cock's hackle.

Hook 2 (grayling).

He (Ronalds) states that the Derbyshire anglers thus dress it :

Wings : Upright, from the under-covert feather of a young grouse.

Body : Russia-leather-coloured silk, ribbed with the finest yellow silk.

Tail : Two dun fibres.

After a frosty morning they use the following pattern, which they call the 'frost fly' :

Wings : Starling feather, onion-dyed.

Body : Claret silk.

Legs : A dead furnace hackle.

Francis thus dresses the ordinary red spinner :

Body : Red-brown quill, ringed with fine gold wire.

Legs : Red hackle.

Tail : Three fibres of red hackle.

Wings : Golden-tinged blue dun hackle points.

This dressing will suffice for the imago of the blue dun and red spinners generally. The hook would be an ordinary o or 1, or even oo; but he states no size.

HALFORD'S PATTERNS OF RED SPINNERS.

Wings : Honey dun cock hackle points.

Body : Peacock or adjutant quill dyed in No. 9, and ribbed with fine gold wire.

Hackle : Black-budded red game-cock.

Tails : From a pale cream - coloured Dorking cock's hackle.

Hook o, oo, or ooo.

HACKLE RED SPINNER.

Hackle : Honey dun cock over three or four turns of black ostrich at shoulder.

Body : Peacock or adjutant quill dyed in No. 9, and ribbed with fine gold wire.

Tails : Pale cream-colour. W. F.

Hook o or oo.

N.B.—A first-rate pattern.

BROWN BADGER.

Hackle : Badger cock.

Body : Peacock-quill dyed in No. 9.

Tails : Pale cream-colour.

Hook o or oo.

DETACHED BADGER.

Hackle : Badger cock.

Body : White horsehair dyed in No. 9, worked over a doubled bristle similarly dyed, and ribbed with crimson tying-silk.

Tails : Pale cream-colour.

Hook o or oo.

BROWN SPINNER.

Ronalds gives no dressing of this fly. Francis dresses it similarly to the red spinner, but with a lighter and browner silk for the body, and ribbed with fine gold wire, the hackle being of a lighter red, and the wing of a lighter hue. He states that it is a useful fly after the yellow dun has been on the water during the day.

CLARET SPINNER (HALFORD).

Wings : Pale starling.

Body : Claret floss-silk, ribbed with fine gold wire.

Hackle : Red game-cock.

Tails : Pale cream-colour.

Hook o, oo, or ooo.

Halford states that it is useful during the early mornings in hot weather.

THE RED QUILL.

One of the best of all good flies. It is dressed thus :

Wings : Light or medium starling.

Hackle : Red.

Body : A stripped quill of peacock herl, or the quill of a starling wing-feather.

Tails : From a red hackle.

A most useful pattern of the red spinner class.

Different districts have different names for the flies used therein. Thus, in Devonshire, the blue dun is termed the 'blue upright,' by reason of its carrying its wings erect, though this peculiarity is by no means limited to this fly, for all the Ephemera carry their wings in a similar manner. Ronalds terms it the 'cock-tail,' though why I do not know, for all the Ephemera cock their tails much in the same manner. Theakstone calls it the 'blue bloa,' a Yorkshire term for it ; what the word 'bloa' signifies I am at a loss to imagine. When the body is made of hare's ear, it is termed 'hare lug,' lug being Scotch for ear, or 'hare's flax,' flax meaning fleck or fur. In like manner the olive dun is termed the 'olive bloa.' In Hampshire the blue dun is styled the 'blue quill,' and the olive dun the 'olive quill,' by reason of quill being used in the manufacture of

the artificials. In Cumberland and some of the northern counties, the olive dun is termed the 'light snipe' or the 'dark snipe,' according as the fly is dressed light or dark, the feathers for the wings being taken from the wing of the full snipe, for the former from the inside, for the latter from the outside of the wing. Again, the iron-blue is called the little iron - blue at times, in order, I suppose, to distinguish it from the July dun.

It is to be regretted that the nomenclature adopted by Theakstone is so original, for it renders his charming and otherwise valuable work well-nigh useless to fishermen, despite the efforts of the editor to render it intelligible to all. The names which he adopts are neither entomological nor piscatorial. It is, nevertheless, a work possessing deep interest and much valuable information. It cannot fail to strike those who peruse it how earnest he must have been in his investigations, how true a sportsman to be so much in earnest, and how engrossing sport, when coupled ever so modestly with science, can be; without the aid of the latter, how wanting in real interest.

The present chapter is already somewhat over-lengthy, so I will here close it, and defer making mention of the other flies on our list until the commencement of a fresh one.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Alder Fly—Sedge Flies—The Grannom—The Needle Brown—The Silver Horns—The Hawthorn Fly—The Peacock Fly—The Gold-eyed Gauze-wing—The Black Gnat—The Red Ant—The Cowdung Fly—The Coch-y-bonddhu—Fancy Flies—The 'Wickham's Fancy'—The Red Tag—The Coachman—The Governor—The Orange Bumble—The Claret Bumble.

THE ALDER FLY.

WITH the close of the preceding chapter we bid adieu to the interesting Ephemera. Those flies which remain to be referred to belong, for the greater part, to the trichopterous or hairy-winged class; some few of them are neuropterous, or nerve-winged, but they belong to the same genus. Amongst these latter may be reckoned the family of Perla. I do not desire to weary the reader, or to confuse him with a laboured essay on entomology. I should probably bore him, and get into a veritable quagmire of long names, and find myself wandering into regions which I had better keep out of altogether. Suffice it to say that the alder fly is one of the Perlidæ. It is not a beautiful fly, it is not even good-looking; but if

'handsome is as handsome does,' then its worth is great, and its want of grace and colour may be ignored, for at times a good artificial imitation will work wonders, even though the mayflies, siren-like, may do their utmost to beguile the trout from the consideration of more homely qualities.

It is, perhaps, rather during the evening that the alder possesses greater attractions for the fish than in the brighter hours of the day, though I have not infrequently done well with it in brilliant sunshine and on the hottest days. Perhaps, like the faded beauty, 'in the dusk, with the light behind her,' the commonplace appearance of the alder is more readily overlooked in consequence of the valuable addition she forms to the supper *menu* of the trout.

The alder varies very considerably in size; Theakstone gives from half to five-eighths of an inch as the average length. I have seen a few specimens, generally in the early part of the season, of double that length. It generally makes its first appearance on the water in April, and continues throughout May and June.

The best dressings of this fly with which I am acquainted are as follows:

Wings: From the centre tail feather of a hen pheasant.

Hackle : A rusty black or grizzled blue dun.
Body : Bronze peacock herl.

Or—

Wings : Small dark bustard.
Hackle : As before.
Body : A strand of bronzed turkey-feather.

The hook used should be 2, 3, or 4 (long).

This fly is sometimes called the 'orl fly'—why, I don't know ; I have never been able to discover the origin of the word. Theakstone calls it the 'light dun.' Ronalds advises the use of the natural fly in preference to the artificial. Such a plan may conduce to the filling of the basket. Let those who like adopt it!

THE SEDGE FLIES (TRICHOPTERA).

The reader may have observed, if he is not already acquainted with the sedge fly, a somewhat foxy-looking, four-winged insect, which flaps its way in laborious fashion over the surface of the water in the dusk of the summer evenings ; from time to time it settles on the reeds or rushes which fringe the banks of the stream. This is the sedge fly. It is one of those flies which make their habitations of pieces of stick, etc., and of which Mr. Wood gives so interesting an account in the quotation I have given from his

work, 'Homes without Hands.' There are several varieties of this fly—first cousins to it—but in Hampshire they are all termed 'sedges,' being distinguished from each other by their dressings, colour, etc.

The largest of these is the 'big cinnamon.' It is somewhat of a 'poacher,' and I believe there are rivers on which its use is forbidden. It is generally used when quite dusk. It is thus dressed:

Wings: Red feather from the landrail.

Body: Foxy-coloured hare's fur or wool.

Hackle: Of same colour.

Hook 3, 4, or 5.

SAND FLY.

This is another of the same tribe, but considerably smaller than the cinnamon.

Wings: From the red feathers of the landrail.

Body: Copper-coloured fur or wool.

Legs: Hackle of same colour as the body, rather lighter perhaps.

SILVER SEDGE (LARGE AND SMALL).

This fly is generally made in two sizes, viz., the large and the small. It takes its name from the silver tinsel with which it is ribbed. The smaller pattern is excellent for both trout and grayling during the day as well as the evening,

and more or less throughout the season from May onwards.

Wings : Landrail as before.

Body : Pale buff-coloured silk or wool.

Hackle : Red from head to tail, and ribbed with fine silver wire.

For the smaller pattern use a 0 or 1 hook. For the larger, a 2 or 3. The larger fly is more adapted for evening use.

THE ORANGE SEDGE.

This is an equally good killer during the evening.

Wings : As above.

Body : Orange floss silk or wool.

Hackle : Red hackle from head to tail, ribbed with fine gold wire.

Hook 1, 2, or 3.

THE DARK SEDGE.

Also an evening fly.

Wings : Landrail as before.

Body : Dark hare's ear, or dark sage - green wool.

Hackle : Blood-red from head to tail, and ribbed with fine gold wire.

All the above patterns are good and reliable. The large and small silver sedges are at times

dressed with a light or medium starling's feather for the wings, but I think these are ever inferior to the landrail feathers.

In either case the wings should be doubled, *i.e.*, each wing should be doubled before being tied on, as the flies represented are four-winged. The artificials are generally made with the wings upright; this should not be. The natural fly never carries its wings upright; neither should they be dressed too close, but rather midway between the two—at an angle of 45° . They will thus, when wet, lie quite closely enough, and without clogging round the hook.

THE GRANNOM (TRICHOPTERA).

On those rivers where it is to be found this is a very special fly, and has a season all its own, and its arrival is little less looked forward to by the angler than that of the mayfly; indeed, it not infrequently happens that there is better sport obtained during the grannom season than in the mayfly. Unlike the latter, however, it cannot be depended upon. One year it appears in countless myriads; the next there is scarcely a fly of the species to be seen. Some years ago, when fishing on the Test, the rise of grannom on one portion at least of that river was a most extraordinary sight. I was fishing on that part of the river which runs through the Broadlands estate, on

what is called the Shrubbery water. The season was unusually forward, and there had been a succession of bright, hot days. At first the fly had been on in fair force, and the fish had risen well at it. On one afternoon it increased to such an extent as to completely cover the surface of the water, broad though the river is at that particular stretch. I can only compare it to a thick mist extending across the whole stream, and up and down it as far as I could see. Strange to say, the fish ceased to rise, nor did they again do so for several days. I conclude they were glutted with the fly. Since that time, now some six or seven years ago, I have never witnessed a similar occurrence, or anything at all approaching it, save with what is known as the 'angler's curse,' the smallest of the black gnats. About eleven years ago, during a visit to Loch Leven, the boatmen drew my attention to what they called the 'smoke' above the trees by Kinross House. On my expressing my surprise and wonder as to what it could be, the avenue being too far from the house to warrant the supposition that it could be smoke from the chimneys, they explained to me that it was a dense cloud of flies of the midge tribe. The column, which had precisely the appearance of smoke, must have been a quarter of a mile in length.

Like the March brown, the female grannom

is very much larger, and lighter in colour, than the male fly. Both male and female are very similar to the male and female March brown respectively. Indeed, an artificial March brown, divested of its tails, and with the addition of a small tag of pea-green silk, makes an excellent substitute for the grannom. This green tag serves to represent the funny little bunch of green eggs with which the female is provided. Hence the predilection of the fish for the female fly. Others of the Trichoptera also thus carry their eggs, and the latter are generally green or yellowish green in colour. The needle brown is an example of this.

The grannom usually appears on the water in April, and remains for about ten days or a fortnight. Some authors mention having seen it in July and August. Whether these are the true grannom or not, I cannot, of course, pretend to say. The authority is too good to be questioned. This fly is also called the 'greentail.'

The grannom may be thus dressed :

MALE FLY.

Wings : From a darkish partridge wing-feather.

Body : A strand of heron's wing-feather dyed brown, or hare's ear and mole's fur mixed.

Hackle : A grizzled blue dun.

Hook 0 or 1.

FEMALE FLY.

Wings: From a hen pheasant's wing or from a light feather from the wing of a partridge.

Body and hackle: As above, perhaps a shade lighter.

Tag: A small piece of pale pea-green floss silk.

THE NEEDLE BROWN.

This is sometimes called the 'Spanish needle.' It derives its name from its attenuated body, which is a mere strip of dark brown. When flying, it presents a very imposing appearance; but when it settles, and its wings are folded, it becomes a very difficult matter to see it at all. It is a very valuable fly to the fisherman, especially for grayling. Strange to say, it is by no means in as general use as it ought to be. I know no fly which is more worthy of a place in the angler's collection; but it is a very difficult fly to imitate, or rather to procure a good imitation of. One author only gives the proper dressing—at least, what I consider a good one—and that is Francis Francis. Dressed as he prescribes, it is one of our very best flies. His recipe is as follows:

Body: A fine shred from the yellowish quill of a thrush's wing.

Legs: A grizzled blue dun cock's hackle.

Under wings : A starling's feather, used sparingly.
Over wings : Two fine slips of a hen blackbird's wing.

I cannot too strongly urge the reader to adopt this fly, dressed thus. The hook used should be small, either 00 or 0, but never larger.

The needle brown makes its appearance very early in the season, and then apparently disappears for a time. It is most useful, especially for grayling. Ronalds omits this fly altogether. Halford gives a dressing of it, but I do not think it is to be compared with that which I have quoted.

THE SILVER HORNS (TRICHOPTERA).

There are two flies thus named, the one black, the other brown. Although several writers mention the former, but very few take any notice of the latter ; and where they do so, they do not appear to hold it in very great esteem. Now, as far as my own experiences extend, I have never been able to do anything with the black variety ; but I have found the brown a most excellent fly, especially as an afternoon and evening fly in the summer. Though it is to be frequently seen flitting about over the water in groups, it very rarely settles thereon until quite late in the evening. Now and again I have seen

a fish jump out and make a dash at one of a batch, when they have hovered within its reach.

The name 'silver horns' is derived from the two long horns peculiar to this fly. In the black fly they are black ringed with white; in the brown, brown ringed with pale gray. Theakstone, who terms the black the 'dark-pied dun,' gives the following dressing :

Wings: From a blackbird's wing-feather, with a reddish tinge on the under side.

Body: Coppery silk, tinged with water-rat's fur.

Hackle: A hen's hackle (he does not state the colour), or hare's ear for legs.

My own opinion is that this pattern is infinitely more like the brown silver horns than the black.

As a rule, the black fly, and all such, are made of materials far too dead black in colour (if black can be termed colour). There is nothing in nature which is absolutely black. Some of the midges are as nearly so as they can be; but when seen under a magnifying-glass they are by no means the lack-lustreless creatures which they are represented to be. There is another fly, the 'hawthorn,' which is nearly always dressed with ostrich-feather dyed black. Now, whenever feathers are dyed, and they must be so at times, they still retain a certain amount of lustre. Black dye, however, seems to drive out every particle of the latter,

and, consequently, feathers so treated are not as suitable for the manufacture of artificial flies as those which are natural.

I cannot advise the reader to cumber his fly-book or waste his money by adding the black silver horns to his stock. The brown silver horns is thus dressed by Theakstone, who terms it the 'little brown dun.' The reader may well take advantage of it :

Hackle : A slightly freckled grouse hackle.

Legs : A few fibres of red-brown fur, or mohair, at the breast.

Body : A deep coppery silk, well waxed. W. F.

Hook 1 or 2.

I have found this pattern very killing on the Northern streams. There is also another which answers equally well :

Wings : Darkish grouse-feather.

Hackle : A rusty dark-blue dun.

Body : Dark-brown hare's ear, spun on brown silk.

Hook as before.

Francis mentions this fly, but Ronalds apparently ignores it.

THE HAWTHORN FLY.

This fly is bred on the land. I can hardly say that it is indispensable to the fisherman, yet it at

times proves so good a killer that I have placed it on the list. Nearly all authorities make mention of it. Theakstone gives the following excellent recipe for its dressing :

Head, shoulders, body : Black silk, with black seal's fur or mohair wrought in.

Wings : From a light neutral feather of either a snipe's or starling's wing.

Legs : Black hen's hackle.

The hook should be 0 or 1.

The fly comes out in April, if the weather is not too cold and stormy, and remains during May. It may be used with considerable effect under the hawthorn bushes, which may overhang the stream, whence it drops on to the water. Fine tackle and delicate casting are necessary to ensure success. It should be used dry.

THE PEACOCK FLY (COLEOPTERA).

At times this fly is known as the 'little chap.' It is a very excellent little fly, and will serve its turn, especially in fine, clear water or in sultry weather. The dressing given by Ronalds is the best with which I am acquainted, viz. :

Body : Ruddy-brown peacock's herl, dressed with mulberry-coloured silk.

Wings : The darkest part of a starling's wing-feather.

Legs : A hackle stained a dark purple, appearing black when looked down upon, but when held up to the light having a most beautiful dark tortoiseshell hue.

Hook 1 or 2 (short).

Dressed buzz, it is as follows :

Body : The reddest strand of a peacock's feather.

Legs and wings : A lightish dun hackle, tied with mulberry-coloured silk.

Hook as before.

Of these two patterns, the former is, to my mind, the better.

Halford gives a dressing, thus :

Hackle : Pale-blue dun cock.

Body : Copper-coloured peacock's herl.

Hook 0 or 00.

However, I infinitely prefer Ronalds' first recipe, which exactly answers to a fly called in Cumberland the 'broken points'—a strange appellation, and one which is, I feel sure, a corruption of some other name. Nevertheless, by whichever name it may be called, it bears a very high repute, and in the early part of the season, until the end of May, it is regarded as a sheet-anchor by the Northern anglers. I can personally speak to its utility. There is a story told by the Cumberland people of an old professional fisherman who regarded this fly with such extreme

eneration that when he was dying he requested that the 'flee,' as he termed it, might be laid on his lips when he was dead, and I believe his wish was complied with.

THE GOLD-EYED GAUZE-WING (PERLA).

A delicate, beautiful little fly. It is stated to be on the water in June. Nevertheless, I have seen it, or a fly exactly resembling it, as late as September, and have found it more killing than in the earlier part of the year. I consider it to be one of the very best of our flies. I have met with it on several rivers, and have found it equally useful on all—on our Southern chalk-streams, as well as those in the North.

I prefer the dressing given by Ronalds, which is thus :

Body : Very pale yellowish-green floss silk, tied with silk of the same colour.

Wings and legs : The palest blue dun hackle which can be procured. W. F.

Hook 0 or 1.

It is more especially useful for afternoon and early evening fishing.

THE BLACK GNAT (TRICHOPTERA).

This fly is a positive nuisance to the fisherman. He cannot afford to ignore it, neither can he hope to secure much sport with it. At times, all too

frequently, alas! the fish take it, and will look at nothing else; but it is so small that the best imitation falls short of the natural fly. Moreover, when it is necessary to use a hook so minute as 000, it is impossible to rely on hooking a fish of any size, even should the tiny barb penetrate the skin. I think it is preferable to use a somewhat larger hook, 00 or even 0, and trust to the chance of inducing a fish to take it.

Occasionally one hears of a fairly good basket being taken with this fly, and once, when fishing on a small private lake in the North of England, I succeeded in taking some seven or eight fairly good fish with it. The only patterns which I had with me were dressed on No. 1 hooks. Last autumn (1891) I took three fairly good trout with it one morning on my own river; but I never succeeded in repeating the performance, though the natural fly was on in numbers, and the fish were taking it freely.

The following are the best dressings of this fly with which I am acquainted:

I.

Wings: Pale starling wing-feather.

Hackle: A small black feather from the neck of a starling.

Body: Black tying-silk waxed, or a strip of black quill.

Tag: One turn of fine flat silver tinsel.

Hook 00.

2.

Hackle : A starling's neck-feather, slightly larger than for No. 1.

Body : As for No. 1.

A palish grizzled dun hackle may be used, instead of the dark neck-feather from the starling, for the hackle, for variety.

Hook as before.

I think I prefer the first of the two patterns. The wings are a difficulty, I admit ; but I know no better substitute. Some people advocate the use of the prepared pike-scales for them, and I believe they are found to answer as well as anything. I should think Mr. Richardson's system of using the natural wings should prove equal to the occasion. It is my intention to try them for this fly. I should advise the reader to do likewise.

The black gnat is constantly on the water during the entire season, and invariably when its presence is least welcome. It has been rightly styled 'the angler's curse,' for such it indeed is.

THE RED ANT.

Although the black ant is of but little use to the fisherman, this fly is one of the most important and useful which he can possess, whether for trout or grayling. Theakstone places it in his

list of flies for June. It is, however, rather during July and August that it will be found of the greatest service. It is, in my opinion, a fly which no angler should be without. I have found the following the best mode of imitating it :

Wings : Rather pale starling.

Legs : A red hackle.

Body : A strand of bronze peacock herl, stripped for three parts of its length, the unstripped portion being wound round the hook at the bend, so as to form the lower portion of the body, and the stripped hare-quill representing the remainder.

Hook 0 or 1.

THE COWDUNG FLY.

As may be inferred from its name, this is also a land-bred fly. Some writers term it the 'lion fly,' a more euphonious title, doubtless, but one very apt to mislead, since it is more generally known by its former, if more vulgar, name.

It is by no means a bad fly to use on windy days, and the angler will do well not to ignore it.

It may be imitated with the following dressing, viz. :

Wings : From a landrail feather.

Body : Orange-coloured wool or mohair. A dirty-coloured orange is preferable.

Legs : A ginger hackle.

Hook 1 or 2.

The above pattern will also be found useful in serving to represent some of the smaller sedge flies.

THE COCH-Y-BONDDHU.

A Welshman with a crack-jaw name, also known as the Marlow buzz, shorn fly, hazel fly, bracken clock, Welshman's button, etc.

Ronalds states that this fly is on the water from the beginning to the middle of June only. All the same, it is a fly very generally used, and most universally believed in as being of inestimable value, from the beginning to the end of the season, at all times of the day and on all rivers. It certainly forms one of the standard patterns in every local list. As far as my own experiences extend, I do not share the general opinion regarding the super-excellent qualities of this fly; indeed, I may go further, and say that I consider it to be very much overrated. I wonder how many of my readers can say that they have ever seen this fly on the water at any time. That it *is* to be so found I most firmly believe, and every writer on matters piscatorial makes mention of it; perhaps I do it scant justice. It will, I am well aware, kill fish. I have killed scores of fish, *of sorts*, with it; but this has been more frequently in those districts where the latter run small, and are ready to take anything when they are on the feed. It is a land-bred insect, one of the beetle

tribe. The following are three different modes of dressing it :

RONALDS.

Body : Black ostrich herl, twisted with peacock herl, and tied with red silk.

Wings and legs : Made buzz, with a dark furnace cock's hackle.

FRANCIS.

Body : Dark copper-coloured peacock's herl, mixed equally with black ostrich.

Hackle : A dark-red hackle, with a black stripe up the centre.

HALFORD.

Body : Two or three strands of copper-coloured peacock's herl twisted together.

Hackle : Coch-y-bonddhu.

The body may, for a change, be ribbed with flat gold.

Hooks 0, 1, or 2.

The fly takes its name from the colour of the hackle which is used in dressing the artificial representation.

FANCY FLIES.

THE WICKHAM'S FANCY.

I have already referred to the excellent qualities of this fly, so repetition is needless. It is thus dressed :

HALFORD.

Wings : Medium or light starling.

Body : Flat gold, ribbed with fine gold wire.

Hackle: Bright-red bantam cock from shoulder to tail.

Tail : From same coloured feather as hackle.

Hook 0, 00, or 000.

000 is too small, in my opinion. Moreover, this fly may, with advantage, be dressed on a 1, 2, 3, or 4 hook for use in rough water. It is a good fly on any sized hook, anywhere and everywhere.

THE RED TAG.

This is very much like a coch-y-bonddhu, but with the additional attraction of a small red tag of wool, silk, or feathers. It is by no means a bad grayling fly, and I have heard of good baskets of trout having been taken with it. At one time it was the 'rage.' Halford gives the usual dressing of it :

Body : Two or three strands of copper-coloured peacock herl twisted together.

Hackle : Blood-red game cock.

Tag : Red ibis or scarlet wool.

THE COACHMAN.

So called by reason of its white wing, and also, it is stated, from having been invented by an old well-known whip. It is a very useful fly, more especially for evening and night fishing, though

it will at times kill in hot weather during the daytime.

Wings : White pigeon's feather.

Hackle : Red.

Body : Bronze peacock herl.

Hook 1 to 3, or even larger.

THE GOVERNOR.

I have had no personal experience of this fly that I can remember, but it bears a high reputation. Francis states that it is an excellent fly, especially in the Metropolitan district, and he usually kept it in three sizes—what he calls 7, 10, or 11, No. 7 being suitable for every fishing. He gives the following dressing :

Body : Peacock's herl, dressed and finished off at tail with two or three turns of bright orange-yellow floss silk. Gold twist may be added as a ribbing.

Wing : From a hen pheasant's wing.

The wing may also be made like that of the gray drake. It is then called the 'mackerel governor,' and is an excellent evening fly.

Halford dresses it thus :

Wings : Woodcock.

Hackle : Ginger cock.

Tag : Primrose floss silk.

Body : Copper-coloured peacock herl.

Hook 0 to 3.

I should say that in the dressing given by F. Francis the hooks would be the ordinary-sized Nos. 1, 3, and 4.

THE ORANGE BUMBLE.

The bumbles hail from Derbyshire, where they are much in request, especially for grayling. I have used them myself on the Derbyshire rivers, and found them excellent *there*, but, strange to say, have not been as successful with them on other streams. Of late years they have come into use in Hampshire, and appear, from what Mr. Halford states, to have answered so well that the orange variety has earned for itself the title of 'the priceless bumble.' Bumbles are of all shades; what they are intended to represent I cannot imagine. Mr. Halford gives two dressings, which I here append:

Body: Orange floss silk, ribbed with a strand of peacock sword-feather, and fine flat gold.

Hackle: Honey dun cock.

Hook o or oo (long).

THE CLARET BUMBLE.

Body: Claret floss silk, ribbed with a strand of peacock's sword-feather.

Hackle: Medium blue dun cock.

Hook as before.

This completes the list of trout-flies. I have endeavoured to curtail it as much as possible. I could, of course, have reduced it to some five or six varieties, but this would have been considered very incomplete by the majority of people. Moreover, I am of opinion that fishermen like to possess a certain stock of flies, judging from the enormous collections which some men contrive to accumulate. For my own part, I find a very slender stock amply sufficient; but then, being able to tie my own flies, I can always replenish it when it is exhausted. It is not so necessary to have a large variety as a good stock of the best patterns. I would advise the reader to learn to make his own flies, even though he may prefer to purchase what he requires. I am well aware that a chapter or two on the art of artificial fly-making would form a useful addition to the present work, but I have decided not to refer to it, for the reasons assigned in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Halford's Work, 'Floating Flies, and how to Dress them'—The Experience of an Amateur Fly-tyer—Mr. George Currell—Pleasure to be derived from the Ability to tie one's own Flies—Advice to Beginners—Fly-tying Vices—Mr. Holland's Pattern of Vice—A Vice and its Vices—Good and Bad Silk—Waxing Silk—Varnishing—Recipe for Varnish—Good Materials Necessary—Order and Disorder—Scissors—Tweezers—Utility of Wooden Trays—Fly-tying by Lamplight—Eyeglass for Fly-tying—The Use of a Trout-rod—Casting with a Trout-rod—Different Styles of Casting—How to cast—Overhead and Steeple Casting—Casting Horizontally—Switching—Casting in Windy Weather—Casting Dead against Wind—Casting with a Cross-wind—Utility of changing Mode of Casting—Use of Slack Line—Striking: the Right and the Wrong Way—Reasons for not striking from the Reel—The Timbridge Trout.

ARTIFICIAL FLY-MAKING.

AT the close of the previous chapter I stated that I had reasons for not entering into the subject of the manufacture of artificial trout-flies. It had originally been my intention to do so when I commenced the present work. On further reflection I determined to abstain from so doing. Not by reason of wishing to avoid the trouble, for the

task would have been indeed a labour of love to me, and, to tell the truth, it was a portion of the work to which I had looked forward with pleasurable anticipation. When, however, I remembered how much I owe to the instruction which Mr. Halford has given in his book on 'Artificial Fly-making,' I felt that I should not be acting honourably, either to him or the reader, were I to carry out my first intention. The information which he gives is the very best of its kind; therefore to crib from his book in the wholesale manner which would have been necessary would have been, in my opinion, dishonourable; to give that which I did not consider to be equally good would have been to defraud the reader. I therefore decided to refrain from dealing as exhaustively with the subject as I had proposed, and I think that the reader will endorse my views.

I regret that I have not the honour of any acquaintance with Mr. Halford, but I have studied and profited by his book. I had tied flies from my boyhood; very dreadful productions most of them were, too. If I killed a fish with them my joy was infinite. As years went on I made some considerable progress in the art, but there was still a very manifest want of neatness and finish about them. The work, though engrossing enough, was not a little laborious, and

I experienced very many difficulties which I was never able to overcome successfully.

Happening to be in Winchester for a few days on business, I repaired to Mr. George Currell, the well-known tackle-maker and fisherman, and got him to give me a few lessons in the art. At that time Mr. Halford's book had just made its appearance, and Mr. Currell showed me a copy of it in his possession. I at once ordered one for myself, and set to work to follow out the directions there given. With the assistance of Mr. Currell's able tuition, combined with the instructions so clearly laid down in Mr. Halford's work, I was very soon enabled to tie flies for myself as well as I could purchase them. Since that time I have but very rarely found it necessary to purchase any flies, unless they have been too minute for me to make myself.

I can hardly describe how much pleasure the ability to make my own flies really well has afforded me. It has added yet another charm to a sport which has ever had a peculiar fascination for me. To imitate a natural fly, cast it deftly over a rising trout, and bring the latter to bank, is surely far more pleasurable than to catch the same fish with a bought fly. The man who can tie his own flies may be utterly independent of the tackle-makers in this respect. If his stock is low, or he runs short of any particular pattern,

half an hour's work will suffice to replenish his book.

It is fascinating, pretty work, and forms a pleasant occupation for a wet day. Many a time I have had cause to be thankful that I could so employ my leisure hours when hopeless weather has kept me indoors in some shooting or fishing quarters. While my companions have been bored to death, and have read and smoked until they could do so no longer, I have found the day, so wearying to them, seem all too short for me, and have been able not only to amuse myself profitably, but often to do a good turn to others by replenishing their dwindling stock of artificials.

My advice to everyone who is anxious to learn to make his own flies is, first to procure Mr. Halford's work on the subject—it is somewhat expensive, but it is indeed well worth its price, and it will be money well spent—to read it carefully, and also at the very first opportunity to go to some good professional fly-tyer, and obtain a few lessons from him. There is no royal road to anything, tying flies especially; but this will be found the shortest and broadest, and will save the amateur many hours and weeks of wasted labour, and many a heart-breaking disappointment.

There are some few observations which I wish

to make in regard to the tying of trout-flies, and which I think may prove of service to the reader, and they are these :

I would suggest his ignoring the use of a vice if he can possibly contrive to do without it. Mr. Halford gives illustrated directions for its use ; my own experiences have taught me that it is more difficult to use a vice than to dispense with it. The pattern of vice given in Mr. Halford's book is doubtless excellent. I have one, most beautifully made, by Messrs. Holtzapfel, of Cockspur Street. Now, in the illustrations given by Mr. Halford, the hooks and materials are purposely magnified in order to render the several operations more intelligible. When, however, the tiny hook is placed in the vice, I find that there is insufficient room, by reason of the width of the head of the latter, to manipulate the materials.

Last summer, when purchasing some tackle from Mr. Holland, of Salisbury, I chanced to see a pattern of vice which he had been using. He very kindly explained its action to me, for it was altogether unlike anything which I had ever seen before. The jaws, which are very fine, are made to close by means of a sliding ring ; and, while they hold the hook as firmly as the ordinary screw principle, they do not get in the way of the fingers. Mr. Holland told me how he became

possessed of it, but I forget, nor is it a matter of much importance; but it is by far the best description of vice which I have ever seen for the purpose for which it is intended.

If the amateur is dependent upon the assistance to be derived from a vice, he is considerably handicapped, unless he carries one about with him, if he wishes to tie up a fly by the river-side; nor is such a vice of any use unless it is fixed firmly to a table. To add a table to one's stock of fishing impedimenta would be inconvenient, so I counsel his learning to use his fingers. I say 'learning to use his fingers,' because there is a right way and a wrong, even in so apparently simple a matter as holding a hook. It makes all the difference, though, how it is held, and the difficulties of dressing a fly thereon can be very materially increased or lessened, according as to whether it is placed in the one exact spot between the forefinger and thumb of the left hand, and so held in the best way to work on it, or bungled into the more fleshy part. The aid of a professional tutor in such little matters is of great value.

Nothing but the best and finest silk should be used for tying. It is not an easy matter to procure good silk. That known as gossamer, made by Messrs. Pearsall, is very good, as I have before remarked; but I have now and

again been able to obtain silk equally fine and even stronger than this. It is most irritating for the silk to break, as bad silk always elects to do, just at the most critical moment. Such a contretemps causes endless trouble, and is calculated to drive a beginner clean out of his wits. Whenever I see a specimen of extra good, fine tying silk, I purchase it. If such silk is not carefully preserved it soon becomes rotten; it requires to be kept perfectly dry.

It is a great mistake to suppose, as beginners are very prone to do, that fine silk is not strong. On the contrary, a fly tied with fine silk will not only be neater, but will, by reason of the materials being thereby capable of being laid more closely together, be firmer, and last longer, than if tied with coarser silk, which, from its very thickness intervening between the feathers, etc., induces a tendency in the wings to wobble about, and lie sideways instead of upright; when this is the case the whole work falls to pieces.

Some practice and tuition are also requisite to learn how to wax fine tying silk without breaking it, and making the fingers sticky and to the last degree unsuitable for handling the delicate materials which have to be used. It is an utterly hopeless task to attempt to tie a fly with waxy fingers. Floss silk must be kept spotlessly clean, and is easily soiled. The feathers adhere to the

smallest particle of wax, and it is not a little disconcerting to find half of a wing sticking to a finger when infinite pains and trouble have been taken to put it into its right position.

When varnishing the head of a fly, or, indeed, any fishing tackle, care should be taken not to load it on too thickly. Good varnish dries very rapidly, and it is better to use two applications of it than one heavy lump.

Powdered shellac dissolved in spirits of wine makes an excellent varnish for all tackle. It is not, however, suitable for rods.

I would also urge the beginner never to attempt to tie flies with bad or unsuitable materials. He will probably be anxious to make a collection for himself, and he will perhaps be successful so far as quantity is concerned; but the chances are that he will get together an amount of rubbish which will never be of the smallest use to him, and which will, by reason of its bulk and inutility, only serve to impede him in his endeavours to find what he requires, and to attract moths and all such abominations. He will find it the best plan, certainly at first, to purchase what he requires from some good tackle-maker, and to learn from the latter how best to keep these requisites in order; and having so learned, to firmly resolve never to allow them to get into disorder. If fishing tackle is allowed to get into

a jumble, it will be sure to have its revenge. The fitting opportunity for putting it straight never comes, and so things go on from bad to worse. Good materials are spoiled, and the next batch of flies, and perhaps every succeeding one which may be required, have to be purchased.

The necessary feathers, silks, tinsels, etc., for the manufacture of trout-flies are not very numerous, and occupy but little space if properly kept; nor are they expensive. One thing is very certain, which is, that although a skilful hand may succeed in making a tolerable job out of indifferent materials, a beginner never can.

Two more requisites remain to be noticed, viz., scissors and tweezers. The first-named must be good, and as fine-pointed as possible. Those recommended by Mr. Halford, and termed oculist's scissors, are the best, and, being curved, are very suitable for fly-dressing.

As regards tweezers, I have found it a difficult matter to procure them light and yet strong enough to hold the point of a fine hackle when being wound on the hook. They generally allow it to slip at the last moment, and this is a serious matter, as the hackle is thereby by no means improved, and is not unfrequently ruined. Such a disaster may necessitate the demolition of the entire fly. I have ever so many pairs in my possession, but only one of them is of any use;

and, if I remember rightly, I gave less for that pair than the rest.

I find the use of two or three shallow wooden trays, with a few divisions and tops to fit on them, most useful. If I am interrupted in my work when fly-tying, it is an easy matter to put on the lids, and to slip the boxes away in a drawer, where they are safe; the materials also are less liable to be wafted about the room by reason of a door or window being suddenly opened.

Let me beg the reader never to tie trout-flies by lamplight, if he can avoid doing so. He will, as I have done, most certainly regret it. It is work which is most trying to the sight, and with the strongest eyes and the clearest lamplight the result is rarely as satisfactory as might be desired. When working by daylight, he should always endeavour to do so in a good light, facing the window, and with a large sheet of white paper, or a board painted white, laid on the table in front of him. By this means, not only can the colours of the different materials be more readily distinguished, but the strain on the eye will be very much lessened. A glass, similar to those used by watchmakers, will be found most useful when dressing the smaller patterns. I should advise the use of one in which the eyepiece is made of cork in preference to those made of horn or metal,

as being not only much lighter but more comfortable. A few holes burned in the cork will serve to keep the glass from becoming dimmed by the warmth of the eye, and so necessitating its being constantly wiped.

· THE USE OF A TROUT-ROD.

In the foregoing pages I have discussed the following subjects, viz., Trout, their habits, their habitations, and the tackle required to catch them. It now remains for me to instruct the reader, to the best of my ability, how to use the latter to the greatest advantage, and under the various conditions which are constantly presenting themselves to the fisherman.

The fish are in the river, and the angler, rod in hand, is by the river-side, it being his aim and object to transfer these fish, or as many as he can, from the river to the bank by means of the artificial fly at the end of his line. How to do so remains for me to endeavour to explain. The fly has to be presented to the fish in such a manner that the latter may be induced to take, or rather to mistake, it for one of the natural flies which they may be feeding upon, the rod being the means by which this has to be effected. Success or failure of course very much depends as to how it is used.

I would first of all impress on the reader that,

a rod having been constructed specially to do the work, it should be allowed to do it—that is to say, the fisherman should, without putting undue strain on his rod, extract from it all that is necessary, and with as little muscular exertion from himself as is possible. Brute force is altogether out of place at the end of a trout-rod. Brute force never made a coachman, nor will it make a fisherman, and the man who can handle and make his whip neatly should not fail with a fly-rod, and I may reverse the argument.

Now, there are four different ways of casting with a trout-rod, viz. .

1. Overhead, the rod being used nearly vertically.

2. Waving the rod horizontally on the right side, the knuckles of the right hand being held downwards.

3. Waving the rod horizontally on the left side, back-handed, as it were, the knuckles of the hand being held upwards.

4. Switching.

In all these four different styles of casting, the point of the rod is never to be brought directly backwards and forwards in exactly the same plane, but it must be made to describe a slightly circular movement, for if this is not carried out, the fly will be cracked off to a certainty. The return cast from behind must also be timed so as

to be made, *not*, as is so often recommended, when the line is *fully* extended behind, but *just before* it reaches its fullest extension. This the fisherman must learn by practice to know for himself; theory is useless, and nothing but practice will teach him. He must learn to feel, as it were, with his rod. As every horse has a different mouth, so every rod has its own peculiar swing, and the fisherman must learn to act in perfect sympathy with this swing. The motive power and the direction must be furnished by the muscles of his arm, of which the rod is, after all, but an artificial continuation; and if the requisite amount of force and the proper direction are imparted to the rod, the latter will most surely, if it is a fairly good one, do its share of the work.

Nearly all casting should be performed by the forearm and wrist alone; I may say *all*, save where it is necessary to lengthen the rod by bringing the entire arm into play. One frequently sees men who are bunglers at the art not only swinging their arm frantically to and fro, but their entire bodies. This style of thing is neither necessary nor conducive to neat casting, and is, moreover, clumsy and grotesque. The man who can use his rod gracefully will generally prove to be able to use it to good purpose, whether it be a salmon or a trout rod, the

simple, unaffected ease of his attitude when casting being evidence that the rod is being fully and properly used.

It is necessary for everyone who desires to become a fisherman to learn to cast in each one of the four ways which I have mentioned. At one time, the banks being free from obstruction, such as the boughs of trees, etc., it may be not only possible, but advisable, to cast overhead, especially when a long distance has to be covered, and the line has to be 'steepled' out, as it is termed. This 'steeple casting' is effected by retaining a sufficient quantity of slack line run off the reel at one's feet, and this, as the rod is waved to and fro in the process of drying the fly, or getting out the required length of line, is allowed to follow out through the third and fourth fingers of the right hand, the left hand feeding them with the line until nearly all the slack is expended, when the final forward cast draws out the remainder. A long line being out, when it is desired to cast afresh, it must not be lifted bodily off the water, for if such is attempted, and any portion of it is in slack water, a broken rod will most certainly be the result. The operation should rather be reversed by the left hand drawing the line back through the fingers of the right hand until a convenient length has been left, which can be lifted quietly and cleanly

off the water, and without risk of detriment to the rod or fear of scaring the fish. The above plan will be found useful in all cases where a long line has to be used.

When boughs or other obstructions intervene, it will be necessary to cast horizontally, either to the right or left side, as the case may be. Now, in thus casting, it is, as will very readily be understood, more difficult to place the fly on the exact spot which may be required, because the tendency will be for it to describe an arc, and thus fall too much to the right or left; and this tendency will be found to be greater when the cast is made on the right side than when it is made back-handed. All the same, this style of casting is, when neatly done, very effective, for not only is it thereby possible to prevent the shadow of the rod scaring the fish, and the fly being used in situations which would be impossible by the overhead style; but, as Mr. Halford states—and I have repeatedly proved the truth of the assertion when fishing with a dry fly—the latter is more likely to fall in its proper position, with its wings upright, on the water, than when casting overhead.

Where the position is cramped, and neither of the above methods can be adopted, the switch, or spey cast, as it is termed, must be resorted to, especially where there are high rocks or trees,

etc., behind the fisherman. This is by no means an easy cast to describe, still less to learn to do well. However, I will do my best to explain it. It is *most* difficult to use it when fishing upstream, for it is a necessity, in order to get any length of line out, that it should be made directly down-stream, and in a fairly rapid flow of water. It is thus performed :

The fisherman must face as directly down-stream as possible. A line a little longer than his rod being straight out on the water in front of him, the rod must be raised until the fly is brought as close up to his feet as he can conveniently manage ; the instant it has reached this spot, the point of the rod must be brought sharply down with a firm, stiff wrist in a direction pointing to where it is desired to place the fly. The latter, if the cast is properly made, will leave the water, and, describing an arc in front of the fisherman, will shoot out to the full length of the line. If the system which I have referred to, of keeping slack line out at one's feet, is adopted, the length of cast will be materially increased ; but great care is necessary to see that the line is perfectly clear of the very slightest obstruction, inasmuch as a single blade of grass, or a slender piece of stick, will suffice to check its running.

By means of this cast many a river can be

fished which would otherwise be impossible. One thing is needful, and that is that the line must never be permitted to slacken or dwell from the time the rod begins to move upward until the downward cut is made; hence the necessity for the cast being made down a stream which has a fairly rapid flow of water.

It is possible, though, as I have remarked, most difficult, to switch up-stream; an old practised hand may be able to do so, and it is, moreover, possible to switch in the air—'dry switch,' as it is termed—without the fly touching the water till cast on it; but it requires a pretty strong wind to do it neatly, and if this prevails, it is often a most useful style of cast.

Contrary wind is one of the chief difficulties with which the fisherman has to contend. A day on which there is absolutely no wind, especially if the sun is shining brightly, is rarely what may be termed 'fisherman's weather.' If it is dull, the chances are that there is thunder in the air; if bright, the fish either sulk, or are far too cute to be captured, being able to discern the gut, which on such occasions must to them appear as thick as a cart-rope. If, however, the surface of the water is ruffled by a breeze, it serves as a veil, and the very fact of the natural flies being blown hither and thither makes the fish more active and eager to capture them. I think it is

Francis Francis who states that, in his opinion, the best wind for fishing is 'no wind.' Certainly the very worst are north and east. A wind blowing from any other quarter save these two will not necessarily mar sport--on the contrary, may conduce to it, always provided the fisherman can get his line out.

At times a contrary wind can be most trying and vexatious to the temper, and nothing will go right. If it is necessary to change a fly, a puff of wind probably whips it away out of one's fingers, possibly others out of the book or box going too, and the chances are a hundred to one against finding them again. Matches won't light, and smoking is a farce. Nevertheless, in the backwaters of the bends, and *always* in the most inaccessible places, the fish are feeding, and a quick eye will readily detect the slight bubble made by the rise, even in the roughest, most wind-tossed waters. Under such circumstances, if it is desired to catch fish, the fly must be got over them somehow or other. How to do it remains to be shown.

First of all a weak rod and a light line are useless for such work ; the latter must be heavy, and the former stiff enough to carry it. Too long or too fine a gut-cast is also useless, and not only cannot be forced out against the wind, but coils in hopeless knots and tangles all over the place,

landing the fly anywhere but where it ought to go.

When the wind is straight in one's teeth, strange as it may appear, a longer and straighter line can be cast than when it is blowing obliquely. This is, I think, the only case in fly-fishing for trout when a certain amount of physical strength is necessary. Most writers on the subject recommend the use of a short line under such circumstances; my own advice to the reader, if he possesses a strong wrist, is to use rather a long line. The length will increase the weight, and so aid rather than retard the cast. Stand boldly up to the wind, grip the rod firmly with the wrist stiffened as much as possible, and let the forward cast be a sharp, flogging downward cut, the rod point being brought wellnigh on to the water. There must be no half-measures if this cast is to be successful. The rod must be brought down at almost full strength, the downward cut stopping just clear of the water. If the line is heavy enough, and the gut properly proportioned, the fly can thus be forced out in the teeth of half a gale. The line itself may bag slightly, but the gut will be straight; and if that is so, and it is well in advance of the line, it matters little. As a rule, the line will go out straight enough. Whether fishing for salmon or trout, I would far sooner cast straight against a light wind than directly with a strong one.

When the wind is blowing across, it will be found ever the better plan to cast into it. The lower the cast is made, the better. The line should be cut up into and, as it were, *under* the wind; the fly will fall much more lightly thus cast, and by keeping the rod low the full force of the wind is not felt, by reason of the protection afforded by the banks.

The following is, perhaps, worth knowing. It often happens that a rising fish will not take a fly, though time after time the latter has been cast apparently truly over it. The artificial may be the best of its kind, and the fish may be sucking down the natural flies one after the other, yet, so surely as the furred and feathered imitation presents itself, it is allowed to pass by unheeded. Now, it may be that the cast has hitherto been made overhead, or from the right side; let the fisherman but reverse the operation, and cast from the left side—make the cast back-handed—and he will probably catch that fish. If I were asked why or how this should be so, I can only reply, ‘I don’t know, unless it be that, whereas in the former style of casting the foot-links of the gut bagged over the fish, and so in a measure covered the fly, being drawn askew by some unseen peculiarity in the current, in the back-handed cast this tendency was rectified, and the fly floated truly and naturally. Anyhow, it is a plan worth

the trying, and I have so repeatedly found it answer that I venture to give the reader the benefit of my experience.

One word more before I change the subject. I have made mention of the utility of keeping a certain amount of slack line out when casting, not only because a longer line can thus be got out, but also because, at the final forward cast, when the last of the slack is drawn out, the fly in its forward motion, not being as suddenly checked as would be the case if the line were cast straight from the reel without any slack being left, will fall on the water more lightly and naturally. And there is still another advantage to be gained by thus retaining a certain quantity of slack. It is not possible to always accurately gauge the distance, still less to make absolutely sure of the fly being placed on the exact spot required, for, just as it is over the fish, a sudden gust of wind may blow the cast away to right or left, as the case may be, and the chances are that a twitch of the rod may tend either to splash the gut on the water, and scare an all too wary fish, or to firmly lodge the casting-line in a neighbouring bush or bough (and it is always in the neighbourhood of boughs and bushes that the largest and most cunning old sinners elect to take up their abode). Now, if, instead of thus twitching the rod and running these great risks, a little slack is retained

in the left hand—lightly held, so as not to check the fly—when such danger seems imminent, a quick pull at the line will at once shorten it, and avert the catastrophe.

It may be argued that this plan of using the slack line must interfere with striking a fish. I can only assure the reader that such is not the case, for the right hand closes instinctively on the line in the act of turning the wrist to make what is called, or rather miscalled, striking.

There has been an infinite amount of twaddle and nonsense talked and written about striking trout, striking from the reel, etc. If a man is so coarse-fisted, or so afflicted with nerves, that he cannot learn to strike without fear of smashing his tackle with a large fish, or of hoisting a small one up into the Milky Way, he had better abjure fishing altogether. It is the word *strike* which does all the mischief, and causes beginners to give a vigorous upward snatch of the rod, when all the time they should be doing exactly the reverse. When the right hand is holding the rod, the fly being on the water, the back of the hand is towards the right front. When the motion of striking is properly performed, the back of the hand is turned sharply downwards. That is all ; it is effected by the movement of the wrist alone. This motion, so far from causing the top of the rod to be thrown up, on the contrary moves it

downwards. If a fish is thus struck there need be no fear of breaking even the lightest tackle. In striking from the reel there is every chance of losing a fish, though the probability of a smash, in the hands of a duffer, may be lessened; for when a fish is struck from the reel, for a second the line is slackened, and many a fish, if at all light-hooked, will take advantage of this opportunity, short though it may be, to run in towards the fisherman and get off. Who that knows the Kimbridge trout has not experienced what a fish can do in the way of giving one the slip?

The foregoing remarks apply only to trout and grayling, and not to salmon fishing.

CHAPTER X.

Where to cast—Keeping out of Sight—Advantages and Disadvantages of Wading—Streams apparently Barren—Likely Spots—A Quiet Way of doing Things—Much ado about Nothing—Where to find Fish—Banks should not be shaken—Fishing directly Down-stream inadvisable—How to cast Down-stream—‘Every Fish has its Angle’—Wet-fly and Dry-fly—The Virtue of Humility—Why a Dry-fly fails on certain Streams—Hackles *v.* Wings for Wet-fly Fishing—The Use of the Dry-fly—An Unbeliever—A Convert—How to fish with a Dry-fly—Tailing Fish—A Day of Woe—The ‘Coppersmith’ and the ‘Tinsmith’—Casting with a Dry-fly—‘Streams within Streams’—Wandering Fish—Vacant Shoes—A Slice of Luck—Long Lines and Short—A Change of Tactics—An Alternative—Playing a Fish—‘Notice to Quit’—A ‘Sell’—Testing a Fish—‘Give and Take’—The Value of Good Hands—Fish jumping when hooked—School-board Education—Landing a Fish—‘Double-hooked’—Foul-hooked.

IF my remarks on the subject of how to cast a trout-line have been of any service to the reader, it may perhaps further aid him if I offer a few suggestions as to where he should cast it.

If fish are rising there is not much to be said on the subject, for it rests with the fisherman to make his selection. There are, however, many rivers in which the fish do not rise freely, and yet

are to be caught with a fly. In such cases, since they do not show themselves, the water must be searched for them. I can give the reader no better advice under such circumstances than to steadily fish every likely place, but always to observe the golden rule, viz., 'To keep out of sight,' and, I may add, to be equally careful to prevent the shadow of his rod passing over the water in front of him. He may kneel, sit, lie down flat, stand on his head, perform any acrobatic feat he chooses, in order to avoid his body being seen by the fish, but, do what he may, his efforts will prove useless if he is to ruin everything by allowing the shadow of his rod to fall on the water before him; and he must also bear in mind that there are many occasions where, even though the sun may not be behind him, nevertheless, he is plainly visible to every fish in the river. And there are times when he is actually more so when standing away from the bank than if he were close to the water's edge.

All these things have to be learned and studied, and if the fisherman knows the river, he will be able to avoid thus placing himself in such positions as would tend to neutralize his chances of sport. As a rule, the nearer he is to the level of the water, the closer he will be able to approach the fish. This is one of the advantages to be

secured by wading. It is necessary to wade in some rivers, but where the water is not broken by rocks, etc., I think the practice of wading is by no means conducive to the interests of the stream, and should, therefore, be avoided as much as possible. Standing in the water close under the near bank is not so objectionable, and very frequently enables the fisherman to use his rod to better advantage than would be the case if he were fishing from the bank. He must, of course, be guided by circumstances, and use his own discretion ; but I would urge upon him never to disturb a stream unnecessarily, not only for his own sake, but also for that of others. A duffer will do more harm to a good river in a week than ten good fishermen in as many years.

I would impress upon a novice that, no matter how destitute of fish a river may seem to him to be, there are always *some* fish in it, and a great many more than he would believe to be possible. I have often and often fished in rivers which I knew to be well stocked, and yet for days, in unfavourable weather, have not seen a single fish. It may be asked, 'Where do they go to?' I can't say ; they get anywhere, everywhere, out of sight—sulk in shoals at the bottom of the deep pools, under the stones, banks, weeds, trunks of trees, wherever they can hide themselves ; and if they do come out to feed, it is at night, when it is

too dark to see, and probably they feed under water. On such occasions fishing is folly, because it is useless and a waste of time. This is, I regret to say, but too often the condition of things when some hard-worked City man elects to take his brief holiday and spend it by the river-side.

So much depends on the description of the river, that it is a difficult matter to explain to the reader which are the likeliest spots in which he may hope and expect to secure sport. Roughly speaking, the best fish invariably select those places where it is most difficult to cast a fly to advantage. Big fish, when feeding, rarely make much of a fuss about it; they have a quiet, unobtrusive way of sucking down a fly: their mouths are big, and so perhaps they know that they can make pretty sure of not missing it. The smaller fry take matters in a less matter-of-fact fashion, and dart and splash about, fearful lest they should be too late for dinner.

Wherever a fish can rest without undue exertion, and yet be in a position to readily seek the shelter of rough water, rocks, roots of trees, etc., in case of alarm, and also to take toll of the flies as they pass down-stream over his nose, there he is to be found. Where pools and shallows alternate with each other, as they generally do, the fish come out on the latter to feed when any special rise of fly is on, or in the early mornings

or dusk of evening. Nor will they, unless alarmed, subject themselves to the exertion of remaining exposed to the force of heavy water. They may, to a novice, appear to remain in such a position, but it is not so ; it is rather between the rough and the slack waters, and under the banks, that they love to lie. If it is necessary for the angler to keep out of sight, it is equally so for him to avoid treading heavily on the banks ; the one is as detrimental to sport as the other. The boots of the policeman are the thief's best friends.

In trout-fishing it is never either advisable or admissible to fish directly down-stream, no matter whether a dry or wet fly is used. If the stream is too rough, or otherwise unsuitable for the former, and it is necessary to use the latter, if fish are not rising, and the water has to be searched, the cast should be made rather across and down-stream than directly across or down. Let the reader but reflect that fish under ordinary conditions lie with their heads up-stream ; he will then understand that the more obliquely the fly is presented to them the better. If he fishes straight down-stream he is seen ; if straight across, the fly is dragged before the nose of the fish in a very unnatural manner ; nor does the latter, quick though he may be, get the same chance of seizing it as if it floats more directly and quietly down, as it were, into his very mouth.

I have elsewhere, when writing on grayling-fishing, made the remark that every fish has its angle, not thereby intending to make any pun. By this I meant what I have here endeavoured to describe, viz., that the obliquity of cast must depend on the position of the fish with regard to that of the fisherman; and if the style of fishing adopted be that of a sunk fly down-stream, the fly should reach the water well above the fish, or where the latter is supposed to be, the cast being made so as to allow sufficient line to unfold itself, and permit of the fly reaching the fish. In order to effect this, the fly must be, so to speak, flicked somewhat short of the spot, the point of the rod being lowered and plenty of line used.

There has been so much argument on the subject of dry-fly *versus* wet-fly, that I almost shrink from making any remarks thereon. I think, however, that all sensible men are agreed that bigotry is evidence of a want of sound judgment. Both systems are good in their way. Where a dry-fly can be used, then, by all means, let it be so; for it is, to my mind, the more artistic and sporting way of catching fish. Where the stream will not permit of its use, then the wet-fly must come into operation. A good fisherman will use whichever of the two answers the better. As I have remarked, so far as the science

and sport of the two systems are concerned, there is no comparison, the dry-fly having it all its own way ; but let not the man who is wedded to this style think that, because it is more difficult, and he perhaps excels on a Southern chalk-stream, he is therefore going to give the fish in a Northern or Welsh stream a lesson hitherto unknown to them, and the go-by to all the local fishermen ; because, if he holds such opinions, he will have to confess that he has altogether overrated his own powers, and he will have to learn a lesson, which for its A B C will necessitate a large consumption of what is commonly known as humble-pie.

Strange to say, there are numberless stretches of water in the streams of the North and North Wales, etc., which appear most suitable for working with a dry-fly. The fish in these rivers do not run large ; indeed, they appear to anyone who is used to the large trout of the Southern rivers contemptible fry. Yet these despised fish, of five or six to the pound, positively refuse to be cajoled into taking a dry-fly, no matter how skilfully offered them. I do not know why this is the case, but it may be that they do not like to see too much of the gut casting-line. I can account for it in no other way. For wet-fly fishing, the use of softer feathers for the wings of the artificial imitation is advisable ; indeed, most

of them answer better when dressed hacklewise, than with wings which are somewhat stiff and unyielding by comparison. In the list of various dressings which I have given, it will be observed that I have marked those patterns which are more suitable for streams in which the dry-fly cannot be used.

In order to fish with a dry-fly, it is necessary for the angler to face up-stream. It may so happen that hitherto his piscatorial experiences have been limited to the Northern or Welsh rivers, where he has been in the habit of standing with his face turned across or down the stream. Now, however, he must make up his mind to resolutely face the other way. At first this may seem awkward and troublesome ; he is unused to it, is slow to realize the necessity for so doing, and begins to wish himself back again on a river such as he has been accustomed to, and where he can fish as he has always done. If he is fortunate to have the assistance of any friend who is anxious and willing to initiate him into the mysteries of the, to him, new art, he must necessarily do his best to follow out the instructions given him, so long as his Mentor is beside him. Let him be left alone for a short time, and the chances are that the instant he is unobserved he will turn himself down-stream again, inwardly cursing the whole thing and denouncing it as confounded rot.

He may perchance catch one or two tolerable fish, and several small ones, during the day. At the close of the latter, when his companion rejoins him with some two or three brace of really good fish in his basket, he begins to realize that perhaps after all his conclusions have been somewhat premature. On the next occasion he determines to try and follow the advice given him to the best of his ability, and probably succeeds in hooking and landing a good fish or two. Thenceforward he needs no further inducement to try to master the new style. He is converted—nay, wedded to it.

The reader may desire to learn how to fish up-stream with a dry-fly. I will therefore endeavour to show him.

First of all, it is necessary to find a rising fish, *i.e.*, a fish which is feeding *on the flies which are coming down on the surface of the water*. I have laid particular stress on this last sentence, because it not infrequently happens that although flies may be on the water, and the fish apparently feeding on them, they are in reality not so doing, but are feeding under water with their noses buried in the weeds, and what looks like a rise is caused by the tips of their tail-fins now and again protruding. Such fish are said to be ‘tailing,’ and are best left alone, for to try for them will only result in the loss of time and temper, the chance

of being able to attract their attention with an artificial fly being infinitesimally small. I have known occasions, one in particular, when, apparently, every fish in the portion of the Test on which I was fishing was thus engaged; and this, too, was during the mayfly season. It had been a day of disappointment to me, for the fish had been rising very short; my basket was empty, and I had lost three or four large trout, one of them an historical fish which had broken everyone who had previously succeeded in hooking him. He lived amongst the roots of an old alder-tree, and when struck invariably made for his home, and by means of some two or three quick, deep, double rushes snapped the gut as if it were a cobweb. These tactics he employed with me. I did my utmost to keep him out in the stream; but though I was using a double-handed rod, and the gut was the best of its kind, he beat me by the sheer weight of his body and the violent, rapid snatches he made. Nor was this the worst of my troubles. I had, while casting, placed a very favourite old single-handed rod on the grass behind me, it not being furnished with a spike; and as I stepped back while playing the fish, I trod on it, and ruined it irretrievably.

But to return to what I was saying. The day had been bright and broiling; at sunset the sky was of a deep orange red, and the water of a

similar colour. I mention this fact because the Scotch fishermen have an old saying that when the 'coppersmith,' as they term this peculiar light, is on the water 'the fush wanna tak.' There is also another bluish metallic colour of water which they call the 'tinsmith,' which is held by them as being equally unsuitable. And they are right, for I have never yet found it otherwise.

Having found a rising, feeding fish, the next thing is to ascertain what fly he is feeding upon, and, failing this, to select the fly which is most likely to be the right one. Nor even then is it advisable to at once commence operations; for it is ever time well spent to prospect the position of the fish, the run of the stream in the particular spot in which he is situated, the position of boughs, the sun, wind, etc., and, having done so, to determine from whence and how the cast can best be made, so as to get the fly neatly over him.

In the chalk streams and others of a similar character, it may be observed that the surface of the river is broken up into innumerable little currents, 'streams within streams,' and if these are not carefully observed before the cast is made, the fly, just as it is nearing the fish, will probably be diverted from its course; and if the gut is thereby dragged across, it may be the means of stopping the fish rising for a time,

'putting the fish down,' as it is termed. It is therefore well to endeavour to guard against all risks of failure by thus taking stock of the position. Such caution takes but a very little time, and tends to ensure success. A fly should never be cast at the actual spot where the rise is seen, nor, if visible to the angler, where the fish is lying. It should be planted well above the latter, say a foot or two, and allowed to sail gently down towards it. Neither should it be cast so that more of the gut than can possibly be helped passes over the fish. It should rather be endeavoured to place it in such a position that, while it floats head foremost, and with its wings well cocked, down truly over the fish, the main portion of the gut passes away to the side of it. If it is not taken at the first attempt, the angler should not repeat the cast until he has seen the fish rise once or twice again, thereby affording proof that it has not been in any way scared.

Some fish, when they first come out to feed, have a habit of wandering about before they finally settle down ; they take a fly here, another there, and it seems impossible to hit off their whereabouts. At one time they move up-stream, and just as the angler is making ready to follow them up and put in a cast, lo and behold ! they will turn back and rise again close to him. When

this is the case, it is better to remain quite still, of course keeping out of sight as much as possible, and, if there is no other fish rising near at hand, to wait until they have quite made up their minds where they intend to dine or sup, before putting a fly over them. I have known fish travel twenty to thirty yards up-stream before they settle down to feed ; these are but wending their way from their homes to their club. They are generally good fish, too, and worth the expenditure of a little patience.

Wherever a big trout may elect to take up his quarters, it may safely be assumed that there is nearly always another, a smaller one, waiting about. The reader can make proof of this for himself ; for if he succeeds in catching a trout in a certain place one day—a fish, we will say, of two pounds weight—the next day he will be almost certain to find another rising in the same place, and if he catches this also, it will be found to be smaller than the other. With fish, as with mankind, there is éver someone waiting to fill the vacant shoes, no matter how old and worn the latter may be.

One evening on the Test I caught a trout weighing two pounds ; the next day I caught one weighing about 'a pound and a half, and the day following a third of a little over a pound, all three being taken in exactly the same spot. I knew

that it was quite likely that the place would be filled by another fish on each occasion, and made the remark to a friend who was with me ; but it was great luck to get all three, more especially as the position was a most difficult one, and each cast was made at the risk of losing my fly in a thorn-bush which grew just above where the fish lay.

I am of opinion that it is easier to cast a fairly long line lightly and with precision than a short one. My reason for this assertion is not only because I prefer using a long line, but because the increased weight of the latter brings out the full play of the rod more completely, and thereby enables the user to feel its swing more perfectly. Of course, it is folly to make use of a line absurdly long, unless it is absolutely necessary to do so ; and, moreover, fish hooked at the end of a very long line are more frequently lost than landed. With a short line a mistake may cause a splash, and a fish may thereby be 'put down,' or altogether 'warned off the premises,' but with a long one such is less likely to happen : the fly may fail to reach the desired spot, but if it goes out to the full length of the line, which, if the distance has been accurately gauged when running it off the reel, will be somewhere close to the fish, it will fall lightly enough to prevent the occurrence of such a contretemps.

It may be found utterly impossible to make

any impression on a fish, no matter how carefully the ground may have been reconnoitred, how skilfully the fly may have been presented to it, or how perfect an imitation the artificial representation may be. There is evidently something wrong. I have been hours over such a fish ; indeed, have spent many hours on different occasions in my endeavours to entice it, and have failed until I have changed my tactics, when they have frequently been rewarded with success.

Under circumstances such as these, it may be concluded that the fault rests in the presentation of the fly—that the latter does not reach the fish as it should, by reason of the stream not serving properly. The position of the angler must be changed ; he must either cross over to the opposite side of the river, or, if that fails or is impracticable, try a down-stream cast. If the latter course is decided upon, the angler must keep as far up-stream, away from the fish, as his casting powers will permit, and endeavour to place the fly so that it reaches the fish truly, flicking it somewhat short in the manner I described for down-stream fishing. If this can be effected by switching, it will be better to adopt that style of casting. Indeed, I consider it advisable to use the switch cast as much as possible for all down-stream work. The fly is prevented passing too rapidly over a fish by reason of the weight of the line, and its

course can be in a measure directed by a slight movement of the point of the rod to right or left, as may be necessary.

A few words of advice on the subject of what is termed 'playing a fish' may be of service to the reader. When a fish is hooked, it naturally becomes alarmed, and at once endeavours to make the best of its way home; that the fact of the barb entering its flesh is a source of physical pain to it I very much doubt. The pain it experiences is rather mental, and its one aim and object is to regain its liberty, and to this end its entire energies are devoted. Being foiled in its endeavours to go in the direction it desires, it dashes off in another, anywhere, everywhere. If it is a well-conditioned fish of respectable size, it is capable of putting a very considerable strain on the rod and tackle; and if this strain is too severe, either one or the other must give. It therefore rests with the fisherman to calculate the amount of resistance which his tackle is capable of sustaining, and if he finds that it is too great, he must give way; in other words, he must let the line run off the reel in order to relieve the undue pressure which is brought to bear against him. But at the same time he must not yield more than he is forced to do; for if a fish is allowed to have its own way too suddenly, and too great an extent of line, the latter will be, for

a second or two, over-slackened, and the fish, especially if not fairly hooked, may succeed in getting off. Where weeds, roots of trees and other obstructions are present, the fish must be held out of them as long as it is possible. Should, however, it succeed in making for the latter, the chances are that a smash will follow; if the former, and they are thick, the best plan is to hang on and wait until the action of the water may serve to disentangle them, and permit of the angler's forcing the fish to quit its lodgment by means of steady and continued pressure being put on it to work it down-stream. Should this fail, and waiting be too wearisome, there is nothing for it but to move the fish out by means of stones, clods of earth, etc.; but care is necessary to prevent the gut being broken when such measures are resorted to. If the angler has but the patience to wait, the fish will generally give in in the long-run. It not infrequently happens that a fish, more especially when but lightly hooked, will rush off into the weeds and succeed in freeing itself of the hook, leaving the latter sticking in the former; and the angler may be patiently waiting, being under the impression that the fish is still on, the belief being further strengthened by reason of the tremulous motion imparted to the line by the action of the water. For this there is no remedy save that of philosophy. It

is a sell, and can't be helped. The best thing, therefore, is to try and forget all about it, and to devote one's self to the capture of some other, worthier fish. It is well, when a fish takes to the weeds, as above described, to try him from time to time at frequent intervals, just to make sure that he is really on the hook, and is not congratulating himself on having made a fool of his would-be captor.

Playing a fish, under ordinary circumstances, is merely a matter of give-and-take. It is as if two persons were each to take hold of the ends of a piece of string, one representing the fish and the other the fisherman. When the one pulls the other should give way, though the string should never be allowed to get slack; and so the game proceeds, the only difference being that, in the case of a fish, each succeeding effort to get free but adds to its exhaustion, until it is finally forced to yield to the power of the rod, and permit the landing-net to be placed beneath it. After all, it is but a matter of common-sense. The chief difficulty rests with the touch—the hands—of the angler. If his touch is sensitive, or, as it is termed, his hands are 'light,' he will know exactly how much or how little he can give or take from the fish.

Trout, salmon, etc., often spring into the air when hooked. It is a dangerous sign, and

generally, though not always, indicates that the hook is not firmly fixed. When a spring is made it behoves the angler to be as careful not to check it as it would be for him to slacken his hand on a rearing horse. The least touch, and grief must ensue. I am acquainted with a portion of a certain river, well known to fishermen, where the trout run large, and are extra cunning and lusty. They will look at nothing but the smallest of flies on the finest of tackle. They contrive, by jumping when struck, to smash the gut with their tails. These trout are highly educated—in fact, they know a deal too much. Perhaps the existence of a Board School may be the cause. Anyhow, they have often broken my heart, and my casting-line to boot. I confess they are altogether too much for me, especially when they have become fat and insolent with high feeding during the mayfly season. I could, if I chose, tell some extraordinary tales respecting these trout, and well-authenticated tales, too; but, as I have no desire to be accused of being parsimonious regarding the truth, I will forbear.

When a fish is exhausted, and it is desired to land it, the net must be placed quietly beneath it, and gently drawn out of the water. I have purposely made use of the word *drawn*, because, unless a fish is a small one, if an attempt is made to *lift* it out of the water, the strain may pro-

bably be too great for the joint of the net, and it may break, which is not to be desired. If the net is of the proper dimensions and shape, such as I have described, when it is drawn towards the bank it forms, with that portion of the hoop against which it is pressed, a kind of closed purse, out of which there is no chance of the fish escaping, and any undue strain being placed on the joint is obviated.

If the services of an assistant are requisitioned to land a fish, he should be especially careful to keep *below* it on the *down-stream* side of the angler. Why, it is, I conclude, hardly necessary for me to state. A smart tap on the head will at once suffice to kill the fish, and enable the hook to be removed without inflicting further suffering on the poor struggling creature, or subjecting the fisherman to the possibility of having his finger lacerated by the point of the hook. He might also perchance find the latter doing the double duty of catching him as well as the fish—a somewhat ludicrous, though doubtless painful, state of affairs. Yet such things have happened, as I know to my cost.

Fish at times get foul-hooked. When this occurs the angler must look out for squalls. Should he, as I have done on two or three occasions, succeed in hooking a fish by the tail, he may expect a considerable amount of excitement;

but I would caution him not to be disappointed if the size of his capture should not prove equal to his expectations. A fish so hooked, especially if of any size, can lead the fisherman a dance which he is not likely to forget.

CHAPTER XI.

Loch-fishing—Reminiscences of Lochleven—The Castle Keys—How to fish a Loch—Drifting—Sunk Flies—Want of Skill conducive to Success—Fighting Qualities of Lochleven Trout—The Angling Competition Nuisance—Feeding-grounds of Loch Fish—Dangers of Loch-fishing—‘An East Wind and its only Virtue’—Best Months for fishing on Lochleven—The Green Inn—Flies suitable for Lake Trout-fishing.

WHERE a loch is well stocked, and the fish in it are of a good average size, excellent sport may be obtained ; and such, for a short time, is a pleasant change to the ordinary river-fishing. I do not think, however, that, good though the sport may be, it is ever as satisfying to the true sportsman as that to be obtained by the river-side, although in the latter case the bag may be a far lighter one at the end of the day.

By the river there is ever so much which serves to give zest and interest to the sport. Each bend discloses fresh beauties ; each cast is different. Here the trout lie under the banks ; there, at the tail of the pool. Stills and rapids alternate with each other ; there is, too, more difficulty, more

science, required to fish the stream than is demanded in lake-fishing. The latter becomes dreadfully monotonous work ; one gets lazy and cramped, sitting or standing all day long at one end of a boat casting, casting unceasingly. The eye tires of the scenery, beautiful though it may be, after a time, and is tried and wearied with the glitter of the sun on the water. The wind is *always* behind one, and save for the playing and landing the fish there is little or no skill required. The veriest duffer that ever handled a rod has just as good a chance of catching fish as the most finished craftsman. Nevertheless, for a week or two, loch-fishing, under favourable conditions as regards weather, etc., may be most enjoyable. I have passed some of the very happiest days of my life on Lochleven—days which, alas! can never return, nor the like of them, for he who was then my constant companion and close friend, as gallant a gentleman as ever wore her Majesty's uniform or put foot in stirrup, now sleeps in his grave beneath an Indian sun.

At the time to which I refer, our lines were cast amid the pestilential airs and odours of a Northern manufacturing town. The summer days brought visions of cool streams, and fish to be caught, and an irresistible longing possessed us to be off somewhere, we cared not where, but anywhere away from the smoke and

turmoil of the great city. We could stand it no longer, and so we decided to ask for leave, and, after much discussion, eventually found ourselves at Kinross. The pleasant little hotel was a welcome change to us, and, as there were several people staying there for the loch-fishing, we were far from solitary. When we met at the nondescript meal which was termed dinner, in the evening, the relation of the day's experiences, whether of success or disaster, proved so entertaining that it was generally midnight before we retired to rest.

Lochleven is full of historic interest, and the surrounding scenery, if not as striking as that in many other parts of Scotland, is nevertheless very beautiful. The islands with which it is here and there studded serve to break the monotony of so large an expanse of water. There is, too, some legend connected with each of them. That on which stand the ruins of the old castle, of course, appeals most strongly to one's sympathies by reason of its connection with the ill-starred Queen.

Some years ago, when the loch was being dragged or cleaned, I forget which, a bunch of large keys was discovered at the bottom, not far from the castle, and these, they say, are believed to have been the keys of the latter, which were stated to have been thrown into the loch when

Mary of Scotland made her escape from the castle. They are, I believe, now in the Edinburgh Museum.

But I must not further weary the reader, and he probably knows quite as much of these events as I do, if not more ; so to return to the subject of loch-fishing.

When it is desired to fish a large expanse of water, such as a loch, it is obviously impossible to do so from the banks. The assistance of a boat is therefore necessary. To row aimlessly about in search of sport would be both laborious and unsystematic. The following plan is therefore generally adopted. The boat is rowed up to the windward shore, and then permitted to drift across, broadside on, in front of the wind, until it reaches the opposite side, when the process is repeated, but this time a little farther to the right or left of the previous drift, as may be desired, until the whole of the water, or as much as is possible, has been fished over. If two anglers are in the boat, one takes his stand in the bows and the other in the stern, and as the boat is driven across by the wind, they cast in front of it. The slower the boat moves the better, so long as there is sufficient breeze to move it. The great secret in this style of fishing is to allow the flies, three or four of which are generally used, to sink and work their own will, for the action

of the water moves them far more naturally than if they are tugged at and made to jump about by any motion of the rod. A man may be ever so good a river-fisherman, but so long as he can make a cast of some sort, at all clear of the boat, the veriest novice will be more likely to catch fish than he, inasmuch as the latter, being unable to use his rod, is forced to leave his flies alone, whereas the former cannot resist doing his best to cast cleanly and well, and trying to fish too much on the surface of the water. Thus his very ability to fish becomes a drawback to his success. Such was the case when my companion and I visited Lochleven. I had no previous experience of loch-fishing, and he had scarcely ever fished in his life. Having put his rod and tackle together and set him to work, I proceeded to do the same for myself. Now, I had been fishing from childhood, and thought I knew a good deal about it. I tried my very utmost, but for every fish I succeeded in capturing my companion caught at least three, besides hooking and losing any amount more, and yet he was scarcely able to throw his line a yard in front of him, and knew absolutely nothing but what he had learned from me. This went on for several days ; indeed, until our leave was at an end. On our returning again, some few weeks later, I experienced just the same luck ; I was utterly disgusted with myself, but

not in the least degree jealous, for I knew that there must be a reason, though what it could be I was then unable to account for. I have since ascertained that it is nearly always thus.

These Lochleven trout fight hard and fiercely when hooked, and will often spring yards high into the air. The chief thing to be guarded against is to prevent their getting under the boat, and so fouling the line. They do not, as a rule, run large, the average size being somewhat under a pound.

The angling competitions which take place there from time to time through the season are an intolerable nuisance, and it is much to be regretted that the peace and beauty of the loch should be so ruthlessly disturbed. The competitors, who hail from the large towns, go there rather for the sake of making a day of it than for sport; they shout and drink and make the place altogether unbearable until, to everybody's relief, the evening train carries them off. Some idea of the enormous stock of fish in the lake may be formed from the record of the annual takes. The year previous to that of my visits there, sixteen thousand trout were taken by the rod, and yet, since there are some four thousand acres of water, nearly all of which is fishing ground, this total represents but four fish per acre.

I have since that time fished in other lochs,

and have had some excellent sport, but, despite the annoyance of the angling competitions, my pleasantest reminiscences of loch-fishing are, and ever will be, those connected with Lochleven.

The bottoms of lochs vary very considerably, and while some are fairly regular, others are intersected by banks, the depths being very irregular. When drifting, the greater number of fish, and those of largest size, will be found in the neighbourhood of the banks, which form their feeding-grounds. The deeper parts rarely yield much sport, such fish as are taken in them being generally small. It is therefore well, for anyone visiting a strange loch, to endeavour to ascertain what the soundings are. Charts of most of the large lochs may be purchased, but where they are not procurable, local information must be resorted to.

I would urge the reader, if he has had no experience of loch-fishing, and there is more than one rod in the boat, to be cautious, when thus casting with the wind behind him, to avoid throwing on that side of the boat on which his companion may be, and equally to caution the latter to respect him. A cast armed with three or four flies is not a pleasant thing to have festooned round one's face. Such adornments are less harmful when unattached to a line and coiled around a hat.

There is one striking peculiarity about Loch-

leven fishing which I had almost forgotten to mention. In every other lake or river with which I am acquainted, an east wind is the most unsuitable of all winds for sport; and when such prevails, the angler may make up his mind to a blank day. On Lochleven the reverse is the case, for, strange to say, there an east wind is the one of all others most eagerly to be desired. Why this should be I have never yet been able to discover, nor have I ever met anyone who was able to enlighten me on the subject. I have formed all sorts of theories regarding it, but none of them would hold good. Of course, there must be a reason, but the fish alone are acquainted with it, and so it remains a mystery.

The best months in the year are from the middle of March to the middle of June, and after that during the month of August, July being the worst of all. The charge for boats is somewhat high, being 2s. 6d. an hour, exclusive of the two boatmen, who, if I remember rightly, are to be hired at 1s. 6d. per day each and their luncheon.

The Green Inn at Kinross is the best to stay at; the charges are moderate, and everything is particularly clean and comfortable.

Needless to say, 'Ye munna fush on the Sawbath.'

The following is a list of flies suitable for lake-fishing, which I think may prove of service to the

reader. Although many of the dressings are taken from Francis Francis' book, they are for the most part standard patterns which I have myself proved to be worthy of recommendation. In addition to this list, there are many of the ordinary trout-flies which, in their seasons, will be found, if dressed a trifle larger than for river-fishing, equally suitable for the purpose. I think that, as a rule, the hackled wet-fly patterns are perhaps to be preferred. The addition of a little tinsel, or a red, green, or yellow silk tag, is often an improvement.

FLIES SUITABLE FOR LAKE TROUT-FISHING.

1. Wing : Teal.
Body : Red pig's wool, ribbed with gold thread.
Hackle : Red.
2. Wing : Teal.
Body : Black silk, ribbed with silver thread.
Hackle : Black, from head to tail.
3. Wing : Mallard.
Body : Claret mohair, ribbed with gold thread.
Hackle : Claret, a shade lighter than the body.
A red or black hackle may be substituted if preferred.
4. Wing : Mallard.
Body : Fiery-brown mohair, ribbed with gold thread.
Hackle : Black.

5. Wing : Woodcock.
Body : Orange or yellow crewel, ribbed with gold thread.
Hackle : Red.
6. Wing : From the jay's wing, of a pale-bluish tinge, darker towards the butt.
Body : Hare's ear and water-rat's fur mixed, the former predominating and picked out for legs ; gold tinsel at the tail.
7. Wing : Light jay's wing.
Body : Olive mohair, ribbed with fine gold wire.
Hackle : Greenish-olive in appearance, but golden when held up to the light.
A black hackle or a teal wing may be used as a change.

This is a well-known Irish fly, called the 'golden olive.'

THE HECHAM-PECHAM.

Wing : Mallard with white tips (a nearly black feather).

Body : Red wool, ribbed with silver twist.

Hackle : Red.

This is the best of all loch-flies. There are several varieties of it, but the wing is the same in all. There are green, yellow, and blue hechams.

N.B.—The name is pronounced as if spelt 'heckam-peckam.'

A Scotchman on a loch would be at sea without a dressing of this fly.

Any shades of red, yellow, orange, or green wools may be used for loch-flies. The two last-named colours are especially good. Teal, mallard, and grouse feathers make the best wings.

The following is a good loch-fly :

Wing : Starling (medium colour).

Body : Hare's ear (broken colours), picked out at breast for legs.

Tag : Red, yellow, or green wool.

CHAPTER XII.

Grayling—Relative Size of Grayling—Description of Streams suitable for Grayling—Peculiarity of Grayling when rising at a Fly—Casting for Grayling—The Grayling as a Sporting Fish—Tactics of Grayling when hooked—Spawning of Grayling—Best Month for Grayling-fishing—Advantages of a Grayling Stream—Rising Qualities of Grayling—An Exceptional Day—The Olive Dun as a Grayling Fly—Shape of Grayling—Delicacy and Shape of Mouth of Grayling—The Virtues of Grayling—Edible Qualities of Grayling—Origin of Grayling—Weather and Time of Day most suitable for Grayling-fishing—Grayling as Spawn-eaters—The Law of Retaliation—Yorkshire Grayling Flies—Derbyshire Bumbles—Selection of Grayling Flies.

It is much to be regretted that grayling are to be found in so few of our streams. Although I am well aware that all rivers which contain trout, and in which the latter thrive remarkably well, are not equally suitable for grayling, nevertheless there must be many of our rivers which would suit them admirably if properly stocked. Not so very many years ago there were no grayling in the Test; now it is one of the best, if not the best, of our grayling streams, and the fish there and in the Hampshire Avon attain to a greater average

size than elsewhere. A fish of a pound weight in the Test or Avon is thought to be a takeable fish, and no more ; whereas in Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and other districts, such a fish would be considered of some account. The grayling attains maturity more rapidly than a trout, but rarely a weight of over three pounds. Now and again a capture of five or six pounds is recorded, but such fish as these are few and far between. I have myself taken some few of three pounds, but I have never seen any exceeding that weight.

The most suitable streams for grayling are those in which pools and long gravelly, shallow reaches alternate ; and the more bends there are the better, for they love to congregate in the backwaters formed by the latter. Unlike the trout, they lie deep in the water, and rise almost perpendicularly at the flies floating over them, thereby often missing them. For this reason it is more advisable, when fishing for grayling in waters where the flow is other than sluggish, to cast rather across and down, than directly up stream, as the fly is thereby prevented travelling too rapidly ; but it is, of course, necessary to keep out of sight just as much as when trout-fishing, so it is not always possible to adopt this style of casting. There are those who declare grayling-fishing to be an inferior sport to that of

trout. My own experiences are very much the reverse of this, for I consider that when the fish are of good size, and the river is well stocked, no fish can possibly afford better sport. Equal precision and delicacy in casting are requisite, and, being extremely tender-mouthed, grayling require more careful handling when hooked than trout. They may not fight quite as fiercely, but they can give the angler a considerable deal of trouble before he gets a chance of bringing them to net, their large back fins acting as a kind of screw, and causing them to spin to such an extent that, when the hook is taken out, the gut will often be found to be twisted up like whipcord. At times, when in full condition, the play of a grayling is in nowise inferior to that of a trout; and I have known them spring out of the water, though this is not often the case, as boldly as any trout. I have often been taken forty or fifty yards down-stream before I have been able to turn a grayling, when it has been well-conditioned. It is necessary to use small flies and the lightest possible tackle for grayling-fishing, and so the difficulties of landing a fish of any size are considerably increased.

Grayling spawn in March and April, and are fully recovered in August. November, December, and even the beginning of January, if the weather is at all favourable in the latter, are the months in

which they are in best condition. I have had excellent sport just before Christmas, when the weather has been open and mild. Indeed, the best bag I ever made was at that time a few years ago, and the pick of the basket was caught when it was growing dark. The olive dun was then coming down, though it was so late in the day.

Thus it may be seen that, where there are grayling, the fisherman, instead of being obliged to put away his rod at the end of September, is able to look forward to another three months of sport. Now, this is a very great advantage, for it reduces the dead time to three, instead of six, months; the latter is a weary time to a man to whom the pleasures of hunting or shooting are denied.

Although somewhat choice in their selection of flies and tackle, I think that grayling are better rising fish than their first cousins, the trout. There are few days on which some fish cannot be found on the feed, so long as there is any fly on the water, and they will very often take well when there is an utter absence of any fly at all. I had on one occasion a remarkably good day's sport when the wind was blowing so keenly, and the weather apparently so utterly unsuitable for fishing, as to make me feel almost ashamed to be seen with a rod. Not a fish was stirring. I made

a chance cast, allowing the fly to sink, and caught a fish. I cast again, and was again successful. Before I left the pool I had a pile of fish beside me, which gave me some trouble to carry home. All were good, and some of them rather over than under two pounds. They were all taken with the olive dun.

Though somewhat hog-backed, a grayling is a very handsome fish, and by no means deficient in grace of outline. Nor can anything exceed the beauty of its colouring when in the full bloom of condition. Grays and browns are all exquisitely blended together in every variety of these colours; the large back fin is like the most delicately-marked tortoiseshell, the richest madder taking the place of brown, and contrasting perfectly with the dark-green-coloured back. The mouth is very small in comparison with that of a trout, and is shaped like the bell of a trumpet. It is very delicate and tender, and, in consequence, easily torn by the hook. Hence, as I have remarked, the necessity for the fish being carefully handled when hooked.

One of the best, if not the very best, of our Hampshire fishermen remarked to a friend of mine that he had, after years of experience, come to the conclusion that, so far from considering grayling-fishing inferior to that of trout, he preferred it to the latter. Not only because the

former is a truly sporting fish, being quite as difficult to catch as, if not even more so than, a trout ; but also because it is sooner in condition after spawning, affords sport for a longer period of the year, and is an equally good fish when cooked.

Now this, coming from such an authority, is worth a good deal. I cannot say that I prefer grayling-fishing to trout-fishing, because I do not ; nor do I think a grayling is as good to eat as a trout. Nevertheless, there are many people who consider it a greater delicacy. It has a peculiar flavour, unlike that of any other of the Salmonidæ. It perhaps approaches nearer to the smelt in this respect. Anyhow, it justly deserves a very high reputation not only by reason of the sport it affords, but also for its edible qualities.

It has been asserted that there were no grayling in this country until brought hither by the monks of old. This statement appears to me to be hardly warrantable, for, considering how great care is necessary to transport fish or ova from one part of Great Britain to another, even in these days of rapid travelling, I do not see how, when locomotion was slow and difficult, as was the case in the days when monks were many, it could have been possible to convey fish alive, in any stage, from the Continent, whence they are said to have

been introduced, and more especially grayling, which are notoriously difficult fish to transport from one place to another, and require extra care and attention. I think it may be reasonably concluded that they have existed in this country quite as long as trout or any other fish.

Perhaps the best weather for grayling-fishing is a bright morning after a white frost, in the late autumn, and the most suitable hours from twelve till three, for it is between these hours that the flies are hatching out at that period of the year. I used to notice, when fishing in Hampshire, that, almost to a minute, at twelve o'clock the first batch of flies made their appearance. By two or half-past the rise would be over for the day, unless the weather happened to be very mild, when small batches of flies would continue to come down until sundown.

Grayling are said to do damage in a trout-stream by reason of their spawn-eating propensities. I am sorry to say that there is no doubt but that they do eat spawn of other fish—salmon as well as trout—but it is said that they do not eat their own. How that may be I cannot say, but I know that they are guilty of the other offence; and I also know of one spot, at least, where, when the salmon are spawning, the grayling may be seen in shoals devouring the spawn.

My own private opinion is that grayling are no more culpable in this respect than other fish, for I believe that they all offend in like manner when they get the chance. If it were not so the rivers would be overstocked—nay, choked up with fish. If grayling are not innocent of the crimes laid to their charge, at all events they suffer in a similar manner from the depredations of other fish, and so the matter is pretty equally balanced.

In Yorkshire it is very much the custom to fish for grayling with horsehair casts, and flies tied on the same material. As the fish there do not run large, this is found to answer very well; but it would be quite inadequate for the larger fish in the Southern chalk-streams.

The flies used in Yorkshire are, for the most part, of the spider kind, tied on small, very light hooks, and very thinly dressed. I have some few patterns of these, but I would advise anyone desiring to fish there, or in other streams, for grayling, to procure the flies locally. Those I possess were obtained from Mr. Croisdale, in the Briggate, at Leeds, and are very well tied. Doubtless, any of the Yorkshire tackle-makers can supply them. I mention Mr. Croisdale because such tackle as I purchased from him when in Yorkshire proved so excellent, and he is the only Yorkshire tackle-maker with whom I have had dealings.

In Derbyshire, a pattern of fly termed a 'bumble' is much used for grayling. It answers excellently well on those rivers, but I have never found it of much service elsewhere. There are various kinds of bumbles ; I append the dressings of two.

For ordinary use for grayling a selection can be made from the list which I have given for trout. They like the addition of a little tinsel, and this can be added, if desired, to those which are not dressed with it, excepting Nos. 1, 4, 8, 9.

GRAYLING FLIES.

1. **Needle-brown.
2. **Olive dun (both dark and medium).
3. Hare's-ear dun.
4. Iron-blue.
5. **Red quill.
6. **Wickham's fancy.
7. Brown spinner.
8. **Gold-eyed gauze-wing.
9. *Aldam's Indian yellow.
10. Flight's fancy.
11. *Red tag.
12. **Small silver sedge.
13. Orange sedge.

The double asterisks denote those flies which I have found to be exceptionally good for grayling.

BUMBLES.

14. **Orange.
15. Claret.

There are also other bumbles used by the Derbyshire fishermen, varying in colour. The two I have given will, however, be found sufficient.

CHAPTER XIII.

Pollution of Salmon Rivers—Obstructions—Fish-passes—Salmon-life—Extract from Preface of Reports made to the Tweed Commissioners—Questions and Answers from Tweed Fishery Reports—Summary of Information given in Tweed Fishery Reports—Average Rate of Speed of Salmon when ascending Rivers—Extraordinary Rate of Speed attained by a Salmon in the Sea—Spring Fish and Early Rivers—Temperature of Water—The Parr—The Sewin—Local Nomenclature—Classification of the Migratory Salmonidæ—Differences between Varieties of Migratory Salmonidæ—Care of Salmon Rivers—The Value of a River well cared for—The Value of Trout Streams—The Duties of a Water-keeper—Improving a River—Weed-cutting on Salmon Rivers—A Weed-net.

UNTIL comparatively recent years, but little has been known regarding the habits of the salmon, and the other varieties of Salmonidæ which are migratory. All sorts of wonderful theories and opinions were enunciated from time to time. Thanks to the researches of Buckland and others, who set themselves earnestly to work to learn all that they possibly could of this interesting family, much of the mystery which surrounded it has been cleared up; and we are now in possession of an amount of valuable information which, if acted

upon, should result in the various salmon fisheries in Great Britain and Ireland being placed on a footing and brought into a condition of prosperity such as have not hitherto existed. Very much has been done during the past twenty years; much is being done, and much still remains to be done.

There must have been a time when salmon were to be found in all of our rivers. Such would doubtless be the case at the present if the fish were allowed free access to them. Their progress is, however, barred by the obstacles which advancing civilization has placed in their way, viz., mills and pollution.

It is not so very long ago that the Thames was a salmon river, far more recently than the people of to-day are aware. Such it doubtless would still be, were it not for the causes which I have mentioned. The day may yet come when it will again be so—a time to be earnestly looked forward to, since not only will the presence of the fish be universally appreciated, but, before such a consummation can take place, the river itself must first be restored to much of its pristine purity. Already the efforts which have been made to counteract the evils formerly existing have borne good fruit, and the Thames of to-day is a vastly different river to what it was twenty years ago.

Pollution is the most serious evil of the day with which we have to contend; nearly every evil may be attributed to it. Our rivers, the food we eat, the very air we breathe, everything, are more or less polluted, and disease walks rampant in our midst. The only wonder is that even more serious consequences have not resulted. The population is ever rapidly increasing, and each year it becomes more urgently necessary for the Legislature to guard against the ravages of the hydra-headed fiend. It is all very well to make laws, but if they are to be disregarded and violated with impunity, they are worse than no laws at all. A law is an order given by the State; if that order is not carried out, and its execution seen to, it becomes a positive evil.

Is it to be wondered at that a salmon, a fish which is at liberty to select any river, should hesitate to ascend one in which every description of filth—sewage, refuse from gas, dye, mineral, and other works of a like nature—is for ever sullyng the purity of the water? It must be, in truth, a brave and determined fish which can face such abominations as these, and especially so when it is remembered that such a fish has come fresh from the unpolluted waters of the deep seas. Nothing but the most powerful longing to return to the home of its birth, and there be fruitful and multiply, as did its forefathers, can prove a

sufficient inducement to carry it through the foul and unctuous flood; and yet every impediment which the ingenuity or ignorance of man can invent is placed in its way. At the very commencement of its upward journey it has to encounter the perils of the numerous nets which are spread to ensnare it. Further on there is the awful Styx-like passage to which I have referred, a case of hold your breath and make a bolt for it; and then the many mills, and weirs, and dams remain to be got through or over. The last-named obstructions are by no means to be easily overcome. One is almost lost in admiration of the pluck and determination displayed by the gallant fish which can encounter such dangers and difficulties as these. No wonder that salmon-fishing is the grand and exciting sport it is.

It may be observed by some one of my readers that nowadays passes are established on all salmon rivers to assist the progress of the ascending fish. This is so to a very great extent. There are such passes, it is true, but many of them, though constructed at a considerable expense, are next door to useless; and it is only during heavy floods that the fish can possibly get over them, and even then the difficulty is extreme. They are either too long, too steep, or the channel is situated in the wrong position, and so the money has been utterly wasted and has benefited no one

save the builder and his men, least of all the fish. In many instances half the expenditure would have sufficed to build a proper pass, if a little more skill and forethought had been employed. It has truly been said that, of all our senses, common-sense is the most to be valued.

Salmon, bull-trout, and sea-trout, no matter by what names they may be called, are migratory fish. They belong rather to the fresh-water than to the sea; but it is to the latter they resort annually, to feed and recuperate their condition, which has been weakened by spawning. Fish which have never spawned at all also take this yearly trip to sea. When the process of recovery is complete they endeavour to return to the rivers which gave them birth, for the purpose of spawning. A very few weeks of sea-life and marine food suffice to renew their strength and condition. It is roughly estimated that a salmon, after it has spawned, is only half the weight which it would have scaled before that operation. When a fish has spawned it is termed a 'kelt.' The majority of kelts drop down the rivers during the month of April, and yet return in August or September, frequently before that period, with their original weight very considerably increased. This will serve to give the reader some idea of the nutritious qualities of the food which these fish consume while at sea. It has been stated,

and I believe it is the case, that salmon, during the period which they pass in the river *before* spawning, do not feed at all. I lay stress on the word *before*, because it is my impression that a kelt will devour almost anything. It is certain that the fish daily deteriorate in condition while in the river, thereby affording proof that, even if they do feed, the food they are able to obtain under such circumstances is not suitable to their well-being. But it is a well-ascertained fact that the stomachs of salmon, when caught, are invariably found to be devoid of anything in the way of food. Now and again an exception is found to the rule, but such is very rare ; and if these fish do feed in fresh water, it is my opinion, and that of many others also, that the only sustenance which they receive is from the animalculæ, and such-like, contained in the water itself.

‘Some years ago the Tweed Fishery Commissioners appointed a small committee of their number to make inquiries regarding the natural history of the Salmonidæ frequenting their river. With the view of obtaining information regarding these questions, the committee first employed themselves in putting marks on the fish, which appeared to differ from one another, so as to have the means of discovering the changes of form and size which these marked fish underwent in each

succeeding stage of life, should any be afterwards captured. . . .

‘With the same object, the Commissioners drew out a series of queries, and circulated them among persons supposed to have any knowledge of the fish inhabiting the Tweed. Overseers of fisheries, superintendents of water-bailiffs, intelligent fishermen, amateur anglers, and men of science versed in ichthyology, gave answers to these queries, or to such of them as suited their varied experience, observation, and researches.’

The foregoing is an extract from the preface of the reports instituted regarding the fish frequenting the Tweed and its tributaries. In preparing my notes for the compilation of this work, it occurred to me that if I were to carefully study the reports above referred to, and to select from the sixty different queries given those which I considered likely to prove of interest to the reader, and weigh the answers given by the nineteen individuals who responded to these queries, I could obtain a very fair average of opinions, and also be thus enabled to give the reader a better account of the life and ways of the migratory Salmonidæ than by means of any long-winded and possibly dreary dissertation of my own. It was a somewhat tedious and fidgety task; but having completed

it, I am satisfied that it was worth the trouble it entailed.

I propose giving the questions as put by the Commissioners, and for reply the conclusion which I arrived at from the general opinion given by the respondents :

1. Q.—What are the different kinds of salmon which frequent the Tweed ?

A.—Salmon, bull-trout, sea-trout, and brown trout.

N.B.—The brown trout are the ordinary river-trout.

2. Q.—What is the largest salmon caught in the Tweed or adjoining sea-fisheries ?

A.—Seventy-five pounds, said to have been caught by Mr. Kerr, of Kelso.

3. Q.—State the month or season when the different kinds of salmon come up the river ; also when they leave the latter for the sea.

A.—Salmon ascend at all seasons, leaving the river in April.

Bull and sea-trout ascend during August and September, and leave in April.

4. Q.—From what parts of the sea do salmon come : from deep water, or from those parts adjoining the coast ? And in the latter case from north or south ?

A.—They come from the coast, and from all directions.

N.B.—It is not to be inferred by this answer that salmon do not come from the deep sea, but that they come thence by way of the coasts.

5. Q.—Do foulness, temperature, clearness or muddiness of water, induce salmon to enter or avoid the rivers?

A.—Salmon prefer clear, full flood, and dislike low, dirty, or snow water.

6. Q.—Do salmon appear to grow in size and fatten rapidly whilst in the sea?

A.—Yes; they fatten rapidly whilst in the sea.

7. Q.—In how many days or hours after salmon enter the river do the sea-lice disappear?

A.—In about three or four days.

8. Q.—Do salmon increase in size or improve in quality, or deteriorate, in the Tweed after entering the river? If they deteriorate, do they do so faster at one season than another?

A.—They deteriorate very considerably in fresh water, and more especially so towards the spawning season and in hot weather.

9. Q.—State any facts to show what is the food, if any, on which salmon subsist whilst in the river.

A.—With the exception of perhaps a few small flies, and this is doubtful, salmon do not feed during the period they spend in fresh water.

10. Q.—Are there any offensive or unusual and

extraneous substances discharged into the Tweed and which appear to be injurious to the fish? If so, state the nature of these, etc.

A.—Sewage, paper-mills, dye-works, gas-works, tanneries, woollen manufactories, etc., prevent salmon from entering a river.

11. Q.—When salmon are in the river, do they run up towards the higher parts more at one time than another—*i.e.*, at night rather than in the day-time? When the river is muddy rather than when it is clear? If so, state when.

A.—Salmon run chiefly at night, when the water is low and clear, but both by day and night when it is in flood or muddy.

12. Q.—It being asserted that salmon go back to the particular rivers where they were bred, and even to the tributaries, state whether such has been ascertained to be the case in regard to any of the fisheries of the Tweed?

A.—Salmon do return to their native streams, as a general rule, though not invariably. The same may be said regarding sea-trout.

13. Q.—Do salmon, when coming up to spawn, go chiefly in pairs, male and female?

A.—Salmon, when resorting to any parts of a river or its tributaries, do so in pairs, male and female.

14. Q.—In what month does spawning commonly begin?

A.—Chiefly during November.

15. Q.—Is the spawning time ever retarded by ice, snow, floods, or any other natural causes ?

A.—A low temperature of the water or a flooded state of the river retards the spawning of salmon.

16. Q.—Have you ever seen the female salmon depositing her ova unaccompanied by a male fish ?

A.—The male fish is always in actual attendance or close at hand.

17. Q.—When the female fish is spawning, are the ova deposited at one operation, or does she continue the operation for several days ?

A.—The operation of spawning lasts for some three or four days.

18. Q.—In general, how long is it before the ova, after being deposited, are hatched ?

A.—From a hundred to a hundred and twenty days elapse before the ova is hatched.

19. Q.—Is the hatching season retarded by cold or any other natural causes ?

A.—Cold retards the hatching process.

20. Q.—Are the ova frequently destroyed by any cause—such as floods, cold, etc. ?

A.—Excessive floods or drying-up of the spawning-beds act prejudicially in destroying the ova.

21. Q.—Are the ova frequently destroyed by

other animals feeding on it, such as bull-trout, river-trout, wild-duck, water-ousels, or the grub of the may-fly?

A.—Bull-trout, and ducks both tame and wild—tame especially—destroy the ova.

22. Q.—When do the several kinds of salmon, after spawning, leave the river for the sea?

A.—As a general rule, during the month of April.

23. Q.—Do salmon frequently return to the sea without spawning, and if so, from what distance up the rivers, etc.?

A.—They do not frequently return to the sea without having spawned. When they do so, it would not be from a greater distance up the river than some ten miles or so.

24. Q.—When either smolts or kelts descend the river, do they, before quitting it for the sea, remain for some time stationary about the tide-way, and if so, for what purpose?

A.—Smolts and kelts, especially the former, remain in the tideway for some few days, in order to inure themselves to the salt water.

25. Q.—What changes in size, colour, and marks do the fry undergo before they leave the river for the sea?

A.—They lose the bar-marks, get their scales, increase in size to some four or five inches in length, and their pectoral fins become darker.

26. Q.—What is the age of the fry when they leave the river for the sea?

A.—About eighteen months old.

27. Q.—Is there any particular month in which the salmon-fry leave the river for the sea?

A.—In April and May, but principally during May.

28. Q.—What is the principal cause which fixes the time of the migration of salmon-fry? Is it the temperature of the water, or their assumption of a silvery dress, or both?

A.—The assumption of the scales, and being thereby fitted to take to the salt water, and impelled by natural instinct to go to the sea. The higher temperature of the water acts as a further inducement to them to take their departure.

29. Q.—Assuming that the young fry become parr, and that the parr become smolts, and that the smolts, when they acquire the silvery scales, leave the river, state the age of the fish when they become parr and smolts respectively.

A.—They become parr from the date of their hatching out, and smolts when a year old.

30. Q.—Have either parr or smolts been observed with ova or milt in them?

A.—The male parr have milt fully matured in them. The females are never known to have developed ova.

31. Q.—Have parr ever been seen to go to the sea?

A.—They do not go to the sea, but very occasionally to the tideway, being probably forced there by floods.

32. Q.—Have smolts, or other young fish of the salmon kind, ever been marked in the Tweed in a particular way, and have these fish afterwards been captured? If so, state what change they present in their size and appearance.

A.—A large number of smolts have been marked, and have afterwards been captured in the same and different rivers, having, within a year, changed to grilse.

33. Q.—It being the opinion of some fishermen on the Tweed that when a salmon or grilse leaps to take an artificial fly, it is not with a view to feed upon it, but only to destroy it as a thing apparently having life, do you participate in that opinion?

A.—They take the artificial fly for some living thing for food, probably a shrimp.

For the benefit of any of my readers who may not be acquainted with the terms used to denote a salmon in the different periods of its existence, I venture to give the following information.

A 'parr' is the young salmon before it gets its scales, prior to its leaving the river for the sea.

A 'smolt' is the fish after it has got its scales.

A 'grilse' is a salmon in its first year, and before it has ever spawned.

A 'kelt' is a salmon, male or female, after it has spawned.

In the foregoing questions and the answers given to them, the life of a salmon, from the time it is an egg until it has reached maturity, is very fully explained. The information thus deduced may be summed up briefly as follows, viz. :

That salmon ascend the rivers at all seasons, bull-trout and sea-trout doing so in August and September.

That they come from the sea by way of the coast, and from all directions, but ever prefer a clear, full flood for their journey up-stream, to low, dirty, or snow water. After they have been some three or four days in the river the sea-lice which are on them disappear.

That they deteriorate considerably in condition during their sojourn in the fresh water, more especially before the spawning-time and in hot weather.

That they do not feed at all while in the river, save, perhaps, on a few small flies, animalculæ, etc.

That sewage, paper-mills, dye and gas works, woollen manufactories, etc., deter the salmon from entering a river.

That when the water is low and clear they travel chiefly at night; but when it is in flood or dirty, by day as well as by night.

That salmon and sea-trout, as a rule, return to their native streams.

That when they resort to any part of a river or its tributaries, they do so in pairs, male and female.

That salmon usually spawn in November, but that a low temperature or floods are apt to retard the process ; and that when spawning takes place, the male fish is always in attendance on the female, or close at hand.

That it takes from a hundred to a hundred and twenty days for the ova to hatch, and that cold weather retards the hatching process.

That excessive floods or drying-up of the spawning-beds destroy the ova, and that bull-trout and ducks, especially tame ducks, do considerable damage to the latter.

That salmon do not frequently return to the sea without spawning, and that if they do so, it is not from a further distance up the river than about ten miles.

That smolts and kelts, especially the former, remain in the tideway, on their passage to the sea, for some few days, in order that they may become inured to the salt water.

That the salmon-fry (parr) lose the bar-marks, get their scales, increase in size to some four or five inches in length, and that their pectoral fins become darker, before they leave the river for the

sea ; and that they leave the river when about eighteen months old, generally taking their departure in May.

That the time of the departure of smolts is regulated by their getting their scales, and so being able to undergo the change to the salt water ; and that the increasing temperature of the fresh water acts as a still further inducement for them to depart.

That the male parr has milt fully matured, but that the female has never been known to possess ova.

That parr never go to the sea, but that they are at times forced down by floods into the tide-way.

That smolts marked in the Tweed have been recaptured there and in different rivers, having within the space of a year changed to grilse.

That salmon take the artificial fly for some living thing for food, probably a shrimp.

There are many other questions of interest in the report, but I have selected only those which have a direct bearing on the habits and ways of salmon, and with which every salmon fisherman should be acquainted. It may, however, interest the reader to learn that the average rate of progress made by salmon in their passage up-stream is about three miles an hour. This rate of speed is rarely ever increased, save under the most

favourable conditions ; but thick, muddy water and such-like may serve to reduce it to from a mile to a mile and a half per hour. A curious instance is quoted of the high rate of speed at which a salmon can travel in the sea, which is as follows :

Mr. Alexander Mitchell, formerly the superintendent of the Tweed water-bailiffs, states that he marked some bull-trout and turned them down in the Whitadder, below New Mills, the marks consisting of indiarubber rings placed above the tail, and stamped with the word Tweed and the year. One of these was numbered 192, and was marked on March 29. On April 2 (four days later) it was caught in a net by a Mr. Alder, at Winterton, near Yarmouth. He states that it is, he believes, preserved in the local museum.

Judging from my own experience and that of others, more salmon ascend the rivers during the spring and autumn than at other seasons. The spring fish are always the heaviest, and although salmon, as has been shown, ascend the river at all seasons, they prefer to make the upward journey in water which is not too cold. Some rivers are earlier than others. I conclude that it is by reason of the temperature being higher in these waters. It is a somewhat curious fact that although the Test and the Hampshire Avon run nearly parallel to each other, and at no very great

distance apart, the latter river is ever a month earlier than the former. Nevertheless, the Test rod-fishing continues good throughout the entire season, whereas that in the Avon is but indifferent after June. It may be that the temperature of the water in the Avon is over-high, and makes the fish dull and inactive. I do not say that this is the cause, for I am not certain; it is only my own idea. During the early part of the season, before they have left the river, the fresh fish will usually be found at the tail of a school of kelts, which thus frequently congregate.

The temperature of the water has a very great deal to do with fishing, much more than is supposed. The water is frequently, especially in the Northern streams, icy cold, though the day may be hot and bright, and *vice versâ*. Fishermen are often at a loss to account for their want of sport on days which seem all they should be for fishing. Equally are they puzzled to account for success on those which seem to be least suitable. The cause is doubtless to be attributed to the high or low temperature of the water, as the case may be. Nor can it be supposed that the natural trout-flies as readily hatch out in cold water as in that of a more equable temperature.

At the commencement of the present work, I gave a list of some twelve or thirteen varieties of Salmonidæ, as classified by Yarrell. It will be

observed that he considers the parr to be a distinct variety, his reasons being, he states, because these fish, having milt in them, must therefore be adult fish. This opinion is nowadays discarded, and it has been shown, by the Tweed reports, that though the male fish contains milt, no ova have ever been found in the female, thereby proving that his theory is not correct. In all other similar statements he is the highest and most reliable authority.

There is in Wales (and I believe also in Cornwall and other places) a fish called a sewin. It has been asserted that this fish is also a separate variety. Yarrell distinctly affirms it to be no other than the young of the bull-trout, and I am content to believe that he is right. Again, very much confusion exists amongst anglers regarding the different names by which sea-trout are known. In one district they are termed sea-trout, in another salmon-trout, in a third white-trout, and in a fourth salmon-peal, etc. It is hardly to be wondered at that many people are sadly exercised in their minds as to what varieties of fish these several appellations can possibly refer to. I may as well clear up the mystery by informing them that they are all one and the same fish, viz., the sea-trout, that is to say, according to Yarrell, and, as I have before remarked, there is no better authority. This classification very much simplifies

matters. We thus find that there are but three varieties of the Salmonidæ in Britain which are migratory, and that they are these :

1. The salmon.
2. The bull-trout, otherwise called the sewin, whilling.
3. The sea-trout, otherwise called salmon-trout, white-trout, peal.

It may be asked, What are the differences between the salmon, the bull-trout, and the sea-trout ?

Between the first two there is, to a person ignorant of such matters, scarcely any difference at all. Indeed, so slight is it that even experienced fishmongers are often unable to detect it, and numberless bull-trout are sold in all good faith by them as being true salmon. Bull-trout, however, very rarely attain to over seventeen or eighteen pounds in weight, so that any fish over that size may safely be assumed to be a true salmon. The flesh of the bull-trout is, however, inferior to that of the salmon. Yarrell, who has gone more deeply and scientifically into the subject than any other author, either before or since, explains that, apart from other less definite distinction, the gill-covers of the three fish are very different in shape, that of the salmon being circular, that of the bull-trout nearly triangular, and that of the sea-trout being partly circular and

partly angular. The tail of the bull-trout becomes round at an earlier period than that of the salmon, which in a grilse is concave at the end, rather than convex. Thus, by these characteristics, either variety may be readily identified at any period of its existence. In order to make use of this test, it is necessary to open the gill-cover, the better to see the shape of its outer edge. I think that this will prove sufficiently explicit to the reader to enable him to pronounce to which of the three varieties a fish may belong.

Some few remarks on the subject of salmon-rivers may well find place in this portion of the present work. It is absolutely necessary that such rivers should be carefully attended to at all times, and sedulously guarded during the spawning season. All this means, I am well aware, the expenditure of money; but if the owner of a salmon-fishery neglects his property, he will, most assuredly, subject it to damage, and he must not expect any very great amount of sport. If he is unable or disinclined to go to the necessary expense, he had better by far let it to some tenant who is able and willing to take care of it. It would indeed be wiser to give the fishing to such a person—of course, on the understanding that it should be properly cared for—than allow it to deteriorate. A salmon-fishery may be made a very valuable property—indeed, it should be so.

I know of one river which comparatively but a few years ago was neglected and uncared for ; a few salmon succeeded in getting up it from time to time. There was no water-keeper, and the gamekeepers, who were supposed to look after it, knew nothing about fish or fishing, and cared infinitely less. After a time it was let at an almost nominal rent to a gentleman, who agreed to preserve it. At his death, which occurred shortly afterwards, his executors obtained the remainder of the lease. They were both good fishermen, and were able and willing to do all in their power to benefit the property. Fortunately they had the assistance of the agent himself, one of the best salmon fishermen we have, and through whose repeated exertions and representations to the owner of the property the efforts which had been made to improve the fishery were due. In the space of a very few years their trouble was crowned with the most complete success ; and at the expiration of the then existing lease, the water, which had been hitherto rented for a small amount, was, and is still, let for £600 per annum ; and all this triumph, for I can call it nothing less, was achieved without the owner of the property being called upon to disburse more than a very nominal sum.

The above serves to show what can be done by the employment of common-sense, energy, and

perseverance in the way of improving a river. And much the same, in a minor degree, might be done with many of our trout-streams, which are at present so sadly neglected. There is an ever-increasing demand for good fishing, and by men who are able and willing to pay highly for it; but owners and farmers are dreadfully apathetic as a rule, and prefer to let things run on as they have done. They grumble at the prices, loss of rent, etc., but yet will not pick up the gold which lies, as it were, at their very feet. A neglected river does no one any good, and is as doleful a spectacle as an empty stable or a ruined house. In Hampshire the fishings let for almost fabulous prices. I do not think I am overstating the average price to be £100 a mile for good water. In some instances it is considerably higher. Men want fishing; they are at their wits' end to procure it, and they are ready to travel any distance, and go to any trouble or expense to do so.

It is, as I have said, very necessary that a salmon-river should be well cared for. An intelligent and hard-working water-keeper will find that he has plenty to do, apart from his attendance on fishermen. There is ever something requiring attention: banks are washing away and must be seen to, piles require renewing, weeds cutting, back-waters clearing of débris, etc.; and in the spawning season he will find it a difficult matter

to get a night's rest, for it is at this period that the greatest vigilance is necessary. At such times it is absolutely essential that he should have efficient and sufficient help afforded him ; for it is killing work, even on a small fishery, for a single-handed keeper. It is impossible for him to be everywhere during the twenty-four hours, and owners of fishings should never grudge giving all necessary assistance to a good and hard-working servant. If he is not both of these, he is useless, and probably dishonest to boot, and the sooner he departs the better for his master ; for I maintain that no servant at all is better than a bad one. If a man is dishonest enough to rob his master of his wages, he will hardly scruple to be dishonest in other ways. This night-watching is cold, trying work, and not altogether unmixed with danger, especially where only one keeper is employed. Nor do I think it is fair to expect a man to cope single-handed with a gang of poachers, probably three or four in number.

Very much may be done towards improving a river by means of artificial falls, dams, fish-shelters, etc. Fish do not like to lie in places where they are perpetually exposed to the rays of the sun, and therefore, where necessary shade is deficient, and the banks of the river admit of it, a few trees planted here and there will be found beneficial. Willow or any such description of quick-growing

tree will answer the purpose. Fish love to lie in the shade. The greatest care should, however, be taken not to interfere with any deep natural run under the banks further than may be necessary to preserve the latter from falling in. For if this precaution is not taken, what has been previously a time-honoured resting-place for fish may be utterly ruined; and where wooden offsets, 'gory-dings,' as they are termed, are made use of, they require to be very judiciously placed, or the natural flow of the stream may be seriously interfered with, and a good reach or pool rendered useless.

It may happen that it is necessary to cut weeds on some rivers; indeed, if this were not done, such streams would be choked, and fishing would be impossible. This periodical weed-cutting is a great nuisance to the angler. I have, in the earlier pages of this work, referred to the annoyance which may be experienced on such occasions, and how very detrimental the cut weeds are to trout-fishing. Still, nevertheless, it is possible to pick out a trout with a fly now and again when there is a temporary cessation from the work, such as may occur when the men are resting for their meals, etc. If cut weeds mar sport with trout, they most effectually put a stop to the operations of the salmon-fisher. In the former case, the fly floats on the water, and being cast

up-stream, it is less liable to be interfered with by the masses of weeds floating down. In the latter, the casting being necessarily down-stream, the hook is fouled and clogged by every little fragment of weed which it encounters, and the water is full of such. Moreover, though the trout will often continue to rise, even when the weeds are coming down most heavily, the salmon appear to be scared by them, and are often unsettled for some two or three days after the cutting has been discontinued. I have again referred to this weed-cutting annoyance because it is more serious on a salmon than a trout stream. There is said to be a remedy for every evil under the sun, and I will endeavour to explain how even this one may be prevented.

In the Hampshire rivers weed-cutting prevails more or less throughout the summer, and it was found to be such an intolerable nuisance, and so greatly to interfere with the salmon-fishing, that my friend Mr. Kendle, who has the management of the Broadlands estate, and takes the keenest interest in the welfare of the fishery belonging thereto, adopted the following plan, which has been found to answer most thoroughly, and has been in use for several years: A strong wooden baulk, some eighteen inches square, is laid across the river, and placed on wooden piers at either end, thus forming a kind of foot-bridge. The

upper side is furnished with bridge hand-rails, the upright supports of which are placed at regular intervals. At either end of this bridge there is a powerful check-windlass.

A large net, considerably deeper and wider than the river, is lashed on to a strong rope at the upper edge, and similarly so to another at the lower, sufficient rope being left spare at either end to admit of the entire net being moved across the river without exhausting the spare rope on the opposite side.

The spare ends of the upper rope are each fastened to one of the windlasses. The upper edge of the net is secured to the hand-rail supports by means of cords placed at intervals corresponding with them. The lower rope is passed at either end beneath strong iron catch-hooks, which are driven into the piers as close to the bottom of the river as possible. This bottom rope is then drawn tight, and its spare ends lashed to posts driven firmly into the ground a few yards upstream on either bank. The upper rope is tightened by means of the windlasses, and the net is let go. As may be supposed, the action of the stream and the weight of the weeds cause the net to bulge considerably—hence the necessity for the net being over long and deep. At first a few small weeds may pass through the meshes, but in a few minutes the whole net becomes filled, and

forms an impenetrable barrier to the rest of the weeds which are coming down-stream. At night the lower rope is slackened, and the weeds allowed to escape ; the check is taken off one of the windlasses, and the net is brought across the river by means of the one on the opposite side, cleared of any weeds which may be still adhering to it, and spread out to dry.

This arrangement is made use of daily during the season, being put down early every morning and removed at night. It is as simple and effective as anything can possibly be ; and when it is down, although there may be many tons' weight of weeds behind the net, which is consequently subjected to enormous pressure, not one single particle of weed is able to pass.

All honour to the inventor !

Of course, it is necessary to select a suitable place for the baulk to be placed, and the formation of the bed of the river at the spot at which it may be desired to place such a contrivance must be taken into consideration.

CHAPTER XIV.

Fishing a Strange River—Alterations in Rivers by Floods—
Taking Places—Fishing the Water—An Amateur at Work
—‘Potted Fish’—Water and Weather.

A FISHERMAN visiting a salmon river for the first time is generally at a loss to ascertain which are the best places to try for fish, unless he has the assistance of a keeper or gillie who is well acquainted with the water and its peculiarities.

No two streams are exactly alike. In each one there are some pools and reaches which are better than others, and in each pool or reach there are one or more spots which are what is termed the ‘taking places,’ each one of which requires to be fished in one particular way, in order that the fly may be presented to the fish, which are known or supposed to be lying there, in the most alluring manner. A stranger to a river is, therefore, considerably handicapped, and until he has learned his way about it he cannot expect to do full justice to himself, let him be ever so good a fisherman. And there is so much to learn on every river,

apart from anything to do with the flies to be used, etc. The flow of the water is by no means all it at first sight may appear to be. Not only are the currents which are visible very frequently deceptive, but there are under-currents, which are not visible, and which tend to draw the fly altogether away from the place in which it is believed to be, and so, instead of fishing a certain spot, it is, perhaps, not within several feet of it, despite the appearance of the line to the contrary. A salmon-fly, being sunk and worked under water, is, of course, invisible to the angler, who, unless he is acquainted with these peculiarities and eccentricities of the river, may time after time fail to place his fly within sight of perhaps the best fish in the whole stream; for such ever select positions in which it is most difficult to get at them.

Rivers which run over hard and rocky beds are not subject to any material alteration, inasmuch as their banks are not liable to be worn away. Where, however, the soil is softer, the floods of one winter only will so frequently change the run of a pool as to alter the position of the 'taking place'—indeed, they may spoil the pool altogether as a resting-place for the fish. In such cases, what was deep water previously may become shallow, and *vice versâ*.

The water never runs straight through a pool; there is always a back-water—at times two or

three. It is where these unite again with the main body of the water, and present the appearance of two streams forming a junction with each other, that the 'taking place' is generally to be found. This spot is usually about the tail of the pool; and it is there, and at the head of the latter, that a salmon may be expected to 'come.' In the straight reaches the fish lie in the deep cuts, under the banks, or at the base of any obstruction, such as a rock, etc., provided the water there is deep enough.

In the bends one side is usually shallow, and that opposite to it deep. In these the latter requires to be fished as close under the bank as possible, and to do this efficiently requires no little skill on the part of the fisherman. It may, therefore, be readily understood that, to fish a salmon river properly, a thorough knowledge of it is absolutely essential, and a stranger may very easily waste a great deal of valuable time and energy in trying water which is notoriously useless, or may hurry over that which requires the most careful, delicate fishing. Of course, without any previous knowledge, or the assistance of a guide, there is nothing for it but to work steadily on all through. If time will not admit of this, then the most likely-looking places only must be tried. It happens at times, where the stream varies in character, that the fish will move in the stiller

portions, and not in the rough water, or the case may be reversed. Fish are peculiar creatures, and though there must doubtless be a reason for their eccentric behaviour at times, it is very often impossible to discover it.

I would impress upon the reader, if he is a novice, that salmon are not to be caught with the rod and line, that it is the fly with which he catches the fish. To speak plainly, I would have him remember that the rod and line are only the means by which he is to get his fly into a certain spot ; that it is what he does with the fly after it is in the water which is the chief point to be considered, and that casting more frequently than is absolutely necessary is not fishing, but is detrimental to sport. Fish are not to be caught flying about in the air. I lay stress on this, because it is nearly always the case that a beginner seems to imagine that the one and only thing necessary is to keep on casting and casting. He gives no thought as to what the fly is doing, but he goes on flogging the water until he is thoroughly exhausted with his efforts, and then, and not till then, does he give the fish a chance of even looking at his fly. If by good luck he succeeds in hooking a fish, in nine cases out of ten it is at the very time when his attention is diverted, and the fly has been permitted to remain a little longer in the water than usual. He would be far more

likely to catch fish if, having made his cast, no matter how clumsy the latter may have been, he were to leave the fly alone and trust to the action of the stream to bring it round.

I have at times witnessed the most amusing scenes when watching the efforts of some over-energetic novice. One such scene I shall never forget. The hero on that occasion was a very short, apoplectic-looking individual, and blessed with a temper to match. The day was unusually hot and bright; he had never caught a salmon in his life, and was determined to do or die, and it was quite a toss up whether he did or died. He was armed with a rod of the weaver's beam description (small men invariably select the largest weapons), and he had enough line out for any two ordinary men; this latter being lifted bodily, at full length, off the water after each cast, so nearly knocked him over as to necessitate his running several yards backwards; and when making the return cast he was again carried forward until he reached the bank, nearly toppling over into the river as he did so.

After a time I ventured to approach him and make some inquiries respecting his success, and, by degrees, endeavoured to give him the instruction of which he was so sorely in need. Of all the pupils I ever took in hand, he surely was the most intractable at first. The perspiration was

pouring down his face, his temper was gone, and he swore like a regiment of dragoons if the least thing went wrong. At last he succeeded in smashing the top of his rod, and it required all my persuasion to prevent his packing up and going home. However, having some wax and thread with me, I contrived to splice it together for him, and by degrees he grew calmer and more inclined to listen to reason.

As we worked on he found that, by following my instructions, he was able to dispense with the expenditure of so much muscular exertion, and succeeded in making some few very tolerable casts. All of a sudden a fish came at the fly and hooked himself, a sixteen-pounder; a rare good fish he was, too, and I gaffed it for him. It was his first fish; his excitement was intense, and his gratitude to me unbounded. Since that day I have never seen him, I don't even know where he is; but I can hardly doubt that, having made so successful a *début*, he has become an enthusiastic and good fisherman. I am sure I hope so.

Salmon, when ascending a river, and after they have got well into the fresh water, do not make their way straight up-stream, but take up their quarters in some pool, where they will frequently remain for weeks and months at a time, especially in hot weather. As has been shown, they daily

deteriorate in condition, and, unless a flood intervenes to induce them to move up, such fish often become listless and sulky, and will do nothing. These are termed 'potted' fish, and such they literally might be for all the sport they are likely to afford. They are sometimes of considerable size, and are in consequence a nuisance, since they not only refuse to rise themselves, but hunt any newcomer out of the pool. If the weather has been hot and dry for any lengthened period, it is strange how slight a shower will at times cause them to shift their quarters. I have known fish which have remained apparently motionless for weeks move upward after a shower of rain which was insufficient to lay the dust.

The condition of the water and the weather exercise a very decided influence on the fish. When the river is low and clear, it is difficult to induce them to move. In high flood, fishing with a fly is an impossibility, but when the water is beginning to clear after a flood, good sport may generally be reckoned upon. Fish will not take when rivers are rising. It is the custom of millers to draw the mill-hatches on Saturday afternoon, and the rivers rise in consequence. At such times the salmon may be observed jumping and splashing about in all directions; but they will not look at a fly, or anything of the kind. Indeed, it may here be remarked that when fish jump

high out of the water all hopes of sport may be abandoned.

Since the Legislature forbids any netting between the hour of midnight on Saturday and midnight on Sunday, the mill-hatches being open, and the flow of water increased, fresh fish come up, and those which have been stationary very frequently resume their upward journey.

Before rain, when thunder is about and the weather is heavy and sultry, fish are rarely to be taken; but when rain first falls after a long spell of dry weather, it often proves a very powerful incentive to them to come well and freely at the fly.

When snow-water, 'snow-broth,' as it is termed, is coming down, the temperature of the water is so lowered that sport is rendered hopeless. It frequently happens in the Northern streams that a sudden spate of snow-broth may come down from the hills and so put an effectual stop to fishing, though the weather in the valleys may be mild and genial.

Provided the condition of the water is suitable and the barometer steady, I do not think that wind is of the same importance for salmon-fishing as for trout. I am of opinion that the best wind for the purpose is that which permits the river to be fished to the best advantage. Such winds are rarely due north or east.

A light southerly or west wind and a dull sky, what is often described as a 'brown day,' is ever good fishing weather ; but there are days on which the sun may be shining brightly, when, if the wind is suitable, and the sky now and again overcast, good sport may be obtained. Anything is better than an unsettled state of weather.

The earlier hours of the day up to two o'clock, and from after five o'clock in the afternoon, are the most suitable. Between two and five o'clock, save in the early and latter parts of the season, fish are rarely inclined to move.

When mist comes on the water, no matter how well the fish may have been rising previously, they will cease to move. This rule holds good with trout as well as with salmon, more particularly so, perhaps, with the former ; but when the sun is dispelling the morning mists, especially in the early days of September, good work may be frequently done with a salmon-fly.

During the midsummer nights fish may often be caught, provided the light holds good ; but such work always seems to me to favour rather of the poacher than the sportsman. Still, nevertheless, it may be excusable when the weather is too hot and bright to admit of fish being caught during the day-time.

CHAPTER XV.

Salmon-rods—Spliced Salmon-rods—Rings for Salmon-rods—
 Salmon-lines—Salmon-gut—Salmon-gut—Casting-lines—
 Damping-box for Salmon-casts—Gut-tips—How to put on
 a Salmon-fly—Testing Salmon-tackle—Gaffs—Berthon
 Folding Gaff—Salmon-fly Box—Messengers.

I CAN hardly dispense with some observations regarding salmon-rods and the paraphernalia necessary to the salmon fisherman. It is not my intention to write a long-winded dissertation on the subject, but rather to restrict myself to remarking solely on those points which are absolutely necessary.

Of whatever material a salmon-rod may be made, whether greenheart, hickory, or cane, it must be suitable for the user. A certain amount of physical strength is necessary to enable a man to use any salmon-rod to good advantage; but it is by no means to be assumed that a powerful man must needs be able to cast a better salmon-line than one who is possessed of moderate strength only. Indeed, it more frequently happens that the weaker man is the neater and better fisherman

of the two, by reason of his being able to use such strength as he possesses to the greater advantage. Heavy-chested, large-armed men are often very clumsy. Their limbs are over-muscular, and they cannot open their shoulders freely. Such men cannot throw, run, ride, shoot, do anything—that is to say, they rarely excel in either of these things. A more lathy, weaker man, whose length of limb affords greater leverage, can walk round his bigger, heavier brother, and knock him into a cocked-hat in no time. Now, in order to use a salmon-rod properly, length of arm is of great advantage. But I shall have occasion to refer to this later on.

No man should use a rod which is beyond his strength, or which tries him unduly. A long day's salmon-fishing affords exercise enough without any unnecessary addition; and a beginner will find his ribs ache even with the lightest and most suitable rod. So long as a rod possesses strength sufficient to carry its line well and cleanly, and to hold a fish when it is necessary and possible to do so, it is strong enough; and one inch greater length or one grain more weight than suffices to ensure this is mere lumber. The circumstances which may require the use of a rod more than eighteen feet in length are very exceptional. Indeed, one of sixteen or seventeen feet is amply long enough for all ordinary pur-

poses, provided it is properly made and properly used. The reader can select his own material; but, for my own part, I think that the greenheart rods sold by Mr. Farlow, and named after Major Traherne, leave nothing to be desired; and if a man cannot do well with one of these, he will most certainly signally fail to do better with any other. Cane rods are a luxury; they are very pleasant to handle, and are, I am aware, excellent, when they are really good; but I prefer the old greenheart, and feel infinitely safer with a well-made rod of this description than with any other.

Whereas top-heaviness is to be abjured when making selection of a trout-rod, a salmon-rod can afford to err somewhat in that respect, a slight tendency to drop being an advantage when fishing against a wind or switching. The Castle-Connell pattern of rod is suitable for the latter; and I am well aware that those people who *can* use them are loud in their praises of them. For my own part, I think them detestable, shaky, wobbly affairs, and I would not accept one as a gift if I were expected to use it. They are less expensive than other rods, and are made of good material; but it is most difficult to learn to use them, and when the knowledge has been acquired, they are no better than other good rods—indeed, in many respects inferior.

A good salmon-rod costs about £3, whether spliced or ferruled.

For salmon-fishing a spliced rod, when well put together, is charming to use; but the splices require to be very carefully bound; and this, unless the rod can be kept up throughout the season, is a nuisance. I do not think I like spliced salmon-rods any better than those which are ferruled, but I like them equally well. For trout-fishing I prefer the latter, for the reasons I have assigned in the portion of this work which has reference to them.

There is a very great difference of opinion as to whether 'standing rings' are preferable for use on a salmon-rod to the ordinary 'lay-down' patterns. Personally speaking, I think there is no comparison between the two, and I should never adopt the lay down if I could procure the former; but the pattern should be that known as the 'snake.' The topmost ring should be of steel, with an inner revolving ring. This arrangement prevents the line wearing away the ring at one particular spot, as the inner one can be turned round.

Every salmon-rod should be provided with an india-rubber button screwed into the butt, as the ordinary wooden buttons are apt to make the thigh sore, and also to slip when the rod has to be held

up for any length of time, as is the case when a fish takes to sulking, etc.

A good salmon-reel, and none but the best should ever be purchased, is nearly as expensive as a salmon-rod. The ordinary check pattern is the best; it should always be made of metal, and as light as is compatible with due strength; they are frequently far too heavy. Such a reel will probably cost from £2 to £2 10s. A long price doubtless, but, if it is as good as it should be, it will be well worth the money.

As for trout-fishing, so also for salmon: I maintain that the line should be sufficiently heavy to give due play to the rod. In heavy wind, such a line will be found of the greatest service. Needless to say, it should be thoroughly waterproof, and as pliant as a kid glove. The American abominations usually sold are detestable to use until they are nearly worn out. They may be cheap, but they are nasty kinking things covered with varnish, and drive one mad. To an inexperienced eye they look very beautiful; I would advise the reader to shun them as he would a plague. No salmon-line should be less than 100 yards in length. A line of this length, if a good one, cannot be procured for less than a guinea. The longer a really good line is kept before being used the better. When the dressing of a line becomes worn, the application of a

little megilp, such as is used by artists for oil-painting, will serve to renew the surface, and prevent the silk from becoming rotten.

I do not know if Messrs. Eaton and Deller make salmon-lines on the same principle as they do those for trout, but I have no doubt they do or could do so. Such a line would be perfection for salmon-fishing, but it should not be tapered.

All the best fishing-tackle makers keep good salmon-gut. If the reader desires to purchase direct from the importer, he can hardly do better than write for samples and prices to Mr. Ramsbottom, in Manchester. Good salmon-gut is expensive, and the strands are never very long. The price is from 50s. to 100s. per hundred; that procurable at the former price is, or should be, quite good enough for ordinary use.

Gut-casts for salmon are made either what is termed composite or single. In the former the cast, for about two-thirds of its length, is made of fine twisted gut, the rest being single. These are good enough for general use, but when the water is low and clear, single gut only should be used.

All gut is more or less brittle when it is dry, salmon-gut especially so, and even when wet, a kink or a knot in it will frequently cause it to break at that spot. Gut-casts should be carefully

looked to and used, and no knot ever allowed to remain. They should be stained to suit the colour of the water; strong tea, ink-and-water, or, best of all, a piece of green baize boiled in water, will answer the purpose.

The same description of damping-box as that which I have recommended for trout-casts will be found most useful for salmon-gut. It is always advisable to soak salmon-gut previously to putting it into the box; there will then be no possibility of its becoming broken through kinking.

Many people make use of what are termed 'tips' for the purpose of attaching and detaching a fly more readily. These are merely a length of gut with a loop at one end, which is slipped through a corresponding loop on the casting-line; the other end is knotted on to the fly. They are useful, save time and trouble, and are economical; but I do not think that they are ever as neat or workmanlike as when the end of the casting-line is fastened direct to the fly. The two loops must, if ever so closely pressed, make more or less of a blur in the water, and this is one of the things most necessary to avoid.

Every salmon-fly is furnished with an eye at the head; this eye is either of gut, or forms part of the shank of the hook—is, in fact, an eyed hook. It is placed there for the purpose of attachment to the casting-line or tip, as the

case may be. As in all other things, there is a right and a wrong way of knotting the gut on to the eye. Being a very simple operation, I will endeavour to explain how it should be done :

Hold the fly, wing upwards, between the fore-finger and thumb of the left hand, the head of the fly being towards the right ; pass the end of the gut, from the under-side, through the eye, then round the neck of the latter, and again through the eye from above. Knot the short end of the gut, by means of a single knot, round the casting-line, leaving the knot open and loose ; draw the casting-line steadily until the loop has passed over the eye, then pull it tight, and cut off the spare end. By this means the fly will swim truly, whereas, if the gut is run through the eye from above at first, when the rod is worked, the head will be drawn upwards, and the fly will not follow the line as it should. If, when the knot is drawn tight, the position of the end of the gut is carefully noted, the insertion of a strong pin underneath will at once release the fly if it is desired to remove it.

I cannot too strongly impress on the reader the necessity for making the most careful inspection of his tackle before fishing, and thoroughly testing his line and every strand of gut, the eye of the fly he is going to use, etc., as also after landing a

fish. More fish are lost by neglect of this very simple precaution than from any other cause. If he is too careless to observe it, and he loses a fish thereby, it will be his own fault; but it is a dreadful sell to lose a good fish by reason of such indolence. An old hand will take very good care to run no risks of this description. A salmon is a powerful fish, and the tackle must needs be sound and strong to hold it.

A gaff is a necessity, for without it a fish cannot be landed without running extreme risks, not only of losing it, but also of breaking the tackle, especially if the fisherman is single-handed. It is, I am well aware, possible to 'tail' a fish, *i.e.*, to seize it by what is called the 'wrist,' viz., that part of the body just above the tail, and so pull it out, a salmon being the only fish which can thus be held without the tail slipping through the hand. This plan may be adopted as a *dernier ressort* when no gaff is available or assistant at hand to perform the feat; but even then it can only be managed under very exceptional and favourable conditions.

Therefore, a gaff cannot well be dispensed with. There are two kinds of gaffs, viz., those which fold or shut up, and those which do not. The latter are, of course, the stronger and better, the shank of the gaff-hook being lashed with wire, or water-cord varnished, to a long stout staff of

ash or some such wood. This kind of gaff is all very well when the services of an assistant to carry it are available, but if the fisherman is alone, such an arrangement is an intolerable nuisance to carry about, for it cannot well be slung across the back, and if so carried it is perpetually getting in the way, and yet carried it must be somehow.

It is therefore necessary to have recourse to one which is more portable. Now, the worst of folding gaffs is, that they are either lacking in length, strength, or both. A certain length is necessary, because, as may very readily be understood, when the fisherman is holding a salmon-rod in one hand, the latter being necessarily kept upright, he cannot possibly reach the fish with a short gaff without smashing his rod or tackle, for a rod will only bend to a certain extent. A gaff must therefore be long enough to admit of the fish being reached with ease. It must, of course, possess sufficient strength, or else it will break at the critical moment. It thus becomes a case of gaff *v.* rod.

I know of only one description of folding gaff which fulfils both of the required conditions, and that is the invention of the Rev. E. L. Berthon, the Vicar of Romsey, also the inventor of the Berthon portable boats, and scores of other things besides. He is a friend of mine, and at

my request and suggestion, though no fisherman himself, he succeeded in producing this gaff, which is the very best thing of the kind as yet invented, for it combines length, strength, portability, and, like all good inventions, extreme simplicity. Whether these gaffs are still procurable I do not know, but should any of my readers desire to obtain information respecting them, Mr. Berthon would, I am sure, very readily respond to any communication addressed to him at the Berthon Boat Works, Romsey, for I regret to hear that he is about to relinquish the living which he has held for so many years, and where he has been so universally and justly beloved. I cannot forbear paying this tribute of respect to one whose friendship I so much value, and whose well-known talents I so much admire.

But one more article of equipment necessary to the salmon fisherman remains to be noticed, viz., a receptacle of some description in which to carry flies. A salmon-fly-book is very useful to keep a stock of flies in, but it is a somewhat cumbrous affair, and either fills an ordinary coat-pocket to bursting or necessitates the use of a bag. Whether carried about or not, it is an unwise plan to return salmon-flies to a book before they are dried; to do so is very apt to spoil both book and flies. A friend of mine made me a present of a most excellent little arrangement for carrying flies and casts,

designed by Mr. Farlow. It consists of an oval tin box with three divisions, one for casts, and one with a lid for flies inside the space left for the former. These are in the lower half of the box. The upper portion is fitted with strips of cork in which to place wet flies, and the lid is perforated in order to assist the drying process. It is a very simple and practical little affair, and I can very fully recommend its adoption.

I had almost forgotten to mention one more apparently insignificant, but by no means unimportant, item. It frequently happens that a salmon when hooked takes to sulking at the bottom of the river, and at times the patience of the angler is sorely taxed, for there is no knowing how long this state of affairs may continue; moreover, a fish will often succeed in either sawing the gut through against the sharp edge of a rock, or working the hook out of its mouth. It is, therefore, as well to take active measures to make it move on. Throwing stones, etc., may answer, but this is dangerous work, and the gut may possibly be broken. The usual plan is to send down a 'messenger.' This latter is generally a round ring of thin card, with a slit cut across one side of the ring to admit of its being placed on the line. The angler then gets up-stream above the fish, and the action of the water carries the messenger down to the hook. When this is satisfactorily performed the

fish generally takes the hint, and makes a bolt ; but when the wind is blowing up-stream it is by no means an easy matter to get the messenger to work properly, as the card is too light. The better plan is to snip a stout curtain-ring through with a pair of pliers, and substitute this for the card. There is then no mistake about it, for the ring spins down the line, and, hitting the fish on the nose, ensures his speedy departure.

I need hardly add that no fisherman should be without some strong tying-silk and wax. It may not be required for many a day, but, sooner or later, a breakage of some sort is sure to occur, and then its value will be apparent.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Action of a Salmon Fly—Necessity for fishing Down-stream for Salmon—How to hold a Salmon-rod—How to face the Water—Placing the Fly—Working the Rod—Picking the Line off the Water—Casting—Slack Line—The Value of Switching—Good Style—Length of Line to be used—Fishing a Pool, or Reach—Mr. Kelson's Theory—The Use of Silver-bodied Flies—Small Flies for Low Water—'Coming' and 'Refusing'—Changing Flies—Selection of Flies with reference to Weather, etc.—Old Standard Flies—'Coming' and 'Taking'—Striking a Salmon—Playing a Salmon—Sulking—Gaffing a Salmon—Killing and Gaffing—Difference in Weight after Gilling—How to carry a Salmon.

BEFORE entering upon the subject of casting with a salmon-rod, I think it will be advisable to give some consideration to the action of a salmon-fly in the water.

It is the general opinion that salmon take the artificial fly for some living thing, probably a shrimp. At all events, whatever they suppose it to be, it most certainly is not like anything which lives above the surface of the water. The term 'fly' is, therefore, a misnomer; that of 'lure' would be more expressive and correct, for there

are many people who are under the impression that salmon-flies are intended to represent an insect of some description.

It is of the first importance that the materials used in the manufacture of salmon-flies should be soft, pliant, and as transparent as possible. When dry, the combination of colours which is made use of frequently presents a somewhat gaudy appearance. In the water the case is different, for the brilliant colours become then softened, and the reverse of glaring. I am of opinion that the man who can design a salmon-fly must necessarily possess as good an eye for colour as would enable him to become a skilful artist, for a salmon-fly is a picture in itself. Let the reader inspect any one of our standard patterns, and note how perfectly the various shades of colour harmonize with each other, and how the more brilliant portions are veiled and toned down by the filmy grays and browns which overlie them; he will then be able to realize how much thought and judgment have been brought to bear upon its construction.

Something more than mere colour is required to attract the fish. The lure must be made to live and move. This appearance is to be effected by the motion of the rod; but, unless the materials of which the fly is composed are sufficiently soft and yielding, the fibres of the feathers, etc., cannot be made to open and close. A well-made fly, in

the hands of a skilful fisherman, can be made to appear very attractive and life-like.

Now, it is impossible to impart the required motion to a salmon-fly if it is cast up or directly across the stream. It must swim truly with and parallel to the flow of the water in the particular portion of the stream in which it may happen to be at the time, *i.e.*, parallel to the current it is being worked in. Hence the necessity for fishing down-stream, or as nearly directly so as possible. The fly is drawn down stream by the action of the water, and the top of the rod being worked gently and slowly up and down, *as it follows the course of the fly*, causes the fly to dart upwards against the stream when the upward motion is given, and allows it to fall back with the downward one. In the former the fibres are drawn together, and close; in the latter they reopen.

In order to use a salmon-rod properly, it must be held properly. In other words, it must be held in the position which, while allowing its full powers to be utilized, admits of their being extracted with the least possible exertion to the user. It must be properly balanced.

Nearly all beginners make the mistake of holding a salmon-rod with their hands placed too closely together. This method necessitates the employment of a considerable amount of physical

force, and is not only very tiring and inconvenient, but also prevents the line being cast with the lightness and precision which are necessary.

The rod should be held with the hands as far apart as possible, the shoulders thereby being thrown well open. If the stream is running from left to right, the left hand will be uppermost, and *vice versa*.

Now, let the reader accompany me in imagination to the riverside. We will assume that the stream is flowing from right to left. First of all, let him stand facing directly across the river, then let him make a half turn to the left. He will be thus facing in the proper direction for making his cast. He must endeavour to place his fly under the opposite bank at this angle, or as near to the bank as his casting powers will admit of his doing. If the river is wide, and the entire length cannot be covered, then he must cast as far as he can conveniently manage, but always preserving the position I have described at the commencement of the cast. As the fly is drawn across the stream by the current, he must follow its direction with the point of his rod, and when it has reached the extreme limit allowed by the length of line which may be out, he must slowly and gently move the top of the rod up and down, at the same time gathering up the line bit by bit with his left hand with each downward motion, and turning his body

towards the fly, as it is by degrees brought up under the bank, and the water has been fished inch by inch, as close up to where he is standing as will leave a convenient length of line to take off the water; but he must bear in mind that, throughout the whole performance, *the rod, line, and fly must be in the same plane*. I have italicised this sentence, because it is not infrequently the case that salmon fishermen hold their rods at right angles to the line. It is a wrong system; the position is unsuitable for striking a fish, and the motion which is imparted to the fly when the rod is thus held is not so true and life-like as when it is held as I have described. In gathering up the line, it should first be drawn in by the fingers of the left hand; those of the right hand, closing upon the rod, serve to prevent the slack again running out.

As far as the casting part of the performance is concerned, the process is similar to that which I have described with a trout-rod, save that both hands are required to use the larger rod. When picking the line off the water prior to making a fresh cast with a salmon-rod, it must be first drawn clear of all slack water, etc., and to the surface, and then, *before the point of the rod is raised higher than an angle of 45° with the stream*, twitched smartly and cleanly off; but the point of the rod should never be allowed to go more

than a few inches over the shoulder. It should rather be checked abruptly when the butt is brought back into the shoulder; and just *before* the line has extended itself behind, the return must be made with a strong, determined, forward thrust of the arm. The motion of the latter should be precisely that of aiming a blow with the clenched fist at an object on a level with the eye of the fisherman. In holding the rod the lower hand should be placed immediately above the reel.

A certain amount of slack line necessarily remaining after the line has been picked off the water, this must be run out by making one or two preliminary false casts in the air before the final return forward cast. It is a good plan to retain a few inches of slack line in the hand, until just as the line is in the act of falling on the water; it can then be allowed to run out by the fingers of the right hand being relaxed. By this means the fly will fall lightly, and all splashing be avoided. Slack line can be utilized as recommended for steeple-casting in trout-fishing.

The switch, or 'spey cast,' which I very fully described in that portion of the present work devoted to trout-fishing, is more especially useful for salmon-fishing. It is, indeed, a salmon-cast, though, as I have shown, it may very advantageously be used when trout-fishing. It is most

useful when the wind is behind the fisherman, inasmuch as, if the ordinary shoulder-cast is used in a strong back-wind, the gut is not only very liable to knot and tangle, but the fly not infrequently cracks off, and is probably seen no more—a serious loss at any time, but especially so if the fly is an expensive one.

If the reader will endeavour to follow out the foregoing instructions to the best of his ability, I think I may venture to assert that he will find the difficulties of casting considerably lessened, and he will also acquire a good style. By holding the rod in the way I have described, he cannot fail to stand upright, as he should do; and the use of a salmon-rod, instead of tending to contract his chest, will serve to open it, almost as much as if he were rowing. Nothing looks worse, or savours more of the amateur, than when a man elects to fish for salmon with his back hunched up and his whole body distorted, and clutching at his rod as if he had stolen it.

One thing must be remembered. It is a great mistake to fish with a longer line than can be easily managed. It is even better to use a somewhat short line, and fish the water within reach carefully and patiently, than for the sake of making a long cast to slur the work. On the other hand, it is never wise to dwell too long over any one spot. Let the pool or reach be steadily fished

over, and then, if desired, the process can be repeated. There is a very good reason for this, for when a pool or reach is fished over the first time, although no fish may be seen to come at the fly, nevertheless some fish may make a half-hearted move towards it, and if the cast is repeated too soon, such a fish may be scared rather than attracted. By the time the end of the stretch of water has been finished, sufficient interval will have elapsed for any fish which may have been moved to take up their former position and regain their composure; and when the water is tried the second time, it very frequently happens that they will come straight at the fly and take it. It is for this reason that when two men are fishing the same river, one in advance of the other, the one following will often obtain more sport than the other. Mr. Kelson, the well-known salmon fisherman, and perhaps the best fly-tyer in England, makes a systematic use of his knowledge of this fact. Some of his patterns are made extra large and gaudy; these he terms exaggerations. They are used for fishing over a pool in which the fish are disinclined to move. The pool is then tried with a fly of smaller size, in which the colouring is similar, but very much toned down and veiled by means of gray or brown feathers. Such patterns he terms 'condensations,' and he maintains that a fish, having been moved

with the first fly, is more readily induced to take this smaller, quieter, second edition, than if it had not been previously moved with the larger and gaudier pattern. There is more than mere theory in all this, for it is a well-known fact that certain flies are good changes to each other. Thus, for instance, the Jock Scott and the Silver Doctor form an excellent change. If one fails the other often proves successful.

There has been much discussion as to whether a bright fly should be used in bright weather and a dull fly in dull weather, or the reverse. My own experience inclines me to the belief that bright flies are more suitable for dull days, and more sombre patterns for bright weather. I have often found that, when the sky becomes suddenly overcast during bright weather, a change to a silver-bodied fly, such as a Silver Doctor or a 'silver gray,' has been worth the trouble.

I am convinced that better sport is to be secured if small flies are used in low and clear water; and it is a golden rule that when a fish has moved at a fly and refused it, a change should be made to a smaller sized fly, whether it be of a similar or different pattern, some ten minutes' law being always accorded the fish before casting over it again.

If a fish comes at the fly and refuses it, after the usual law has been given, it is always more advis-

able for the fisherman to move up-stream for a few yards, and fish quietly and steadily down over the spot where the rise took place, than to begin casting directly over the fish from where he was previously standing. Nor should he stop short at the rising place, but continue to try on for some distance, as it not unfrequently happens that after rising at a fly, a fish may drop some little distance down-stream.

While advising that the trouble of making a change of fly should never be considered too great, at the same time it is unwise to go to the other extreme. A fly should always have a fair trial.

It is difficult—indeed, it is impossible—to lay down any rule for the selection of special flies for certain days. It has been said that the colour of the fly should correspond with that of the sky, water, etc., and there is very much to be said in favour of this idea, which I have found a by no means bad guide. Pools, especially those which are shaded, vary in colour, and often require a special pattern; a fly which answers well in one pool being, perhaps, well nigh useless in the next. The colour of the trees which overhang a pool, whether they are bare, green, or yellow, also alters that of the shadow cast on the water beneath them.

There are some grand old standard patterns of

flies which, under ordinary conditions, rarely fail to do their duty on any river in which they may be used. I maintain that with the following in his book, dressed on some two or three different sized hooks, the angler need hardly hesitate to trust his luck on any river in Britain :

The Jock Scott.	Silver Gray.
The blue Jock Scott.	Dusty Miller.
The silver Doctor.	Butcher.
The blue Doctor.	The Mystery.
The Popham.	

Of course, there are heaps of other patterns which are all good ; indeed, the number of salmon-flies is innumerable. I intend to refer to some of the best of these, giving their dressings later on.

When a salmon comes and takes, in nine cases out of ten he contrives to hook himself without any effort on the part of the angler being necessary, for as the fly is in motion, this, combined with the dash of the fish, is generally sufficient to drive the hook home. In no case should a fish be struck in the ordinary acceptation of the word. Here, as in trout-fishing, it is not a strike ; it should rather be a steady, firm draw of the line, the rod point being raised upward. This is all that is required. A violent upward snatch would probably result in a smash. The instant the fish feels the steel it makes a rush for

it, sometimes taking out a considerable amount of line before it stops. The instant it pulls up the fisherman must get opposite to it, reeling up as speedily as possible. Other rushes may follow, but in each case the same tactics must be adopted of keeping level with the fish. So long as he can manage to do this the angler can feel tolerably safe; but whether up or down stream, he must endeavour to preserve this position. The more brilliant the play of the fish, the shorter will be the struggle. In all this the rod must be kept as upright as possible; and needless to say, care must be taken to see that there is no risk of the line fouling. If the reel is not a good one it may overrun with the first rush, and when the line is wound up to get to the fish it is very apt to become tangled in the reel. If this takes place, fish and line must go. Again, the reel may be too stiff and refuse to run as it should; this latter state of affairs is little better than the former. Hence the necessity for a reel being as perfect as possible. Each succeeding rush serves to exhaust the fish, and so bit by bit it can be brought nearer and nearer, until it is within reach of the gaff; but I would warn a novice never to make too sure that a fish is done for. Even when lying over on its side, many a fish will make a final effort, and may, if the gaffer is inexperienced, the hold of the hook worn, or the tackle frayed, succeed in getting away.

Should a fish sulk, he must be moved by means of a messenger, as I have previously described.

It is no easy matter to gaff a salmon properly. A man must be cool and quick. The gaffer should always keep below the fisherman, and out of sight of the fish as much as possible. The gaff should be held hook downwards, and struck into the tail end of the fish so as to avoid damaging or killing it. If the gaff is driven into the stomach, and by mischance the fish should get off at the last moment, as has often happened ere this, there will be every risk of its dying. It is bad enough to lose a good fish at any time, but it is truly deplorable when it has sustained such damage as to condemn it to a lingering and painful death.

A fish should not be *lifted* out of the water by the gaff. No gaff could stand such treatment. It should be drawn upwards to the bank. The gaffing and drawing the fish out should be performed in one motion. As soon as the fish is landed, it should be knocked on the head and killed, and when the hook has been removed, the gill covers should be lifted, and the gills on both sides cut through with a sharp knife. This sets the curd. If a fish is weighed before being thus gilled and afterwards, the difference will be remarkable. A pound in weight is generally allowed after gilling. It is a somewhat curious

fact that the loss of so little blood as usually flows should cause so great a discrepancy in the weight.

The most convenient way of carrying a salmon is to make a slip-knot at the end of a piece of cord and pass it over the tail (the wrist) of the fish; the other end is then run through the mouth and out at the gills, or through a slit made in the under jaws. The head and tail can thus be drawn nearly together.

CHAPTER XVII.

Gut Loops *v.* Metal Eyes for Salmon-hooks—Double Hooks—Cholmondeley-Pennell Pattern of Hook—Parts of a Salmon-fly described — List of useful Salmon-flies: Anonyma, Baron, Benchill, Britannia, Bruce (A), Bruce (B), Butcher, Champion, Childers (A), Childers (B), Dirty Orange, Black Doctor, Blue Doctor, Silver Doctor, Durham Ranger, Dusty Miller, Brown Eagle, Yellow Eagle, French's Fancy, Greenwell, Glow-worm Grub, Spring Grub, Infallible, Jock Scott, Blue Jock Scott, Kendle, Lion, Mohair Canary, Mystery (A), Mystery (B), Popham, Silver Gray, Stevenson, Thunder and Lightning, Wilkinson, Gitana, Phoebus, Nepenthian.

As I have before observed, a salmon-fly is furnished with a loop at the head end for the purpose of attaching it to the gut casting-line. This is either formed of twisted gut, which is fastened on to the hook when the fly is dressed, or else is of metal, being part and parcel of the hook itself. The angler can decide for himself which of the two to select. Personally, I prefer the metal eye to the gut, inasmuch as the former never wears out, whereas the latter does so all too soon, and, needless to remark, in this case the fly is rendered useless. Objections are at times made against the use of the metal eye, it being

asserted that the casting-line, to which it is fastened, becomes frayed and worn by contact with the metal. I am well aware that such may be the case if the knot is improperly made; but if the plan which I have given of fastening on the fly is adopted, I think I may safely assert that there need be no fear that the gut will fray more against the metal than the gut loop; indeed, my own experience proves the contrary.

Salmon-hooks are frequently made double. Doubtless there is more probability of hooking a fish firmly with a double hook than with a single. The former are generally considerably smaller in size than the single hooks. I cannot say that I like double hooks for salmon-fishing. It stands to reason that even a single hook, no matter how truly it may swim, must cause a slight blur in the water, and with a double hook this is more than doubled, and so it cannot be as satisfactory. Moreover, a fly dressed on a double hook never presents the same neat, workmanlike appearance, and cannot be placed in a book, if it is required to do so, without bulging the pages, and doing more or less damage to the other flies. Double hooks are not made with metal eyes. I consider that a single hook answers the purpose for which it is intended quite well enough.

Unlike a trout-hook, there is no side-twist in a salmon-hook, the shank and barb are in the

same plane. This is necessary, in order to allow of the fly swimming upright and true in the water. Save for the smallness of the eye in the eyed-hooks, the Cholmondeley-Pennell pattern is, to my mind, by far the best-shaped hook there is. The observations I made on the tempering of trout-hooks apply equally to those for salmon.

Before entering upon the subject of salmon-flies it will, I think, be as well to explain the various terms which I shall have to make use of in giving the dressings of the various flies, especially if any of my readers should chance to be ignorant of such matters.

A full-dressed salmon-fly consists of the following parts, viz. :

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. The tag. | 6. The wings. |
| 2. The tail. | 7. The sides. |
| 3. The butt. | 8. The cheeks. |
| 4. The body. | 9. The horns. |
| 5. The throat. | 10. The head. |

The 'tag' is usually formed of tinsel and floss-silk, or either alone, and is situated under the tail of the fly.

The 'tail' is formed of one or more feathers, more generally of a golden pheasant's small crest feather, termed a 'topping.'

The 'butt' is usually of black ostrich herl, and wound round the base of the tail.

The 'body' is made of various materials, such as floss-silk, dyed pig's wool, or seal's fur, at times divided into two or more distinct portions, as is the case with the Jock Scott and Popham, each division being butted with black ostrich herl. It is generally ribbed with gold or silver tinsel, and frequently with a hackle for part or the whole of its length.

The 'throat' is a feather, generally a hackle, wound round the upper part of the body close under the wing.

The 'wings' are composed of strips of various feathers, placed above, and over each other, the under wing being, so to speak, veiled by the upper.

The 'sides' are feathers used entire, and placed along the lower sides of the wings. The spotted neck-feathers of the jungle-cock are generally used for this purpose, varying in length according to the pattern of the fly.

The 'cheeks' are short feathers, also used entire, which are placed over the butts of the sides. They are more generally used alone without the sides; but when the latter form part of a fly, cheeks are usually placed over them. The feathers used for cheeks are generally taken from the blue chatterer jay, blue enamelled thrush, bright blue kingfisher, or neck of the jungle-cock.

The 'horns' are two long fibres, placed over and above the wing, and are usually taken from the tail of the blue macaw—the feathers of which are blue on the upper and yellow on the lower side.

The 'head' is generally formed of black ostrich herl, black worsted, or simply varnished.

I think, and trust, that the above description will enable the reader to recognise without difficulty the several parts of a salmon-fly.

The following list of salmon-flies comprises, for the most part, none but those patterns which bear the highest reputation. The dressings given are the best known. I have arranged them alphabetically to facilitate reference :

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|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Anonyma. | 14. *The Doctor (silver). |
| 2. *The Baron. | 15. *The Durham Ranger. |
| 3. The Benchill. | 16. *The Dusty Miller. |
| 4. *The Britannia. | 17. The Brown Eagle. |
| 5. *The Bruce (A). | 18. The Yellow Eagle. |
| 6. The Bruce (B). | 19. *The French's Fancy. |
| 7. *The Butcher. | 20. *The Greenwell. |
| 8. The Champion. | 21. The Grub (glow-worm). |
| 9. *The Childers (A). | 22. The Grub (spring). |
| 10. The Childers (B). | 23. The Infallible. |
| 11. *The Dirty Orange. | |
| 12. The Doctor (black). | |
| 13. *The Doctor (blue). | |

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 24. *The Jock Scott. | 33. The Stevenson. |
| 25. *The Jock Scott
(blue). | 34. *The Thunder and
Lightning. |
| 26. The Kendle. | 35. *The Wilkinson. |
| 27. *The Lion. | |
| 28. The Mohair Canary. | MR. KELSON'S EXAG-
GERATIONS. |
| 29. *The Mystery (A). | |
| 30. *The Mystery (B). | 36. The Gitana. |
| 31. *The Popham. | 37. The Phœbus. |
| 32. *The Silver Gray. | 38. The Nepenthian. |

Any very special flies are marked with an asterisk.

I.—ANONYMA.

Tag : Silver twist and lemon floss-silk.

Tail : A topping and an Indian crow's feather.

Butt : Red ostrich.

Body : Flat silver tinsel, ribbed with gold twist.

Throat : Yellow or orange hackle, with darkish-red hackle over.

Wings : Tippet and saddle feathers, back to back, veiled with golden-pheasant tail, mallard, peacock wing, gray mallard, strips of red and yellow swan, and a topping over all.

Cheeks : Unspotted enamelled cinnamon feather from the neck of the jungle-cock.

Horns : Red macaw.

Head : Black ostrich.

The foregoing is an original pattern.

2.—THE BARON.

Tag : Silver twist, and dark-red-claret silk.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Divided into two equal portions, the lower : Flat silver tinsel, ribbed with oval silver tinsel, butt black ostrich, and two Indian crow's feathers reaching to the lower tail butt, one placed above and the other below. The upper half composed of black floss-silk, ribbed with silver twist, hackled with a dark-red claret hackle.

Throat : A jay's blue feather.

Wings : Strands of golden - pheasant tippet-feathers, yellow swan, summer duck (barred), blue and red macaw, golden - pheasant tail, peacock wing, mallard, and a topping.

Sides : Jungle-cock (two spots).

Cheeks : Chatterer.

Horns : Blue macaw.

Head : Black ostrich or black wool.

The Baron is an excellent fly ; it is somewhat similar to the Jock Scott, save that the lower part of the body is silver instead of yellow, and Indian crow's feathers are used in place of yellow toucan. It is a capital fly for a nondescript kind of day, and therefore most useful.

3.—THE BENCHILL.

A very handsome fly, and, I believe, bears a high reputation.

Tag : Silver twist, and light-claret floss-silk.

Tail : A topping and scarlet ibis.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Seal's fur dyed dark-yellow, pale-orange, light-claret, and light-blue, placed from tail to head in this order, and ribbed with silver tinsel.

Hackle : Light-blue as far as to cover the blue seal's fur.

Wings : Two tippet-feathers, veiled with light speckled turkey, swan feathers dyed yellow and red, bustard, golden-pheasant-tail, teal, mallard, and a topping.

Horns : Blue macaw.

4.—THE BRITANNIA.

A very old and well-known standard pattern.

Tag : Gold twist.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Red-orange floss-silk, ribbed with oval gold tinsel, and with a reddish-orange hackle from end to end.

Wings : Shoveller duck or large brown mallard and a topping.

Sides : Jungle-cock (two spots).

Cheeks : Chatterer.

Horns : Blue macaw.

Collar : A dark-blue hackle. (This is placed above the cheeks and wings.)

5.—THE BRUCE (A).

This fly is, I believe, named after Colonel Bruce, of Testwood Park, in Hampshire. It is, though of unpretentious appearance, one of the very best flies, especially for use in the early part of the season, or in wild, stormy weather. It is a local pattern.

Tag : Silver twist and lemon floss-silk.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Flat silver tinsel ribbed with oval ditto, and a magenta hackle run alongside the latter from head to tail.

Throat : Magenta hackle, with small speckled gallina ones.

Wings : Under wing—light grizzled turkey; over wing—golden-pheasant tail and a topping.

Head : Black ostrich.

6.—THE BRUCE (B).

The following variety of the above is an invention of my own ; it answered so well as to be in some request. It is, I believe, to be purchased

at Mr. Main's, in Jermyn Street, and, I think, one or two other places. It is thus dressed :

Tag : As before.

Tail : As before.

Butt : As before.

Body : Divided into two parts, with black ostrich herl and small magenta hackle points at the joint ; the body itself is composed of flat silver tinsel ribbed with oval ditto as before.

Throat : Magenta hackle and small speckled guinea-fowl over (as before).

Wings : Under wing—light grizzled turkey ; over wing—strips of large mottled feather from the wing of the great bustard.

Cheeks : Jungle-cock.

Collar : A crimson hackle.

Head : Varnished.

7.—THE BUTCHER.

A well-named fly, for I suppose that no fly, not even the Jock Scott, has killed more fish than the Butcher.

Tag : Silver twist and yellow silk.

Tail : A topping, teal, and light-blue macaw.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Divided into four parts, arranged thus from tail to head, viz., light-claret, light-blue, dark-claret, and dark-blue ; these are made either of seal's fur dyed or pig's wool.

Throat : Small speckled guinea - fowl over a yellow hackle.

Wings : A golden-pheasant tippet-feather, and a blood-red feather from the breast of the same bird, set back to back, and reaching nearly to the bend of the hook ; over these are strips of teal, golden-pheasant tail, small speckled guinea - fowl, bustard, and peacock's wing, strands of red parrot, yellow swan, mallard at the top.

Horns : Blue macaw.

Cheeks : Blue chatterer.

Head : Black ostrich or black wool.

8.—THE CHAMPION.

Tag : Silver twist and yellow silk.

Tail : A topping, light-gray mallard, and two or three strands of light-blue and light-crimson dyed swan.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Light - blue silk ; dark - yellow, crimson, dark-crimson, dark-blue, and black pig's wool or seal's fur, placed from tail to head in the order given and equally divided, and ribbed with flat silver tinsel with fine round silver twist laid beside it.

Hackle : Black, as far as the black portion of the body.

Throat : Blue jay, or guinea-fowl dyed blue.

Wings : Two barred feathers from the summer duck placed back to back, with married strips of silver-pheasant and golden-pheasant tail, repeated twice, and similar strips of blue macaw and crimson swan, with a broadish piece of teal on either side of the latter strips ; strips of pale-gray mallard or unbarred summer duck, strips of crimson and dark-yellow swan, peacock wing, golden-pheasant tail, two longish strips of brown mallard, and a topping over all.

Horns : Blue macaw.

Cheeks : Blue chatterer.

Head : Black ostrich.

This dressing forms one of the most beautiful of salmon-flies. The mixture of colour is very perfect.

9.—THE CHILDERS (A).

Tag : Silver twist and light-blue floss-silk.

Tail : A topping with strands of red macaw, bright-blue macaw, and pintail duck.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Two turns of light-yellow silk, light-yellow teal's fur or pig's wool, and scarlet ditto at the shoulder ; the latter about one-fifth of the entire length, ribbed with flat silver tinsel and fine silver twist beside it.

Hackle : A white furnace hackle dyed light-yellow.

Throat : A scarlet hackle and light widgeon.

Wings: Golden-pheasant tippet, ditto tail, turkey, silver - pheasant, pintail, summer duck (barred), bustard, bright-blue macaw, red parrot, red macaw, large speckled guinea-fowl, mallard, and a topping.

Horns: Blue macaw.

Cheeks: Blue chatterer.

Head: Black ostrich or black wool.

Mr. Kelson speaks highly of this fly; and a very beautiful specimen it is of its kind. It is an old standard fly, and takes its name from a Colonel Childers, formerly well-known on the Tweed.

There are two or three different dressings of this fly, but the above, which is Mr. Kelson's, is the best.

I give another simpler pattern of the same fly, taken from 'The Salmon-fisher's Pocket Companion':

10.—THE CHILDERS (B).

Tag: Gold twist and yellow silk.

Tail: Golden-pheasant and teal.

Body: From tail to head thus, viz., yellow, orange, and red pig's wool, ribbed with gold tinsel, and hackled with a plain black or red hackle.

Throat: Blue jay.

Wing: Mallard, teal, guinea-fowl, bustard, green

parrot, golden-pheasant tail, peacock wing, and strands from the tail of a black cockatoo.

Horns : Blue and red macaw.

Head : Black wool.

11.—THE DIRTY ORANGE.

This is a good fly, and, I should say, good on most rivers ; it is perhaps more especially an Usk pattern.

Tag : Gold twist and blue silk.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Two turns of dark, dirty-orange silk, with light, dirty-orange seal's fur thence to the shoulder, and hackled over the seal's fur with a dirty-orange-coloured hackle, and ribbed with oval gold tinsel.

Throat : Blue jay.

Wings : Guinea-fowl, light bustard, teal, golden-pheasant's tail, swan, dyed blue and light-red-claret, summer duck, or mallard.

Horns : Blue macaw.

Head : Ostrich herl dyed light-blue.

12.—THE BLACK DOCTOR.

There are three flies which have the title of 'doctor,' viz., the black, blue, and silver. In each of these varieties the wing is similar, and is as follows :

Wing : Golden-pheasant tippet, ditto tail, light-gray turkey, bustard, wood-duck, swan, dyed red, yellow, and blue, a strand of blue and yellow macaw at either side, and a topping.

With this wing the 'Black Doctor' is thus dressed :

Tag : Gold twist and pale-yellow floss-silk.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Scarlet wool.

Body : Black floss-silk, ribbed with flat silver or gold tinsel.

Throat : A natural black hackle with blue jay over it.

Cheeks : Jungle-cock.

Head : Scarlet wool.

13.—THE BLUE DOCTOR.

Tag : Silver twist and lemon floss-silk.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Scarlet wool.

Body : Light-blue floss-silk, ribbed with flat silver tinsel, and fine silver twist beside it, and hackled throughout with a light-blue hackle.

Throat : Light-blue hackle with small speckled guinea-fowl over.

Head : Scarlet wool.

14.—THE SILVER DOCTOR.

Tag : Silver twist and golden-yellow floss-silk.

Tail : A topping and blue chatterer.

Butt : Scarlet wool.

Body : Flat silver tinsel, ribbed with oval ditto.

Throat : Medium blue with small speckled guinea-fowl over.

Head : Scarlet wool.

The above is Mr. Mallock's dressing. Mr. Kelson gives the following :

Tag : Silver twist and dark-yellow silk.

Tail : A topping and kingfisher.

Butt : Dark-scarlet wool.

Body : Flat silver tinsel, ribbed with oval ditto.

Throat : A blue hackle and guinea-fowl.

Wing : Connected strands of tippet, summer duck, pintail, golden-pheasant tail, swan, dyed light-yellow and light-blue, mallard, bustard, and a topping.

Horns : Blue macaw.

Head : Scarlet wool.

None of our standard patterns possess a higher reputation than the 'Silver Doctor.' It will take fish in any river. Mr. Kelson advocates its being used on bright days rather than in dull weather. I have found it do well on both bright and dull days, especially on those which are alternately bright and cloudy. The 'Blue Doctor' is also an especially good fly—more particularly when the sun is bright and the sky blue overhead. The 'Black Doctor' is much esteemed, and is, I

am aware, very justly so. I have never done much with it myself—perhaps because I have so seldom made use of it.

15.—THE DURHAM RANGER.

This fly does not take its name from the city of Durham, but from its having been very successfully used by a party of Durham fishermen when fishing on the Sprowston water.

Mr. Kelson, who mentions the foregoing, gives the following dressing for this fly, which is one of the very best of all good patterns :

Tag : Silver twist and light-yellow silk.

Tail : A topping and an Indian crow.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Two turns of orange silk, two turns of dark-orange seal's fur ; the rest, which is about half of black seal's fur, ribbed with flat silver tinsel and fine silver twist, and hackled from the orange seal's fur with a white Coch-y-bonddhu hackle dyed orange.

Throat : Light-blue hackle.

Wings : From golden-pheasant tippets in pairs, the shorter overlapping the longer and placed back to back with two long jungle-cock spotted feathers in the middle between the tippet-feathers.

Cheeks : Chatterer.

Horns : Blue macaw.

Head : Black wool.

This fly has a very varmint-looking, sporting appearance ; the colouring is peculiarly good. It is a reliable fly in all descriptions of weather.

16.—THE DUSTY MILLER.

I have a special fancy for this fly, for I have so often had occasion to be grateful to its alluring qualities. It is a good fly throughout the season, but especially for autumn fishing. It is a quiet, somewhat sombre-looking fly. Although it is metal-bodied, the fact of the tinsel being embossed reduces the glitter, and it is therefore just the fly to use on those days in which the weather may be described as intermediate, *i.e.*, neither bright nor cloudy. Francis gives the following excellent recipe for its dressing :

Tag : Silver tinsel and dark-olive floss-silk.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Embossed silver tinsel, ribbed with gold thread, and hackled with a dark-olive-coloured hackle.

Throat : Small speckled guinea-fowl.

Wing : Golden-pheasant tail, mallard, teal, green parrot, strips of swan feathers dyed a lavender colour.

Cheeks : Jungle-cock.

Head : Black ostrich, wool, or varnished.

17.—THE BROWN EAGLE.

Both this fly and the yellow eagle (No. 18) are more especially Scotch patterns.

The brown eagle is thus dressed :

Tag : Silver twist and light-blue floss-silk.

Tail : Green parrot, summer duck, and fibres of tippet.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Two turns of light-brown floss-silk, the rest of orange fur, ribbed with oval gold tinsel.

Hackle : Dark-gray down of the golden eagle, from the light-brown floss-silk upwards.

Shoulder : A small quantity of teal.

Wings : Strips of dark-brown turkey feather, with the white tip extending flatwise and outward from the top of the iron at an angle of 15° .

Horns : Red macaw.

Head : Black wool.

I think, but am not sure, that the dressings which I here give of these two flies are Major Traherne's.

18.—THE YELLOW EAGLE.

Tag : Silver thread.

Tail : Sprigs of golden-pheasant tippet-feather, or the red rump feather from the same bird.

Body : Scarlet seal's fur, or yellow and scarlet seal's fur in two equal joints, ribbed with flat silver tinsel and silver cord in wide spirals.

Hackle : From a third of the way down the body, the down of the golden eagle dyed a decided yellow ; the fibres can hardly be too long and fluffy, and generally dressed full.

Shoulder : Teal.

Wings : Silver-speckled strips of turkey, with a black bar and a white tip, extending flatwise and outward at the same angle as described in No. 16.

Head : Varnished.

No. 16 can be obtained from Mr. W. Garden, fishing-tackle maker, Union Street, Aberdeen ; No. 17 from Mr. J. A. Dunbar, fishing-tackle maker, the Esplanade, Oban.

19.—FRENCH'S FANCY.

I have myself christened this fly after the name of the friend who invented it, Colonel French, A.D.C. It has proved so killing a pattern that I venture to give the reader the benefit of it.

Tag : Lemon floss-silk.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Black ostrich (this may be omitted).

Body : Magenta-coloured floss-silk for clear water, and mohair of the same colour for heavy water, ribbed from head to tail with a magenta-coloured hackle, and flat silver tinsel with fine silver twist beside it.

Wings : Yellow swan, with a topping.

(The wings may be varied with strips of blue, but the yellow colouring of the wings must predominate.)

The above is a very gaudy, brilliant fly, either in or out of the water. Whatever its appearance may be, its virtues are many.

20.—THE GREENWELL.

Another fly christened after a Durham man, viz., Canon Greenwell of that city, who invented it many years ago. He also invented a well-known North-country trout-fly called 'Greenwell's Glory.' The Greenwell bears a high repute on the Tweed during the autumn, but it is also a good fly on all rivers during the earlier part of the season.

Tag : Silver twist and yellow silk.

Tail : A topping and small-spotted jungle-cock.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Light-blue silk, ribbed with flat silver tinsel, and fine silver twist beside it.

Hackle : Light-blue from the last rib but one.

Wings : Two strips of black turkey, white tipped ; golden-pheasant tail, dark and light bustard, guinea-fowl, white turkey dyed green and scarlet, gray mallard, brown mallard, and a topping over all.

Sides : Jungle-fowl (two spots).

Horns : Blue macaw.

Head : Black wool.

21.—THE GLOW-WORM GRUB.

All the grubs, and there are several varieties, strange uncanny-looking things, are useful at times. They may be described as wingless salmon-flies, jointed in the middle with a hackle feather, and also hackled at the butt. I purpose giving two dressings, viz., the glow-worm and the spring. The following dressing of the former I took from one of Farlow's patterns, though I believe it is not the true glow-worm. Nevertheless, it proved itself to be as good as any.

Tag : Silver twist and claret floss-silk.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Red parrot's hackle, and small speckled guinea-fowl over it.

Body : In two portions, of deep copper-coloured twisted tinsel, hackled in the centre with a blue-dun hackle.

Throat : Dark-claret hackle, with a small speckled guinea-fowl hackle over it to the head.

22.—THE SPRING GRUB.

Tag : Silver twist and light-blue silk.

Tail : Scarlet ibis and blue macaw in married strips.

Butt : A furnace hackle dyed orange.

Body : Divided, as in No. 20. The lower half of yellow silk, ribbed with black chenille, and

a blue-dun hackle in the centre of the body ; the upper part black silk, ribbed with silver tinsel. Shoulder : A Coch-y-bonddhu hackle, with a small speckled guinea-fowl hackle over it dyed orange.

The above is Mr. Kelson's pattern.

23.—THE INFALLIBLE.

Tag : Silver twist and light-blue floss-silk.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Three or four turns of claret silk, and very dark-yellow silk above it, ribbed with flat silver tinsel, with a claret hackle running alongside of the tinsel.

Throat : A jay's blue feather.

Wings : Golden-pheasant tippet back to back ; above these golden-pheasant tail, peacock wing, bustard, mallard, red and blue macaw, and a topping.

Sides : A strip of summer duck, reaching as far as the centre of the orange part of the tippet-feather between the bars.

Horns : Blue macaw.

Head : Black ostrich.

The above is a very handsome fly ; it is not unlike the Childers. As its name implies, it is held in high estimation. It is a favourite fly on the Exe. The pattern is one of Mr. Farlow's.

24.—THE JOCK SCOTT.

This fly and the Silver Doctor may be said to be, of all known patterns of salmon-flies, the very best. It may truly be said that no fisherman should be without them. The Jock Scott is thus dressed :

Tag : Silver twist and light-yellow silk.

Tail : A topping and an Indian crow's feather.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : In two equal portions, the lower one being of light yellow floss-silk, ribbed with fine silver twist, and butted with black ostrich ; above and below this part of the body are placed two or three toucan feathers, which should reach just beyond the butt of the tail. The upper part of the body is of black floss-silk, ribbed with flat silver tinsel, and fine silver twist beside it, and hackled with a natural black hackle throughout the length of the black floss-silk portion.

Throat : Small speckled guinea-fowl.

Wings : Two strips of white-tipped black turkey ; above these, strips of bustard, gray mallard, strands of golden-pheasant tail, and peacock sword-feather ; over these are strands of red macaw and blue and yellow swan ; two strips of mallard and a topping above all.

Sides : Jungle-fowl (two spots).

Cheeks : Chatterer.

Horns : Blue macaw.

Head : Black ostrich.

The Jock Scott is usually dressed as above. Some patterns vary slightly, but this, given by Mr. Kelson, is the best.

25.—THE BLUE JOCK SCOTT.

This is a variety of the foregoing fly, and it makes an excellent change to the latter. I believe this fly is the invention of Mr. Basil Field. The difference between it and the ordinary Jock Scott consists in the upper portion of the body (the apron, as it is termed) being blue instead of black. Mr. Field makes use of scarlet ibis and chatterer, together with the topping in the tail instead of the Indian crow. The blue portion is not hackled throughout, but at the throat alone, where a blue hackle is covered with a hackle from the widgeon. I think, unless I am very much mistaken, that the cheeks are blue kingfisher's feathers in place of the chatterer; but such difference is immaterial, the one feather answering the purpose as well as the other.

The blue Jock Scott has done some wonderfully good work on the Test, where it is a special favourite.

26.—THE KENDLE.

This fly is also the invention of Mr. Basil Field, who named it after my friend Mr. Kendle.

I believe it to be an excellent fly, though I have never tried it. I find a pattern of it stuck into the leaves of my notebook, from which I give the dressing :

Tag : Silver twist.

Tail : Two small toppings and a chatterer at the base.

Body : White floss-silk, covered over with a thin strip of gold-beater's skin, the joints of the coils being hidden by means of a ribbing of gold twist.

Throat : Yellow hackle or yellow macaw, with a blue hackle, or guinea-fowl dyed blue, over it.

Wings : Swan, dyed blue and yellow, with bustard, golden-pheasant tail and teal above.

Horns : Blue macaw.

Head : Black ostrich.

27.—THE LION.

An old standard pattern, and said to be as good of its kind as it can be. Mr. Kelson gives the following recipe :

Tag : Silver twist and light yellow silk.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Flat silver tinsel, ribbed with oval ditto, a fifth part at the shoulder being left for dark scarlet seal's fur.

Hackle : A natural black down three parts of the body.

Throat : Small speckled guinea-fowl.

Wings : A few fibres of golden-pheasant tippet-feather, golden-pheasant sword-feather, and peacock herl (sword-feather ?), yellow macaw, red ditto, bustard, golden-pheasant tail, teal, guinea-fowl (as at throat), two strips of mallard, and a topping over all.

Sides : Jungle-cock, spotted.

Horns : Blue macaw.

Head : Black wool.

28.—THE MOHAIR CANARY.

A very good and popular fly on most rivers in Britain.

Tag : Silver twist and yellow floss.

Tail : A topping, and a few sprigs of golden-pheasant tippet-feather.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Three turns of yellow floss and gold-coloured seal's fur, ribbed with oval silver twist.

Hackle : Gold-coloured, with black centre throughout the seal's fur portion ; a tuft of gold-coloured mohair at the shoulder.

Wings : Gold-coloured mohair and bronze peacock herl, in the proportion of two-thirds of the former to one of the latter, commencing with the mohair and alternating with the peacock herl, the mohair being over all at the top.

Head : Varnished.

This description is also taken from one of Mr. Kelson's patterns.

29.—THE MYSTERY (A).

A capital fly, especially in spring and autumn. I am sorry to say that I have not a good pattern or dressing by me to which to refer, but I think that the following dressing is correct :

Tag : Silver twist and lemon-coloured floss-silk.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Pale salmon-coloured floss-silk, ribbed with flat silver tinsel and fine silver twist beside it.

Throat : A very dark claret hackle, continued for a third of the way down the body.

Wings : Swan dyed light yellow, and with a strip of red macaw on either side ; a topping over all.

Head : Black ostrich.

30.—THE MYSTERY (B).

This is one of the many varieties of the preceding pattern. I do not know its proper name, and have never been able to ascertain it. It is, however, so good a fly, that I give its dressing. The only thing which can be said other than in highest praise of it, is the fact of its being a somewhat expensive fly when dressed in any but the smaller sizes, by reason of the number of toppings required.

Tag : Small flat gold tinsel and two turns of black floss-silk.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : None.

Body : Orange-coloured floss-silk, ribbed with flat embossed gold tinsel, and hackled from the first turn of the ribbing with an orange-coloured hackle.

Throat : A jay's blue feather.

Wings : Three or four toppings.

Horns : Red macaw or scarlet ibis.

Head : Varnished.

31.—THE POPHAM.

This fly is said to be an imitation of a cooked prawn. It is somewhat strange that, although the latter is so attractive a bait for salmon, one which is uncooked is useless for the purpose. Evidently fish are attracted rather by colour than by scent. The Popham was invented by Mr. Popham, the owner of the celebrated Derby winner, Wild Dayrell. It is thus dressed :

Tag : Gold twist.

Tail : A topping and an Indian crow's feather.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : The body is divided into three equal parts, the joints being butted with black ostrich herl and an Indian crow's feather, the length of the joint above and below each joint. The first

(the lowest) joint is of orange-red floss-silk, ribbed with fine gold twist; the second (the middle joint), of yellow silk, also ribbed with fine silver twist; and the third (the top) joint of light-blue floss-silk, and the same ribbing as before. The Indian crow's feather also being over this joint in the same manner as in the other two.

Throat hackle : A jay's blue feather.

Wings : Tippet, teal, guinea-fowl, golden-pheasant tail, red parrot, light-brown mottled turkey, and bustard, with strips of red, and yellow macaw, or yellow swan; brown mallard and a topping over all.

Cheeks : Chatterer.

Horns : Blue macaw.

Head : Black ostrich.

32.—THE SILVER GRAY.

The value and virtues of this fly can hardly be exaggerated. It has been often argued that silver-bodied flies are more suitable for bright than for dull days. This may be so, but I have killed more fish with such flies on dull days than at other times. One day's sport which I shall never forget when using a Silver Gray may interest the reader, and will afford proof of what I assert. A friend of mine and myself were one day invited to fish on a stretch of excellent

salmon-water. Our host was unable to fish after two o'clock, having to fulfil an engagement. I failed to move a single fish until just before luncheon, when I hooked an eighteen-pounder, which, having come short at the fly, gave me the slip. When we met at mid-day, our host had caught one fish, and my other friend three, varying in weight from thirteen to twenty pounds. While we were at luncheon it began to rain, and it continued to do so heavily throughout the remainder of the day. When he left us, our host instructed me to go down-stream and my other friend to fish up. I had previously been fishing with, I think, a 'Butcher' or a Jock Scott, and changed to a Silver Gray. At the second or third cast I rose a fish which came short; a few minutes later another fish rose in a similar manner. Shortly afterwards a third came and took me, a twenty-one-pounder, and after a most exciting battle I landed it. Some fifty yards lower down a fourth fish, of much the same size, rose, and I succeeded in landing it also. I rose a fifth shortly afterwards, and on my return to the upper water, where we had rested for luncheon, I secured a sixth of about twenty-three pounds. All these fish were taken on a Silver Gray. My friend who had gone up-stream, a far better fisherman than I am, succeeded in taking two more fish, and, if my memory serves me truly, I

think these were also taken on a similar fly. We had thus caught eight fish between us, not including the one caught by our host before luncheon. I think that this is proof enough of the virtues of the Silver Gray, and that a bright fly is not always unsuitable for a dull day.

The Silver Gray is thus dressed :

Tag : Silver twist and yellow floss-silk.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Flat silver tinsel ribbed with oval ditto, and hackled from the second turn of the oval, with a silver-gray hackle, with a black stripe running down the centre.

Throat : Teal or widgeon (the latter for choice).

Wings : Strands of golden-pheasant tippet, strands of golden-pheasant tail, white swan and ditto, dyed blue and yellow, brown mallard, a narrow strip of barred summer duck on either side, and a topping over all.

Cheeks : Chatterer.

Horns : Blue macaw.

Head : Black wool.

33.—THE STEVENSON.

This is a somewhat strong-coloured fly, and so suitable for high water. The wings are not unlike those of the Durham ranger. It is a fly which I only know by repute, and I have had no

personal experience of it. The dressing given is Mr. Kelson's, but whether he has altered the original pattern, which was invented by the well-known fly-tyer, James Wright, I am unable to say. Mr. Kelson states that by making a slight change in the dressing it can be used as an 'exaggeration' for low, clear water.

Tag : Silver twist and light-blue silk.

Tail : A topping and strands of golden-pheasant tippet-feather.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Two turns of orange floss-silk, and above this orange seal's fur, hackled with an orange hackle, and ribbed with flat silver tinsel, and fine silver twist placed beside it.

Throat : A light-blue hackle.

Wings : Two long jungle-cock spotted feathers placed back to back, reaching to the tail, and enveloped by four double golden-pheasant tippet-feathers, arranged so as to overlie each other and show the three black bars at their ends at equal distances apart.

Sides : Jungle-cock spotted feathers (two spots).

Horns : Blue macaw.

Head : Black wool.

34.—THE THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.

This is an excellent all-round fly, and is especially useful for autumn and low water. Its

name would imply a somewhat gaudy dressing. Such, however, is not the case, for it is a remarkably quiet pattern. It should most certainly find a place in the book of every salmon fisherman. I am myself well aware of its value, and should be sorry to be without it. It should not be dressed too large.

Tag : Gold twist and orange floss-silk.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Black floss-silk, ribbed with oval gold tinsel, and hackled from the first turn of the latter with an orange hackle.

Throat : A jay's blue feather.

Wings : Two large pieces of brown mallard and a topping.

Side : Jungle-cock spotted feathers (two spots).

Horns : Blue macaw.

Head : Black ostrich.

35.—THE WILKINSON.

This fly does not seem to be as generally used as it might be, for it is an invaluable pattern. I have proved its good qualities on several occasions, and can most strongly recommend its adoption. It is an excellent fly for bright weather.

Tag : Gold twist.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Scarlet wool.

Body : Flat silver tinsel, ribbed with gold twist, and hackled throughout with a pale-blue hackle.

Throat : A jay's blue feather.

Wings : Fibres of golden-pheasant tail, bustard, widgeon, golden-pheasant tippet-feathers, red swan, and a topping over all.

Horns : Blue and yellow macaw.

Head : Scarlet wool.

I have referred to Mr. Kelson's patterns of what he terms 'exaggerations.' The three following flies are his inventions :

36.—THE GITANA.

Tag : Silver twist and blue floss-silk.

Tail : A topping and a chatterer feather.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : In two divisions, the lower portion rather shorter than the upper. The lower part of flat silver tinsel, ribbed with oval ditto, and over it (as in the Popham) two Indian crow's feathers, back to back, at top and bottom, butted with black ostrich herl. The upper part is of black floss-silk, ribbed with oval gold tinsel and flat silver ditto, and hackled from the first turn of the tinsel with a natural black hackle.

Throat : Green macaw, the feather taken from under the wing or the tail of the bird.

Wings : Two blue macaw feathers, taken from

the top of the wing, longish jungle-cock spotted feather on either side of the macaw feathers, and reaching beyond the tag. Three tippet-feathers overlapping on either side, the first reaching to the tail butt, and two toppings above.

Horns : Red macaw (double).

Cheeks : Chatterer.

Head : Black ostrich.

37.—THE PHŒBUS.

Tag : Silver twist and blue silk.

Tail : Two toppings and a chatterer feather.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Of flat gold tinsel in four equal sections, each butted with black ostrich herl and with Indian crow's feather, as in the Popham, and graduating in length from tail to head. Under each of these feathers there are two or three yellow toucan feathers.

Wings : Two large green macaw feathers, back to back, and two toppings over all.

Sides : Two longish summer duck (barred) feathers.

Cheeks : Chatterer.

Horns : Blue macaw.

Head : Black ostrich.

38.—THE NEPENTHIAN.

Tag : Silver twist and light-plum claret floss-silk.

Tail : A topping.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : In four equal sections of silk, ribbed throughout, with small oval silver tinsel. Commencing from the tail end, the colours are : yellow, dark blue, orange, and dark orange. They are all butted with black ostrich, and with feathers above and below, as in the preceding fly. The first of these are toucan, the second blue chatterer, the third and fourth Indian crow, graduated.

Wings : Double tippet-feathers, back to back, enveloping two long, spotted jungle-cock feathers, which reach to the end of the tail, and with a topping over all.

Sides : Two summer duck feathers, as in the preceding pattern.

Cheeks : Chatterer.

Horns : Blue macaw.

Head : Black ostrich.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Hints on the Manufacture of Salmon Flies—Sea-trout Fishing
—Useful Sea-trout Flies—Conclusion.

IT is absolutely impossible to attempt to give any instruction to the reader regarding the manufacture of salmon-flies without the aid of numerous illustrations; and even then I very much doubt if he would acquire the art without the expenditure of many weeks and months of toil, and numerous disappointments. To anyone who may be desirous of learning to tie his own salmon-flies—and I most strongly recommend every salmon fisherman to learn—I would give the following advice, viz., to go to some really good professional and take a few lessons. He will learn more in some three or four hours than in the same number of years without such assistance.

I consider that it is infinitely more difficult to learn to tie a salmon-fly really well, than to tie a trout-fly. The latter are small, fidgety, and require very good sight; but the difficulty in making a salmon-fly consists in building the

wings. Every feather in the latter must be true and correspond with its fellow ; one twisted fibre will cause a ' blur ' in the water, and spoil the effect of the whole fly, and cause it to swim untruly.

The materials used in the manufacture of salmon-flies are expensive and numerous, but none but the very best should ever be used. It is impossible to construct a salmon-fly properly with bad materials. The strips of feathers for right and left wings must correspond in length, colouring, and curve. Hackles must be dyed the exact colour, and the same remark holds good as regards seal's fur, pig's wool, mohair, etc. The birds from which many of the feathers are taken are often rare, and consequently costly ; but notwithstanding all these, the fisherman will find it true economy to learn to make his own flies, and also a very pleasurable and fascinating employment, to say nothing of his being able to be independent of tackle-makers. He can, moreover, exercise his skill in designing fresh patterns for himself. But even should he prefer purchasing his flies to making them, the knowing how to make them will very materially assist him in his purchases. Every tackle-maker professes to make or sell salmon-flies, but far too often the latter are absurd monstrosities, and altogether unlike the patterns they are intended to represent. The materials are cheap, ill-dyed substitutes ; the

hackles, those at the throat especially, are far too short and scanty; the tinsel lacks brilliancy, and the whole thing speedily falls to pieces. Considering the number of tackle-makers in Great Britain and Ireland, there are but very few, comparatively speaking, who are able to turn out a salmon-fly well dressed and well tied.

In making metal-bodied flies, an amateur invariably experiences some difficulty in getting the coils of flat tinsel to lie evenly and to present the appearance of a smooth, even surface of silver; the edges of the coils will rise and leave spaces. This can be avoided by making a false body of wool, and carefully graduating it from head to tail, before the tinsel is laid on. The end of the latter which is nearer the tail should be cut off at a sharp angle and fastened securely before the butt is laid on. The latter should always be opposite the barb of the hook; if it is higher than this, the fly will present an ugly, stiff appearance, and the graceful curve of the bend of the hook will not be shown.

The fibres of the tail and the upper wing should bow over so as nearly to meet.

The throat hackle should not be less than half the length of the hook. In some patterns it may advantageously reach to the barb of the hook.

Many of the patterns which I have given have strips of dyed swan, macaw, etc., placed so as to

overlie the sides of the wings. These are termed 'married strips,' by reason of their being arranged so as to adhere to each other. If the edges of these fibres are examined with a magnifying-glass, it will be seen that they are like the teeth of a saw, and so readily cling together when properly held. Thus a strip of swan and a strip of macaw, etc., can be married. I made the remark 'properly held' because, unless the edges of the fibres are placed together in the right way, they will refuse to adhere to each other. If held by the butts, some difficulty will be experienced; but if by the points, it becomes an easy matter, and they will retain their position quite as firmly as if they had grown naturally alongside of each other. It is impossible, without steaming them, to induce fibres from feathers of different curves to unite properly throughout their entire length; therefore all feathers for wings should be as flat as possible. Where they are not naturally so, steaming and pressure must be resorted to.

It must be remembered that the lie of the fibres of feathers depends entirely on the way in which their butts are tied on; if the butt is twisted the whole fibre will also become so. The fibres of the feathers which form the wings of salmon-flies must be perfectly flat and true one above the other, and to effect this requires no little practice and dexterity.

A vice is most useful for tying salmon-flies, when laying on the wings; when making the bodies it can be dispensed with. If used for this purpose it should, however, be very firm and strong, and as fine in the jaws as is compatible with these two essentials.

Whenever floss-silk is used for bodies or tags, it must be laid on so as to present a flat, smooth, shining surface, and any silver twist used for tags must be bound in close, firm coils, the spaces which may be observed between the latter being filled up by pushing the coils close together. The brilliancy of the metal is thus materially increased.

In preparing hackles for tying on, the two sides of the feather should be drawn together by the fingers. The stem of the feather will thus be left uppermost. It is a somewhat difficult operation. The best plan is to put the butt-end of the hackle in a vice, and holding the point of the feather between the finger and thumb of the left hand, to draw the fibres of both sides downwards and towards the point with the sides of the thumb and forefinger of the right hand. The fibres must never be wetted. The appearance of a hackle thus treated is vastly superior to one which has been stripped on one side or wound on without any preparation. In the former case it is too meagre and thin; in the latter, rough and untidy.

It is sometimes a difficult matter to make a golden-pheasant topping lie in the required direction. It will twist over to one side or the other. If the butt is twisted and pinched with the thumb-nail, this perverseness can easily be rectified.

The head of a salmon-fly should not be made too long or too thick. It is a good plan when finishing it off to touch the silk with a little varnish now and again. This will serve to materially strengthen the work.

I would urge the reader, if he should attempt to make his own flies, never to be content with any work which is not as perfect as it should be, but unhesitatingly to pull to pieces what may have been perhaps the labour of hours. An ill-tied fly is useless, and will soon fall to pieces; but experience will have been gained, and the time spent in acquiring it is never wasted. The next effort will be more successful.

If when a fly is finished the wings are easily moved from their position to either side, it may be assumed that it is useless, and the sooner it is demolished the better. It is a good plan to test bought flies in this manner, for if the wings wobble the whole fabric must soon collapse when put to hard work.

Floss-silk is very apt to get rough and woolly. Its gloss may very readily be restored if it is smoothed down with the point of a pin. It is

very easily soiled, and the fingers require to be kept scrupulously clean and free from wax, etc. If it becomes at all stained it is useless, and the appearance of a fly dressed with it is marred.

The foregoing remarks may prove useful to the reader. I have gone through the troubles incidental to the efforts of an amateur fly-tyer, and so am well aware of the value of little hints such as these.

The present work would be incomplete without some reference to sea-trout fishing, and I have purposely abstained from entering upon the subject until now.

Sea-trout, as I have stated, are like salmon and bull-trout, and, as their name implies, migratory fish. Although now and again to be met with during the summer floods, it is not until August that they enter the rivers in any numbers. They are fine, bold fish, and will face the roughest water and the most difficult passes. When hooked they fight desperately, though not for long. After one brilliant rush, and maybe a dash into the air, they can very readily be brought to the net. They afford excellent sport, and are first-rate eating. They are, however, most capricious, and it is very difficult to know when they are likely to rise. After or even during a flood, if the latter is not excessive, is generally the best time to secure them. Late in the evening, when it is

quite dark, they may often be taken with some simple little fly, such as the brown silverhorns or the July or iron-blue dun. As a rule, when they are taking well, they may be caught with any of the salmon-flies dressed very small, or, indeed, with an ordinary trout-fly. Many of the loch trout-fly patterns are also useful for the purpose. The following dressings will be found useful :

I.—RED-BROWN.

Tail : A tuft of orange floss-silk.

Body : Dark red-brown pig's wool, ribbed with fine silver twist.

Hackle : Coch-y-bonddhu.

Wings : Light teal.

In two or three sizes.

2.—ORANGE AND BLACK.

The same as No. 1, but with an orange body and a black hackle.

Medium size.

3.—RED AND BLACK.

Tail : As in No. 1.

Body : Lower half dark-red ; upper half black pig's wool.

Hackle : Coch-y-bonddhu, with a broad black stripe down the centre.

Wing : Teal.

Medium size.

4.—BLACK AND TEAL.

Tail : As before.

Body : Black ostrich and silver thread.

Hackle : Coch-y-bonddhu.

Wing : Bright, well-marked teal.

Two sizes.

5.—ORANGE.

Tail : Golden floss.

Body : Orange-red pig's wool, ribbed with gold thread.

Hackle : Red, with a short black butt.

Wing : Brown mottled feather from the tail of a woodcock.

Medium size.

6.—YELLOW AND RED.

Tail : Bright-red wool.

Body : Lemon-yellow pig's wool, ribbed with silver twist.

Hackle : Sandy-red.

Wing : Light-speckled turkey.

The wing may be varied with dark mallard instead of the teal.

Medium size.

7.—BLACK AND BLUE.

Tag : Gold thread and orange floss.

Tail : Small orange toucan.

Body : Dark-blue floss-silk.

Hackle : Black floss-silk, ribbed with fine silver twist.

Wing: Golden-pheasant tail (the streaked feather), tippet, and teal over all.

Head: Black.

Longish hook.

8.—ORANGE AND BRONZE.

Tag: Gold twist.

Tail: Tippet sprigs.

Body: Peacock herl, ribbed with fine gold wire.

Hackle: Coch-y-bonddhu at shoulder.

Wing: Two small tippet-feathers.

Cheeks: Kingfisher.

Ribs: Blue macaw.

Longish hook. A good sewin fly.

9.—CLARET.

Tail: Red or yellow floss-silk.

Body: Claret wool, ribbed with gold twist.

Hackle: Grouse, at shoulder.

Wing: Light or dark turkey.

Medium size.

10.—CLARET.

Tag: Gold tinsel.

Tail: Cock of the rock (yellow).

Body: Light-claret pig's wool.

Hackle: Light-claret.

Wings: Under wing of golden-pheasant tippet-feather, over wing brown mallard.

Head: Black ostrich or wool.

Medium size.

11.—APPLE-GREEN.

Tag : Silver twist.

Tail : Gray mallard.

Body : Apple-green floss-silk, hackled with a red hackle, and ribbed with silver twist.

Wing : Mottled woodcock.

Medium size.

12.—CLARET AND ORANGE.

Tag : Silver twist and orange floss-silk.

Tail : Golden-pheasant tippet-sprigs, and green parrot ditto.

Butt : Black ostrich.

Body : Two-thirds of light-claret pig's wool, and one-third dirty-yellow ditto at shoulder.

Hackle : Black, at throat only.

Wing : Dark feather from jay's wing, with tippet strands over it.

Head : Black ostrich.

Medium size.

13.—BLACK AND GRAY.

Tag : Golden-yellow floss-silk.

Tail : Sprigs of red and green parrot and tippet.

Body : Black pig's wool, ribbed with silver twist, and hackled with a black hackle throughout.

Throat : A couple of turns of a jay's blue feather.

Wing: Brown and gray mallard, mixed with fibres of golden-pheasant tail, and four or five sprigs of blue macaw.

Longish hook. A good Irish pattern.

14.—BLACK AND RUBY.

Tail: A small topping.

Body: One turn of ruby-coloured floss-silk, the rest of black ditto, ribbed with silver twist, and a black hackle a third of the way down.

Wing: Darkish feather from the wing of the jay.

Small size.

And now, before I bring this work to a close, I trust that the reader, if he has accompanied me thus far, may have found at least some few practical hints which may prove of service to him. If so, I shall be amply rewarded.

INDEX

- A.
- Alternative, An, 227
 Amateur at work, An, 288
 Angling competitions, The nuisance of, 239
- B.
- Bags, fishing, Plan for, 79
 " " *v.* Baskets, 79
 " Freke fishing, 80
 Banks not to be shaken, 217
 Beds, Chalk and gravel, 6
 " spawning, Care of, 9
 Beginners, Advice to, on fly-tying, 193
 Bends, Kirby and Limerick, 86
 Blow-line, The, 128
 Blue Mahoe, 44
 Brogues, 82
 Butt, Mr. (taxidermist), 33
- C.
- Cast taper, How to make, 72
 " Where to, 213
 Casting dead against wind, 208
 " horizontally, 204
 " in windy weather, 206
 " Overhead and steeple, 203
 " Utility of changing mode of, 209
 " with a cross wind, 209
 " with a dry-fly, 221, 223
 " with a salmon-rod, 309
 Castle keys, The (Lochleven), 236 [299
 Casts, gut, Damping box for, 74,
 " Horsehair, 73
 Change of tactics, A, 227
- Colour, Sensitiveness of fish to, 6
 Coming and refusing, 314
 " " taking, 316
 Convert, A, 221
 Coppersmith and tinsmith, The, 223
 Currell, Mr. G., 56, 192
- D.
- Day of woe, A, 222
 Dead men's shoes, 225
 Derbyshire bumbies, 253
 Detached bodies, 142
 Difficulties, Patience under, 60
 " Self help in, 62
 Disappointed anticipations, 15
 Double-hooked, 232
 Down stream, How to cast, 217
 Drifting, 237
 Dry-fly, why it fails on some rivers, 219
 " " The use of the, 221, 223
- E.
- East wind, An, and its only virtue, 241
 Ephemera and Trichoptera, 101
 " casting their skins, 113
 " Duration of life of, 111
 " The, 102
 'Every fish has its angle,' 218
 Exceptional day, An, 248
 Eyeglass for fly-tying, 199
- F.
- Ferruling, 56
 Fish difficult to discern, 7

- Fish passes, 258
 „ jumping when hooked, 231
 „ Shelter necessary for, 10
 „ shelters, Positions for, 10
 „ spawning, Perils of, 29
 „ tailing, 221
 „ visible from a height, 7
 „ Where to find, 216
 Fishing directly down - stream,
 217
 „ gear, 40
 „ in strange rivers, 284
 „ the water, 101, 287
 „ Wet-fly, hackles *v.* wings
 for, 219
 Flies, 'British Angling,' by Theak-
 stone, 165
 „ Changing, 315
 „ Fancy, 185
 „ 'Floating, and how to dress
 them,' by Halford, 191
 „ Four useful, 142
 „ gut, Damping-box for, 75
 „ lake trout, List of, 242
 „ Local names of, 164
 „ Mr. Richardson's, 99
 „ Old standard (salmon), 315
 Flies, salmon, List of useful :
 Anonyma, 325
 Baron, 326
 Benchill, 327
 Britannia, 327
 Bruce (A), 328
 „ (B), 328
 Butcher, 329
 Champion, 330
 Childers (A), 331
 „ (B), 332
 Dirty Orange, 333
 Doctor (Black), 333
 „ (Blue), 334
 „ (Silver), 334
 Durham Ranger, 336
 Dusty-Miller, 337
 Eagle (Brown), 338
 „ (Yellow), 338
 French's Fancy, 339
 Gitana, 354
 Greenwell, 340
 Grub (Glow-worm), 341
 „ (Spring), 341
 Flies, salmon (*continued*) :
 Infallible, 342
 Jock-Scott, 343
 „ „ (Blue), 344
 Kendle, 344
 Lion, 345
 Mohair Canary, 346
 Mystery (A), 347
 „ (B), 347
 Nepenthian, 356
 Phœbus, 355
 Popham, 348
 Silver Gray, 349
 Stevenson, 351
 Thunder and Lightning,
 352
 Wilkinson, 353
 Flies, salmon, Selection of, ac-
 cording to weather,
 315
 „ „ silver-bodied, The
 use of, 314
 „ „ Small, for low water,
 314
 „ Sunk, 237
 Flies, trout, List of, 117
 Alder, 166
 August Dun, 154
 Black Gnat, 180
 Various Blue Duns :
 Blue Dun, 136
 Gold-ribbed Hare's Ear,
 141
 Little Pale-blue Dun,
 155
 Quill Gnat (Blue), 141
 Bumbles :
 Claret Bumble, 189
 Orange Bumble, 188
 Coachman, 187
 Coch-y-Bonddhu, 184
 Cowdung, 183
 Gold-eyed Gauze-wing,
 180
 Governor, 187
 Grannom, 171
 Hawthorn Fly, 177
 Iron-blue Dun, 149
 Jenny Spinner, 152
 July Dun, 154
 March Brown, 132

Flies, Trout (*continued*) :

Various Mayflies :

- Gray Drake, 122, 131
- Hammond's Champion, 126, 130
- Mayfly, 121
- Spent Gnat, 126, 130
- Needle Brown, 174

Various Olive Duns :

- Olive Dun, 141
- " (Dark), 142
- " (Medium), 142
- " (Light), 142
- " Badger (The Olive Spinner), 145
- " Detached, 145
- " Quill, Hackled, 145

Peacock Fly, 178

Red Ant, 182

Various Red Spinners :

- Brown Badger, 162
- " Spinner, 163
- Claret Spinner, 163
- Detached Badger, 163
- Hackle Red Spinner, 162
- Light Mackerel, 161
- Red Quill, 164
- " Spinner, 161, 162
- " Spinner, Great, 159, 161

Red Tag, 186

Various Sedge-flies :

- Big Cinnamon, 169
- Dark Sedge, 170
- Orange Sedge, 170
- Sand Fly, 169
- Silver Sedge (Large), 169
- Silver Sedge (Small), 169

Silver Horns, 175

Stone Fly, 119 [186]

Wickham's Fancy, 125,

Various Yellow Duns :

- Aldam's Indian Yellow, 148
- Flight's Fancy, 148
- Hare's Ear Yellow Dun, 148.

Flies, Trout (*continued*) :

- Little Marryat, 148
- Whitchurch Dun, 147
- Yellow Dun, 145

Fly, dry, How to use, 220

- " salmon, Placing a, 309
- " The right and the wrong, 95

Fly-tyer, The experiences of an amateur, 191

Fly-tying by lamplight, 199

- " Pleasure derivable from, 192

Foul-hooked, 232

G.

Gaff, The Berthon folding, 302

Gaffing a salmon, 318

Gaffs, 301

Gilling and killing, 318

- " Difference in weight of salmon after, 318

Give and take, 230

Good hands, The value of, 230

Good style, 312

Grayling, 230, 245

- " Casting for, 246
- " Edible qualities of, 250
- " fishing, Best months for, 247
- " fishing, Weather and time of day suitable for, 251
- " flies, Selection of, 253
- " " Yorkshire, 252
- " mouth, Delicacy and shape of, 249
- " Origin of, 250
- " Peculiarity of, when rising at a fly, 246
- " Relative size of, 246
- " Rising qualities of, 248
- " Shape of, 249
- " spawn-eaters, as, 251
- " Spawning of, 247
- " sporting fish, a, 247
- " stream, Advantage of a, 248
- " Streams suitable for, 246
- " Tactics of, when hooked, 247

- Grayling, Virtues of, 249
 Greenheart, 42
 Green Inn, The (Lochleven), 242
 Gut, knot, How to, 73
 „ Manufacture of, 71
 „ Salmon, 298
 „ „ casting lines, 298
 „ Selection of, 73
 „ Soaking of, 74, 299
 „ Staining, 299
 „ tips, 299
 „ Trout, 70
 „ Varieties of, 71
- H.
 Hands, Value of good, 230
 Hickory, 44
 'Homes without Hands' (Quotations), 102
 Hook, How to extract, 62
 Hooks, Bad batch of, 88
 „ Double, 321
 „ Pennell (Salmon), 322
 „ „ (Trout), 89
 „ Salmon, gut loops and metal eyes, 320
 „ Trout, 84
 „ „ Bend of, 86
 „ „ Good, requirements of, 84
 „ „ lightness essential,
 „ „ Shape of, 85 [88
 „ „ Size of, 92
 „ „ strength necessary, 87
 „ „ eyed, advantages of, 90
 „ Trout, eyed, disadvantages of, 90
 „ Trout, eyed, Hall's pattern *v.* Pennell's, 91
 „ Trout, eyed, How to tie on, 91
 „ Trout, eyed, Prejudices against, 92
 „ Trout, eyed, recommended by Wade, 90
 „ Trout, eyed, shape of eye, 91
 „ Trout, eyed, *v.* hooks tied on gut, 89
- Horsehair casts, 73
 Humility, The virtue of, 219
- I.
 Improving a river, 279
 Inland Fisheries Act, 12
- K.
 Kirby and Spence (quotations), 112, 113
 Knots in gut, Cutting out, 75
- L.
 Landing a fish, 231
 Larval period, Duration of, 111
 Law of retaliation, 252
 Line, broken, How to splice, 61
 „ Length of, to be used, 312
 „ salmon, Casting with, 310
 „ „ Picking of, the water, 310
 „ Slack, 203
 „ „ Use of, 203, 210, 311
 „ winder, Farlow's patent, 69
 Lines, drying after use, 69
 „ Eaton and Deller's patent trout, 67
 „ Long *v.* short, 226
 „ new, To uncoil, 69
 „ Salmon, 297
 „ Silk and hair, 68
 „ Tapered, 68
 „ Trout, 66
 Local nomenclature, 274
 Loch, How to fish a, 237
 „ fishing, 234
 „ „ Dangers of, 249
 „ „ Flies suitable for, 242
 Lochleven, Months best for fishing on, 241
 „ Reminiscences of, 235
 „ trout, Fighting qualities of, 239
 Loch trout, Feeding grounds of, 240
- M.
 Mackintosh coat and square, 83
 Materials, Good, necessary for fly-tying, 197

- Mayfly, The, 121
 „ Drying the, 127
 „ Gray Drake, 122, 131
 „ Mr. Green's pattern, 126
 „ Spent Gnat, 125, 131
 „ Transportation of, 111
 Mayflies, Patterns of, 130, 131
 „ varieties of patterns, 126
 Messengers (salmon fishing), 304
 'Much ado about nothing,' 214
- N.
- Nets, Landing, 76
 „ „ Long Staff for, 77
 „ „ Materials for, 78
 „ „ Shape of, 76, 78
 „ „ Short-handled, 77
- O.
- Obstructions (salmon rivers), 258
 Olive Dun, The, as a grayling fly, 249
 Order and disorder, 197
- P.
- Parr, The, 274
 Patience under difficulties, 60
 Plausible pollution, 26
 Playing a fish, 228, 316
 Pliers-cutting, Use of, 62
 Pollution of Hampshire Wey, 10
 „ Rivers, 25
 „ „ Act, 1876, 25
 „ „ „ Inactivity regarding, 26
 Pollution of Rivers, Salmon, 257
 Pool, Fishing a, 312
 Potted fish (salmon fishing), 290
- Q.
- Quiet way of doing things, 216
- R.
- Ramsbottom, Mr. (Manchester), 71
 Red-deer suet, Use of, 70
 „ „ Caution regarding, 70
 Reel, A, gone wrong, 61
 „ To take to pieces, 66
- Rivers, Alteration of, by floods, 284
 Rocky rivers and small trout, 18
 Rods, Trout, 41
 „ Binding when broken, 59
 „ Cane, 44
 „ Castle-Connell, 54
 „ Fittings of, 56
 „ Ferruling, 56
 „ Foster's, Mr., steel-centred, 51
 „ Length of, 53
 „ Material and workmanship, 43
 „ rings, 57
 „ Selection of, 49
 „ Shape of, 48
 „ spears, 58
 „ Spliced *v.* ferruled, 54
 „ St. Lucas, 52
 „ Wear and tear of, 47
- S.
- Salmon, Carrying, 319
 „ casts, gut, Damping-box for, 299
 „ fly, Action of, 306
 „ „ box, 303
 „ „ How to fasten, 300
 „ „ Parts of, 322
 „ „ Placing a, 309
 „ flies, Hints on making, 357,
 „ flies, List of useful, 324
 „ life, 259
 „ Necessity of fishing down streams for, 308
 „ Playing a, 316
 „ rivers, Care of, 276
 „ „ Pollution of, 257
 „ „ Weed-cutting on, 280 [311
 „ rod, How to hold, 308,
 „ „ Working a, 309
 „ rods, 293
 „ „ Rings for, 296
 „ „ Spliced, 296
 „ Speed of when ascending rivers, 271

- Salmon, Speed extraordinary in the sea, 272
 " Striking a, 316
 " Sulking, 304, 318
 " tackle, Testing of, 300
Salmo ferox, 37
 Salmonidæ migratory, Classification of, 275
 Salmonidæ migratory, Varieties and differences, 275
 Science and sport, 97
 'School-board education,' 231
 Scissors, 198
 Sea-trout fishing, 363
 " " Flies for, 364
 Self-help in difficulties, 62
 'Sell, A,' 230
 Sewin, The, 274
 Sight, Keeping out of, 214
 Silk-tying, Good and bad, 195
 " How to wax, 59
 " Waxing, 59, 196
 Slice of luck, A, 225
 Spawn-eaters, Early condition of, 31
 Spawning-beds, 9
 " " Necessity for cleanliness of, 26
 Spawning, Process of, 30
 Spinners, 156
 " Dressings of, 159
 'Sport-spoilers,' 15
 Spots, Likely, 216
 Spring fish and early rivers, 272
 Stockings and socks for fishing brogues, 82
 Streams apparently barren, 215
 " overstocked, 8
 'Streams within streams,' 223
 Striking reel from, The reasons against, 211
 Striking, right way and wrong, 211
 Switching, 204, 227
 " Value of, 312
- T.
- Taking places, 286
 Testing a fish, 230
 Theory, Mr. Kelson's (salmon fishing), 313
- 'Time wasted,' 96
 Top rod, Spare, 58
 Trays, wooden, Use of, 199
 Trichoptera, 104
 Trout, brown, Early condition of in lower test, 23
 " Common, 5
 " " Varieties in same river, 22
 " " Varying colour of, 6
 " Description of rivers suitable for, 5
 " Deterioration of, with age, 8
 " Experimental feeding of, 35
 " flies, List of, 117
 " fishing season, Abridgement of, 14
 " fishing season, abridgement of, Objection to, 14
 " Fly food essential for, 6
 " Growth of, 35
 " Kimbridge, The, 212
 " Large in Lower Test, 33
 " Large in Lower Test, Mr. Kendle's specimens, 33
 " Late spawning, 31
 " Lochleven, 19
 " Loss of sporting qualities and partial cause of ditto, 8
 " Over-large detrimental to a river, 8
 " reels, 64
 " Test, 22
 " rod, Casting with a, 201
 " rod, Different styles of casting with, 201
 " rod, How to cast with a, 202
 " rod, Use of, 200
 " small, Beauty of, 18
 " Spawning, 28
 " spawning season varying in rivers, 13
 " stream, A ruined, 24
 " " Value of, 278
 " Thames, 36
 " Varieties of in river Test, 22

- Trout, transportation of, Experimental, 21
- True sport, 128
- „ Test trout, 22
- Tweed fishery, reports, Extract from preface of, 261
- Tweed fishery, reports, Questions and answers from, 262
- Tweed fishery, reports, Summary of information, 269
- Tweezers, 198
- U.
- Unbeliever, An, 220
- V.
- Value of a river well cared for, 276
- Varnish, Recipe for, 197
- Varnishing, 197
- Vice, A, and its virtues, 195
- „ for fly-tying, 194
- „ „ Mr. Holland's pattern, 194
- W.
- Waders, Danger of not using, 81
- „ „ using, 81
- Wading, Advantages and disadvantages of, 215
- Wading boots, Mr. Cording's, 82
- „ garments, 80
- Wandering fish, 224
- 'Want of skill conducive to success,' 238
- Washaba, 43
- Water and weather, 290
- Water-cress farming, Evil effects of, 11
- Water-drowner, The, 29
- Water-flies, Beauty of, 97
- Water-keeper, Duties of a, 278
- Water, Temperature of, 272
- Water, the, How to face (salmon-fishing), 309
- Waxed silk, 59
- 'Weed-cutting fiend, The,' 16
- „ net, 281
- Wet fly fishing, Hackles *v.* wings for, 219
- Wet fly *v.* dry, 218
- Wey, The Hampshire, 10
- 'Wickham's Fancy,' The virtues of, 125
- Winch fittings, 58
- Wings *v.* bodies, 98
- Y.
- 'Yarrell's British Fishes,' 4
- „ classification of Salmonidæ, 4

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70



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