

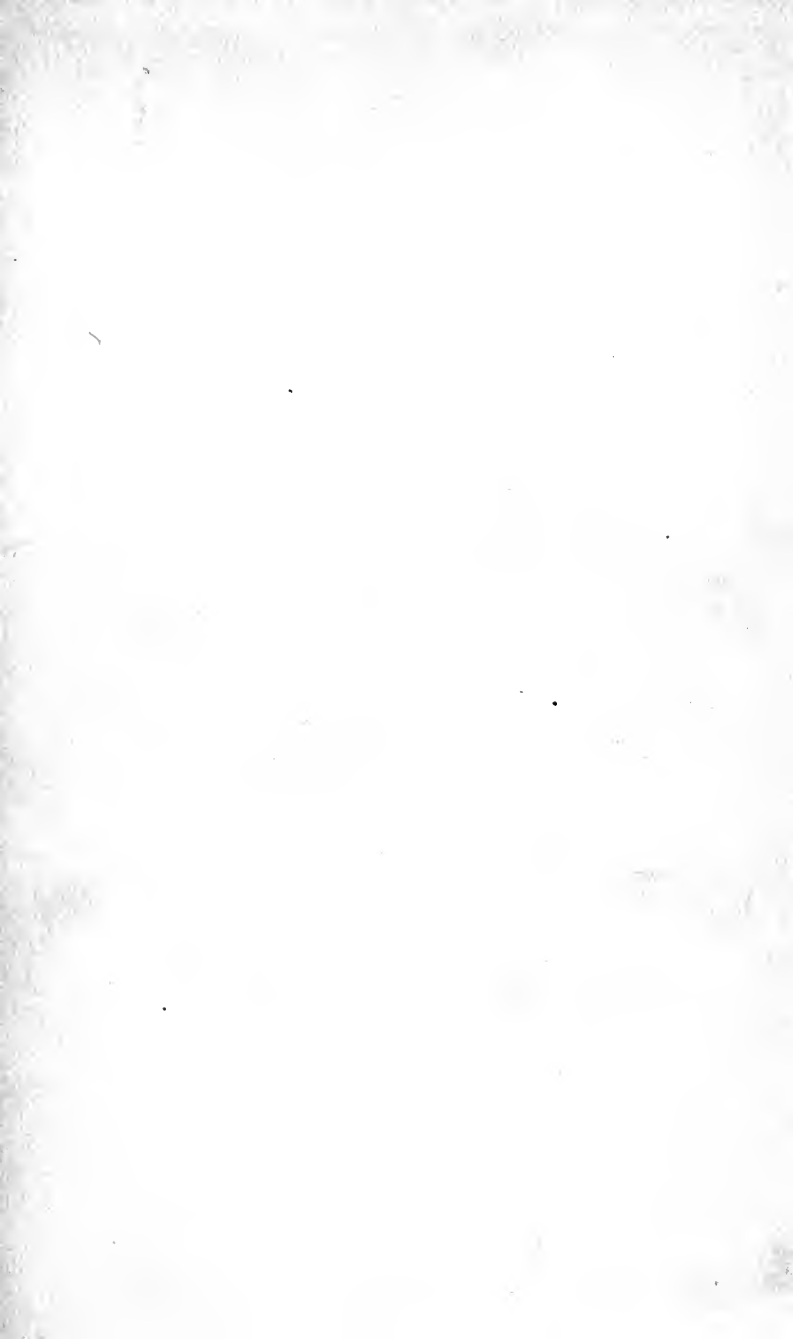
ANCIENT  
ANGLING AUTHORS

TURRELL



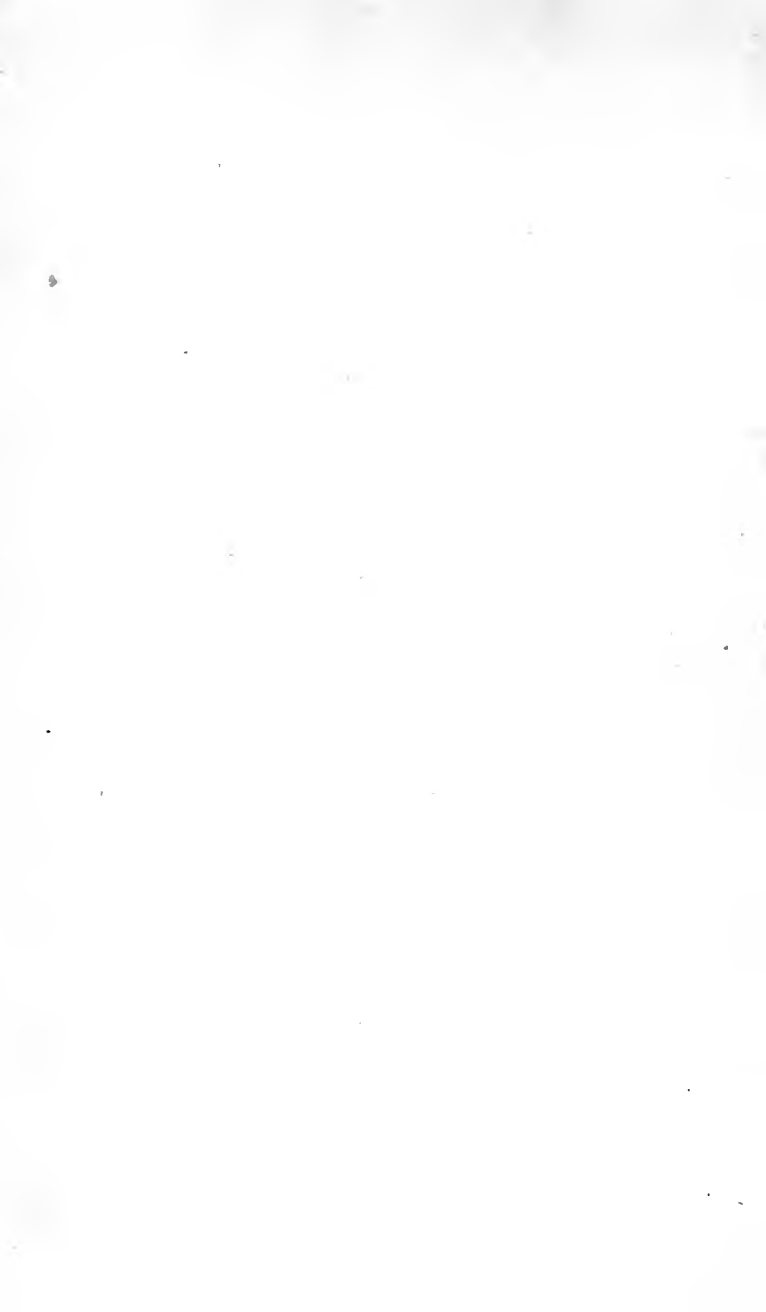
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ANCIENT ANGLING AUTHORS



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**Here begynnyth the treatyse of fysshynge wpyth an Angle.**



**S**alamon in his parables sayth that a good spyryte makyth a flourynge aege; that is a fayre aege & a longe. And syth it is soo: I aske this questyon. Whiche ben the meanes & the causes that enduce a man in to a mery spyryte. Truly to my beste dyscrecion it semeth good dysportes & honeste gamys in whom a man Joyeth wpythout ony repentance after. Thenne folowpyth it þat gode dysportes & honeste games ben cause of manns fayre aege & longe life. And therefore now woll I chose of foure good dysportes & honeste gamys; that is to wyte: of huntynge: hawkynge: fysshynge: & foulynge. The beste to my simple dyscrecion whiche is fysshynge: callyd Anglynge wpyth a rodde: and a lyne

Illustration of an Angler, from *The Treatyse of Fysshynge wpyth an Angle*.



# ANCIENT ANGLING AUTHORS

BY W. J. TURRELL.

“Fishing, if I a fisher may protest,  
Of pleasures is the sweet'st, of sports the best,  
Of exercises the most excellent.  
Of recreations the most innocent.  
But now the sport is marde, and wott ye why?  
Fishes decrease, and fishers multiply.”

*Chrestoleros*, THOMAS BASTARD, 1598.



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

GURNEY AND JACKSON  
10 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.

1910



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T8

TO

THOSE BRETHREN OF THE ANGLE

“THAT HATE CONTENTIONS, AND LOVE QUIETNESSE, AND  
VERTUE, AND ANGLING”

THIS WORK IS FRATERNALLY DEDICATED



## FOREWORD

THERE are probably many anglers who, whilst pursuing their contemplative recreation, have at some time wondered by whom and at what date the various forms of fishing-tackle, and the different methods of angling, were first introduced: this work on the ancient angling authors is the outcome of an attempt to satisfy that natural curiosity.

Though only English angling literature is here dealt with, it must not therefore be inferred either that the art of angling originated in England, or that the first treatise upon it appeared in the English language. On the contrary, the origin of angling is lost in the impenetrable depths of pre-historic times: the paintings on the Egyptian tombs show that fishing, by methods not very dissimilar from those in use at the present day, was practised in the East from the earliest periods of which any records exist. Moreover, not only did the ancient Egyptians practise the art of angling in order to appease the pangs of hunger and to delight their palates, but even in those early days the capture

of fish afforded both amusement and sport, for we are told that then the aristocratic form of fishing was with the fishing spear or bident, and that the use of the net and the hook was relegated to the lower classes.

Among the many ancient writers who either refer to, or deal with, angling in their works, the following especially call for notice.

Pliny, in his *Historia Naturalis*, a work written in the first century of our era, recognised seventy-four varieties of fish, and it is worthy of note that even at that early date, he correctly classified the whales among the *Beluæ* and not among the *Pisces*.

Julius Pollux, of Naucratis in Egypt, a Greek sophist and grammarian, in his work, the *Onomasticon*, which was written before A.D. 177, mentions the use of lines made from the hair of stallions, and bamboo rods so slender that they scarcely threw any shadow on the surface of the water. He describes the method of spearing fish by torch-light, leistering or "burning the water," as it is now termed in Scotland; and he also refers to the use of leads, cast-nets, dragnets, etc.

Oppian, who lived about the end of the second century, wrote a work, divided into five books: *Halieuticks, of the Nature of Fishes, and the Fishing of the Ancients*. The two following extracts from William Diaper's translation (1722) of part of this book show that the eel basket, the taper rod, the line, etc., were known in the time of the author, and

also that the pursuit of the art then afforded considerable pleasure :—

Besides loud threat'ning Storms, and sudden Winds,  
 He meets vast Whales, and monstrous nameless Kinds.  
 The slender-woven Net, vimineous Weel,  
 The taper Angle, Line, and barbed Steel,  
 Are all the Tools his constant Toil employs ;  
 On Arms like these the Fishing Swain relies.

Thither the thronging Boats with Pleasure hast,  
 You in the central Depth the Plummet cast.  
 The willing Fish around ambitious wait,  
 Fly to the Line, and fasten on the Bait  
 While You with Joy the grateful Prey receive,  
 And from the wounding Steel his Jaw relieve :  
 Well pleas'd You see him gasp, and lab'ring breath,  
 And long in sportive Pain his struggling Body wreath.

The vimineous weel was a kind of trap made of twigs or withies. Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* (printed first in 1621), refers to the use of "weeles" in what he calls a kind of "hunting by water." The famous author of this mine of learning commends fishing, and deals with Plutarch's view, which he quotes :—

Plutarch, in his book *de soler. animal* speaks against all fishing, "as a filthy, base, illiberal employment, having neither wit nor perspicacity in it, nor worth the labour." But he that shall consider the variety of baits for all seasons, and pretty devices which our anglers have invented, peculiar lines, false flies, several sleights, etc. will say, that it deserves like commendation, requires as much study and perspicacity as the rest, and is to be preferred before many of them. Because hawking and hunt-

ing are very laborious, much riding, and many dangers accompany them; but this is still and quiet: and if so be the angler catch no fish, yet he hath a wholesome walk to the brookside, pleasant shade by the sweet silver streams; he hath good air, and sweet smells of fine fresh meadow flowers, he hears the melodious harmony of birds, he sees the swans, herons, ducks, water hens, coots, &c., and many other fowl, with their brood, which he thinketh better than the noise of hounds, or blast of horns, and all the sport that they can make.

In the third century the *magnum opus* of Claudius Aelian, *De Natura Animalium*, was written: the seventeenth book of this work contains a most interesting reference to the use of the artificial fly. Aelian refers to the Macedonians, who lived on the banks of the river Astraeus, and were wont to catch a certain spotted fish (in all probability trout) by means of an artificial fly, which they called the *hippourus*.<sup>1</sup>

The natural fly, from which the *hippourus* was imitated, was an insect, about the size of a hornet, which buzzed like a bee, and was marked like a wasp: it could not be used in the natural state because it was of too delicate a bloom and of too frail a structure, and it was therefore necessary to imitate it by an artful device. This consisted in wrapping scarlet wool round a hook, and then affixing two wings from the wattles of a cock, suit-

<sup>1</sup> The *hippourus* was probably so called from its resemblance to the horse-hair crest then worn on helmets.



ably coloured by the use of wax. The fly so dressed must have borne some resemblance to a modern chub fly. The rod which they used was 6 feet in length, and to it was attached a line of a similar length.

A Latin poem written by Richard de Fournival about the thirteenth century alludes incidentally to fishing, and from this work it appears that the fly and the worm were among the lures then used by anglers, and that the eel basket and spear were also in use.

The foregoing brief notes from the ancient Greek and Latin authors will serve to illustrate the development to which angling had attained at the time when it was first introduced into England.

Although there were many books treating more or less of fishing, they appear to have dealt with the art of angling incidentally; the object of the authors seems to have been more to illustrate the customs and habits of fishermen and the natural history of the fish, than to give instruction in angling. It may therefore, I think, be fairly claimed that the *Treatyse of ffysshynge wyth an Angle*, was not only the first angling manual in England, but was also the first practical work of the kind written in any language. From the date of the appearance of this book, the gradual and steady evolution of the art of angling, etc., from the rough and ready forms of fishing then in vogue, to the artistic and scientific methods now practised in the various branches of the sport, can

be readily traced by reference to the subsequent English angling authors.

The question, however, still remains, whence did the compiler of the *Treatyse of ffysshynge wyth an Angle* derive his or her information for the composition of such a book? There can, I think, be little doubt that this notable work was a compilation from the old manuscripts written and preserved by generations of monks in the various monasteries: and it is most probable that the original manuscripts were brought over from the French abbeys.

That such old manuscripts on fishing did exist is proved by a paper, mentioned in Blakey's *Angling Literature*, which was read before a society of antiquaries at Arras, in France, and entitled, "On an old manuscript treatise on fishing, found among the remains of the valuable library belonging to the Abbey of St Bertins, at St Omer." This work, which was much mutilated, was supposed to have been written about the year 1000, and to have been divided into twenty-two chapters. The primary object of the author appears to have been to show that fishermen were exceptionally favoured with the Divine approbation, but appended to the work there was "a full list of all river fish, the baits used for taking them, and the suitable seasons for angling for each sort of fish."

In compiling my work on ancient angling authors I have endeavoured as far as possible to quote the

old writers verbatim, preserving their punctuation, their spelling, and their prodigal use of capitals.

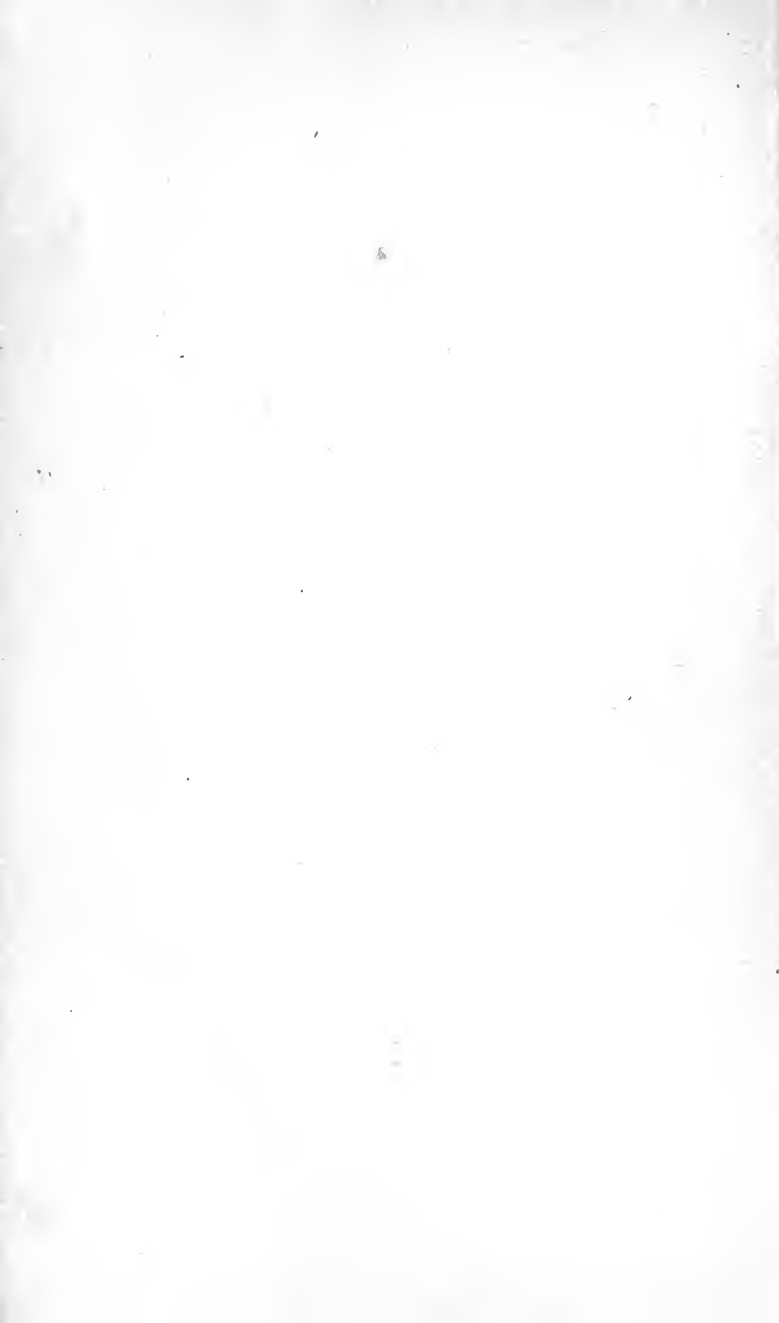
The passages quoted have in most cases been selected for their practical bearing on the sport, with a view to showing the development of angling in England.

In conclusion, I must not omit to acknowledge the valuable assistance which I have obtained from that wonderfully complete catalogue of angling books, Westwood and Satchell's *Bibliotheca Piscatoria*, and I must also express my indebtedness to the Librarian of the Bodleian Library, for the kind permission which enabled me to obtain the photographs used for the illustration of this book. In another direction I have to express my cordial thanks to Mr E. Fordham Spence, for many valuable suggestions during the progress of my work; and I am also indebted to Mr James Dallas, for his assistance during the passing of the book through the press.



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Illustration of an Angler, from *The Treatyse of Ffysshynge wyth an Angle* . . . . *Frontispiece*
2. Illustration of Man Pike-fishing, from *Dyalogus creaturarum moralizatus* . . . . *Face page 5*
3. Title-page of *The Secrets of Angling* . . . . „ 43
4. Title-page of the First Edition of Walton's *The Compleat Angler* . . . . „ 93
5. Title-page of Venables' *Experienc'd Angler* . . . . „ 112



# ANCIENT ANGLING AUTHORS

## CHAPTER I

THE earliest description of fishing in the English language occurs in Ælfric's *Colloquy*, to which the Rev. W. Skeat, Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Cambridge, was the first to draw attention in a paper, entitled "The Oldest English Treatise on Fishing," which he contributed to the *Anglers' Note Book*. The colloquy was written by Ælfric the Abbot, about the end of the tenth century, to teach his pupils Latin, and for this purpose was written in English (Anglo-Saxon), with the Latin translation beneath. It is arranged as a conversation between the master and his pupil, the latter in turns figuring as a huntsman, a fisherman, and a falconer ; thus :

Hwylcne cræft canst thu ?

*M[agister]*. Qualem artem scis tu ?

Ic eom Fiscere

*P[iscator]*. Ego sum Piscator.

The following portion, which relates to fishing, is translated from Thorpe's *Analecta Anglo-Saxonica* :—

*M.* What trade are you acquainted with?

*P.* I am a fisherman.

*M.* What do you get by your trade?

*P.* Food, clothes, and money.

*M.* How do you catch the fish?

*P.* I go out in my boat, put forth my nets in the river, throw forth the hook and the baskets, and whatever they catch I take.

*M.* What do you do if the fish happen to be unclean?

*P.* I throw out the unclean and take the clean ones to eat.

*M.* Where do you sell your fish?

*P.* In the city.

*M.* Who buys them?

*P.* The citizens: I am unable to catch as many as I can sell.

*M.* What kind of fish do you catch?

*P.* Eels, pike, minnows, eel pouts,<sup>1</sup> trout, and lampreys, and as many other kinds as swim in the river.

*M.* Why don't you fish in the sea?

*P.* I do sometimes, but not often, because it is a long voyage to the sea.

*M.* What do you catch in the sea?

*P.* Herrings, salmon, dolphins, sturgeons, oysters, crabs, mussels, periwinkles, cockles, plaice, soles, lobsters, and many others of a similar kind.

*M.* Would you like to catch a whale?

*P.* No, I should not.

*M.* Why?

*P.* Because it is dangerous to catch whales. It

<sup>1</sup> The eel pout, referred to as a river fish, is probably the burbot, the restocking with which is advised by Mascall (see page 28).



is safer for me to go to the river with my boat, than to go hunting whales with many boats.

*M.* Why so?

*P.* Because I prefer to catch a fish, which I am able to kill, rather than one, who is able to sink and kill with one stroke, not only myself, but also my companions.

*M.* But nevertheless many men catch whales, and so obtain great profit.

*P.* You speak truly, but I dare not owing to the sluggishness of my spirit.

It is a long jump from the tenth to the fifteenth century, but during the intervening period, with the exception of a few statutes relating to fishing, I am not aware of any mention of angling in English literature.

Mr Hartshorne has published in his *Ancient Metrical Tales*, 1829, a poem taken from a manuscript by Piers of Fulham, which is supposed to have been written about the beginning of the fifteenth century. The original manuscript is in Trinity College, Cambridge.

The following extracts are taken from Mr Hartshorne's book :—

Loo worshipfull Sirs here after ffolleweth a gentlymanly Tretyse full convenyent for contemplatiff louers to rede and understond made by a noble Clerke Piers of ffulham sum tyme ussher of Venus Schole, whiche hath brieflye compyled many praty conceytis in loue under covert termes of ffysshyng and ffowlyng.

Perdimus anguillam manibus dum stringimus illam.

Mr Piers seems to have been a somewhat pessimistic angler, and to have fully appreciated the difficulties and disappointments of the art of angling.

A man that lovith ffishyng and fflowlyng bothe,  
 Ofte tyme that lyff shall hym be lothe,  
 In see in ryver in ponde or in poole,  
 Off that crafte thowe he knowe the scole,  
 Thought his nett never so wide streiche,  
 It happith full ofte hym naught to ketchē.  
 What fische is slipperer than an ele?  
 Ffor whan thow hym grippist and wenest wele  
 Too haue hym siker right as the list,  
 Than faylist thou off hym, he is owte of thy fyst.  
 Diches sumtyme there samons used to haunte,  
 Lampreyes lucys or pykys plesaunt,  
 Wenyng the ffisher suche fische to ffynde;  
 Than comyth there a noyous north west wynde  
 And dryveth the ffishē into the depe,  
 And causeth the draught nat worthe a leeke;  
 But in steide off sturgeon and lamprons  
 He draweth up gurnard, and goions,  
 Codlyng cungr, and such coisy fische,  
 Or wulwiche rochis, nat worthe a rysshe.  
 Suche fortune ofte tymes on ffishers fallys,  
 Though they on Petir prayen and callys.

The poem is too long to give in full, but I quote the two couplets following to show that the poet was possessed of some sportsmanlike instincts:—

And ete the olde fische, and leve the yonge,  
 Thought they moore towgh be upon the tonge.

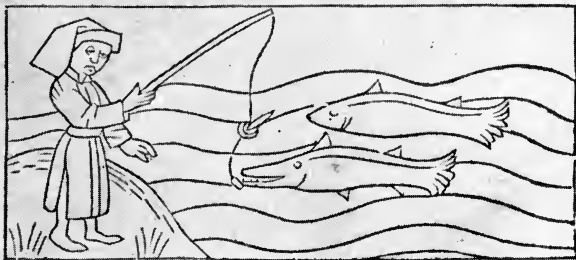
But stynkkyng fische, and unseasonable,  
 Latte passe, and taake such as be able.

Some anglers, when they return an undersized fish to the water cut off a small portion of the caudal fin, in



rixari Sic enim nullus cum ignoto sine despecto certamen as-  
 sumat. quia in persona virtus non est sed in corde ac ingenio bel-  
 latoris Soliach desperit dauid sed ab eo interfectus est primo  
 regum xvij. **C**ave etiam propter iram et cupiditatem vindicte plium  
 inire. quia iratus semper putat se plus posse super omnes ideo mi-  
 noratur **U**nde seneca **S**emper iratus plus putat se posse quam possit  
**E**t idem legem solet obliuisci iracundia **U**n phis lex videt ira-  
 tum. iratus non videt illam **C**apropter abscondenda est ab ani-  
 mo **Q**uia sicut dicitur puer. xvij. **I**ra non habet misericordi-  
 am propter hoc nunquam iudex aliquam sententiam iratus proferre  
 debet **L**egitur in cronicis imperatorum quod otto primus cum in pascha-  
 li solemnitate principibus suis conuiuium preparasset antequam  
 sederet cuiusdam principis filius more puerili de mensa fer-  
 culum accepit. quem dapifer iratus fuisse prostravit **Q**uod cer-  
 nens pedagogus pueri turbatus ipsum dapiferum mox pere-  
 mit **Q**uem cum sine audientia cesar motus condemnare vel-  
 let ille cesarem ad terram deiecit et suffocare cepit **Q**ui dum  
 de manibus eius vix erutus fuisset ipsum reseruari iussit. se cul-  
 pabilem clamans quod festo debitum honorem non detulit **U**-  
 de ipsum libere abire permisit

**De lucio et trinchha Dialogus quadragiesimus quartus**



**P**iscator quidam piscabatur **U**nde escam inhamatam  
 piscibus ostendebat **L**ucius autem et trinchha intuen-  
 tes escam ipsam plurimum peroptabant **S**ed lucius ige-  
. e . i

Illustration of a Man Pike-fishing, from *Dyalogus Creaturarum Moralizatus*.

order that they may be able to identify it, if they should happen to catch it again: other fishermen condemn this practice, stating that it is unsportsmanlike to mutilate fish in this manner, and also that these marks are not sufficiently distinctive for the purpose of identification. In relation to this an extract from an old and a very rare work may prove interesting. In 1480 a Latin book, entitled *Dialogus creaturarum optime moralizatus*, was published, and of this a translation appeared about the year 1520, entitled "The Dialoges of Creatures Moralyed. Applyably and edificatyfly, to euey mery and jocunde mater, of late translated out of latyn into our Englysshe tonge right profitable to the gouernaunce of man."

The forty-eighth dialogue treats

#### OF A FISSHER AND A LYTYLL FISSH.

A fisser as he fished he cawght a lytell ffish and whan he wolde haue kylled him he spake and sayde. O gentyll Fisser haue mercye uppon me, for yf thou kyl me thou shalt haue but lytel auantage of me. But & if thou wilt suffre me to go fre and delyeuer me from this daunger & captuitye I promise to God and to the, that I shall cawse the to haue greate wynnyng, for I shal retourne unto the daylye withe greate multitude of ffishes and I shall lede them in to thy nettis. To whom the fisser sayd. How shall I mowe knowe the emonge so many ffishes. Then sayd ye ffish. Cut of a lytell of my tayle that thou mayst know me emong al othir. The fisser gaue credence to his woordis and cut of his tayle & let him go. This lytel ffish was

euer uncurteys, for contrary to his promyse he lettyd the fissher as oftyn as he shuld fissh, and withdrewe ye fisshes from him and sayd. faders and worshipfull senyours be ye ware of that deceyuar for he deceyuyd me, & cut of my tayle, and so shall he serue you if ye be not ware. And, yf ye beleue not me, beleue his workis that apere upon me. And thus saynge the fissh shewyd them his tayle that was cut. Wherfor the fisshes abhorryd ye fyssher and fled from him in al possible haste. The fissher usid no more fysshinge, wherfore he leuyd in great pouerte. Of fortune it happid so that a longe while aftir the fissher cawght agayne the same fissh emonge othir. And whan he knew him he kylled him cruelly and sayde

He that hath a good turn and is uncurteys agayn  
It is veray rightfull that he be therfore slayne.

Among many other woodcuts in this book, there is the earliest known illustration of an angler fishing with a float. A photographic reproduction of this illustration, taken from a copy of the first edition of this work in the Bodleian Library, is given. Bencath this woodcut the following didactic dialogue appears:—

#### OF A LUCE AND A TENCHE (Dialogo xliiii.)

Vppon a tyme ther was a Fissher that fished, and hydde his hookis sotellye, and shewid unto the fissh the delycyows bayte. A Luce and a Tenche beholdynge the pleasaunte bayte, desyrid it greatlye. But the Luce was wytty, and sayd to the Tenche. This mete semyth very good and delicate, but neuerthelesse I trowe that it be putte here to

disceyue Fisshes. Therfor let us forsake it, that we be not loste by the fowle apetyte of glotonye. Trincha than spake and sayde. It is but folye to forsake soo goode a morsell, and so delycyous, for a lytle vayne dred for rathir I my self shal attaste of it first, & dyne with it with great plesure and swettenesse. And Tarye thou and beholde my chaunce. And whyle that she swalowyd in the mete, she felte the hokys that were hydde. And she wolde fayne haue retournyd bakwarde, but the Fisser pluckyd her up to him, and the Luce fledde swyftlye and sayde thus.

Of othir mennys sorowe corected mote we be,  
Euyr that fro parell we mowe escape free.

It is curious to look back from the present time, when ladies are taking so active a part in most of the so-called "manly" sports, and to find that the first existing work on angling in the English language is attributed to a lady writer, one Dame Juliana Berners, or Barnes.

This work, entitled the *Treatyse of ffysshynge wyth an Angle*, was first printed in 1496, and was published then as part of the *Book of St Albans*. It seems probable, however, that the treatise on fishing was compiled some time before this date.

Mr Joseph Haslewood, in the introductory notes to his facsimile reproduction of the *Book of St Albans* (1810), says: "The period of writing this treatise may be fixed, with some confidence, to have been early in the fifteenth century." He calls attention to the fact that allusion is made in the

treatise to "the ryght noble and full worthy prynce the Duke of Yorke, late called Mayster of the Game," and identifies the Duke of York here referred to with Edmund of Langley, the fifth son of Edward III., who died 1st August 1402; and Mr Haslewood argues, "the word *late* in the above passage distinctly shows his name and person were recent in memory in the time of our author."

There is in existence, in the possession of Mr Denison, a portion of the treatise in manuscript, differing somewhat in the orthography and also slightly in certain passages from the printed work. Of this manuscript Mr Thomas Satchell printed and published 400 copies in 1882. He says:—

That it is an independent text cannot be doubted, and in this opinion we are supported by the high authority of the Rev. Professor Skeat, who is inclined to assign it an earlier date than 1450. Though probably an older form of the treatise printed at Westminster 1496, it is drawn from the same original, which, where ever it first came from, was at that time written in our language. The close correspondence in many passages forbids the idea that the two versions were independent translations from another tongue.

The authorship of the *Book of St Albans*, including the *Treatyse of ffysshynge*, appears to have been attributed to Dame Juliana Berners on very slender evidence. At the end of that portion of the book which deals with hunting, there is the following colophon: "Explicit dame Julyans Bernes." Hence



the dame Julyans Bernes has been credited with the authorship of the whole work, and is inferred to have been a certain Juliana Berners, a daughter of Sir James Berners, who was beheaded on Tower-hill in 1388; and she is further supposed, though upon what evidence is not clear, to have been the Abbess or Prioress of Sopwell Nunnery in Hertfordshire.

The following weighty arguments against this theory are given in the article on Caxton in Dr Andrew Kippis' *Biographia Britannica* (2nd ed., 1784, p. 364 *note*):—

But the next most famous book that was printed at St Albans, and, it seems, with Caxton's letter, is all we shall here take notice of, as the off-spring in these early times of that press; and it is the rather not to be omitted, because of divers mistakes that have been made, concerning both it, and its author. This book treats of Hunting, Hawking, and Heraldry; and is ascribed to an illustrious and heroic Lady, of great gifts in body and mind; a second Minerva in her studies, and another Diana in her diversions; in short, an ingenious *Virago*, as Bale and Pits call her, who lived about 1460, and yet she was no less than an Abbess, as Sir Henry Chauncy, or Prioress, as Dr Middleton stiles her, of the strict and mortified Nunnery at Sopwell in Hertfordshire; who says also, that she was sister to Richard Lord Berners of Essex. But that the said Juliana Barnes was such a religious Lady and so nobly descended, no author, as yet, has attempted to prove. As for the book in question, it has been sometimes called *The Gentleman's Recreation*, and *The Gentleman's Academy*, or book of *St Albans*. But of the original edition now before us, there is a colophon comprehending the

true title, in these words, "*Here in thys boke afore ar contenyt the bokys of haukyng and huntyng with other plesuris dyuerse as in the boke apperis and also of Cootarmuris, a nobull Werke. And here now endyth the boke of blasynge of armys translatyt and compylyt togedyr at Seynt Albons the yere from thincarnacion of owre lorde Jhū Crist MCCCCLXXXVI. . . .* It seems not, that Bale or Pits ever saw this original edition, because they also mention with it, a book of Fishing as of this Lady's writing; which is not to be met with, but in the second edition of these tracts, printed by Wynkin de Worde at Westminster, in folio 1496; and therein it is neither ascribed to her, nor to any body else; but only printed in this larger volume of those subjects relating to the Gentry and Nobility; that every idle and ordinary person might not be able to purchase it, as they would if it had been published in a little pamphlet by itself."—"And for by cause that this present treatyse sholde not come to the hondys of eche ydle persone whyche wolde desire it yf it were enpryntyd allone by itself, & put in a lytyll plaunflet therefore I haue compylyd it in a greter volume of dyuerse bokys concernynge to gentyll & noble men, to the entent that the forsayd ydle persones whyche sholde haue but lytell mesure in the sayd dysporte of fysshynge sholde not by this meane utterly destroye it."—*Treatyse of ffyssshynge.*

Kippis further ridicules the idea that Mrs Barnes was "sister to Richard Lord Berners," and concludes his attack as follows:—

And indeed, such a contrast of characters in one person, is apt to raise very contesting ideas. One cannot reconcile the notions those subjects inspire, of their authors being so expert and so practised in those robust and masculine exercises, with the

character of such a sedate, grave, pious, matron-like Lady, as the Prioress of a Nunnery is imagined to be; a conjunction of such extreams, seeming quite unnatural. Indeed, we have, and so we may have had, your romping, roaring hoydens, that will be for horsing and hunting after the wildest game, in the most giddy company; but to join so much of these rough and impetuous diversions, as is required to obtain the proficiency aforesaid, with the most serene and solemn profession of a mortified and spiritual life in herself, and the charge or care of training it in others, must make an unaccountable mixture. In that light, there appears such a motley masquerade, such an indistinction of petticoat and breeches, such a problem and concorporation of sexes, according to the image that arises out of the several representations of this religious Sportswoman or Virago, that one can scarcely consider it, without thinking Sir Tristram, the old Monkish Forester, and Juliana, the Matron of the Nuns, had united to form John Clevelands *Canonical Hermaphrodite*.

Though I do not think that the evidence is sufficient to justify the belief that the *Treatyse of ffysshyng* was either written or compiled by Dame Juliana Berners, nevertheless in commenting on the following extracts, partly perhaps from sentiment, and partly for convenience, I have adopted the popular supposition.

In the first few extracts I have followed the orthography of Mr Denison's manuscript in order that the reader may, if he wishes, compare it with the original text (*see* frontispiece). It commences as follows:—

“Saloman in hys paraboles seith that a glad spirit

maket a flowryng age. That ys to sey a feyre age & a longe and sith hyt ys so I aske this questyon wyche bynne the menyys & cause to reduce a man to a mery spryte." The authoress assumes that this is brought about by "good & honeste dysportes," of which she selects four, hunting, hawking, fowling, and fishing.

Hunting she considers to be

to gret labur. The hunter must all day renne & folow hys howndes travelyng & swetyng ful soyr he blowythe tyl hys lyppys blyster and wen he wenyt [*i.e.*, supposes] hyt be a hare ful often hit ys a heyghoge thus he chaset and wen he cummet home at even, reyn beton (rain beaten) seyr prykud with thornes & hys clothes tornes wet schod fulwy [miry] sum of hys howndes lost som surbatted suche grevys & meny other to the hunter hapeth.

Hawking is also "laborous and ryght noyous [troublesome]. The fawkner often tymes leseth hys hawkes. Full often he cryethe & wystal [whistleth] tyl he be sor a thurst."

The following extract is taken verbatim from the *Treatyse of ffyssshyng wyth an Angle*, 1496, but the orthography of some of the subsequent quotations is slightly modified.

The dysporte & game of fowlynge me semyth moost symple For in the wynter season the fowler spedyth not but in the moost hardest and coldest weder: whyche is greuou. For whan he wolde goo to his gynnes he maye not for colde. Many a gynne and many a snare he makyth. Yet sorryly dooth he fare. At morn tyde in the dewe he is weete shode

unto his taylle. Many other suche I cowde tell: but drede of magre makith me for to leue. Thus me semyth that huntynge & hawkyng and also fowlyng ben so laborous and greuous that none of theym maye perfourme nor bi very meane that enduce a man to a mery spyryte: whyche is cause of his longe lyfe acordynge vnto ye sayd parable of Salamon. Dowteles thenne folowyth it that it must nedes be the dysporte of fysshynge with an angle. For all other manere of fysshynge is also laborous & greuous: often makynge folkes ful wete & colde, whyche many tymes hath be seen cause of grete Infirmytees. But the angler maye haue no colde nor no dysease nor angre, but yf he causer hymself. For he maye not lese at the moost but a lyne or an hoke: of whyche he maye haue store plentee of his owne makynge, as this symple treatyse shall teche hym. Soo thenne his losse is not greuous. And other greyffes may he not haue, sauynge but yf ony fische breke away after that he is take on the hoke, or elles that he catche nought: whyche ben not greuous. For yf he faylle of one he maye not faylle of a nother, yf he dooth as this treatyse techyth: but yf there be nought in the water. And yet atte the leest he hath his holsom walke and mery at his ease: a swete ayre of the swete sauoure of the meede floures: that makyth hym hungry. He hereth the melodyous armony of fowles. He seeth the yonge swannes: heerons: duckes: cotes and many other foules wyth theyr brodes; whyche me semyth better than alle the noyse of honndys: the blastes of hornys and the scrye of foulis that hunters: fawkeners & foulers can make. And yf the angler take fysshe: surely thenne is there noo man merier than he is in his spyryte. . . .

Thus haue I prouyd to myn entent that the dysporte & game of anglyng is the very meane & cause that enducith a man in to a mery spyryte.

Having thus proved her contention that angling conduces to a long and a happy life, the worthy lady proceeds to give detailed instructions how to make the "harnays." She tells when the wood for the rod must be cut, the means by which it is to be straightened, and how it is to be seasoned. The finished rod is of three pieces of willow, hazel, or aspen, a fathom and a half long, with a hollow butt. It was moreover a suitable rod for Sunday fishing, for "thus shall ye make you a rodde soo preuy that ye maye walke therewyth: and there shall noo man wyte where abowte ye goo. It woll be lyghte & full nymbyll to fysshe wyth at your luste. And for the more redynesse loo here a fygure therof in example." She then appends an illustration of a rod far from "nymbyll." The line was made from the tail of a white horse of the longest, fairest, and roundest hair obtainable. Directions follow for staining the line in six different colours, suitable for different seasons and varying conditions of water. The colours are yellow, green, brown, tawny, russet, and dusky colour. Instructions are given and an instrument depicted for twisting the hairs into a line. But the "moost subtyll & hardyste crafte" is in making the hooks: the small hooks are made from "quarell nedlys" and the large ones from "gretter nedles: as broderers nedlis: or taylers: or shomakers nedlis spere poynte, & of shomakers nalles in especyall." The authoress describes the way in which the needles are to be first heated, then barbed and

pointed, heated again, and bent to a shape of which an illustration is given.

The lines must vary in strength from a single hair for a minnow to fifteen hairs for a salmon; but angle "for the pyke wyth a chalke lyne made browne with your browne colour aforsayd: armyd with a wyre."

The lines must be plumbed with "lede," and the leads must be "rounde & smothe that they stycke not on stonys or on wedys."

The floats are to be made from a fair cork that is clean and without many holes; they are to be bored with a hot iron and a quill inserted in the hole thus made. An illustration is given of five pear-shaped floats of different sizes.

Having completed her description of the "harnays," she proceeds to relate "in what place of the water ye shall angle."

In a pool there is not "grete choyse of ony places. For it is but a pryson to fyshe, and they lyue for the more parte in hungre lyke prisoners: and therefore it is the lesse masttry to take theym.

"But in a ryuer ye shall angle in euery place where it is depe and clere by the grounde: as grauell or claye wythout mudde or wedys. And in especyall yf that there be a manere of whyrlynge of water or a couert. . . . And it is good for to angle where as the water restyth by the banke: and where the streme rennyth nyghe there by."

It is unnecessary to quote the learned dame's

further directions to the angler *verbatim et literatim*, and they are accordingly given in modernized English.

*What time of the day ye shall angle.*—From the beginning of May until it be September the biting time is early by the morrow from four of the clock until eight of the clock. And at after noon from four of the clock until eight of the clock; but not so good as in the morning.

And if it be a cold whistling wind or a dark lowering day. For a dark day is much better to angle in than a clear day. From the beginning of September till the end of April spare no time of the day.

And if ye see any time of the day the trout or grayling leap angle to him with a dubbe (an artificial fly) according to the same month.

*In what weather ye shall angle.*—From September until April in a fair sunny day is right good to angle. And if the wind in that have any part of the Orient, the weather then is nought. And when it is a great wind, and when it snoweth, raineth, or haileth, or is a great tempest, as thunder or lightning, or very hot weather then it is nought for to Angle.

*There be twelve manner of impediments* which cause a man to take no fish without other common causes which may casually happen.

*The first* is if your harness be not neat or fitly made.

*The second* is if your baits be not good nor fine.

*The third* is if that ye angle not in biting time.

*The fourth* is if the fish be frightened with the sight of a man.

*The fifth* is if the water be very thick white or red of any flood late fallen.

*The sixth* is if the fish stir not for cold.



*The seventh* if that the weather be hot.

*The eighth* if it rain.

*The ninth* if it hail or snow fall.

*The tenth* if it be a tempest.

*The eleventh* is if it be a great wind.

*The twelfth* if the wind be in the east, and that is worst, for commonly neither winter nor summer the fish will not bite then. The west and north winds be good, but the south is best.

*Baits for every manner of fish and for every month.*—For ye can not bring an hook in to a fishes mouth without a bait, which baits for every manner of fish and for every month here followeth in this wise.

*Salmon.*—The salmon is a gentle fish, but he is combrous for to take. His baits are with a red worm in the beginning and ending of a season. And also with a bob that breedeth in a dung hill, and especially with a sovereign bait, that breedeth on a water-dock. Also ye may take him but it is seldom seen with a dubbe at such time as when he leapeth.

*Trout.*—The trout for by cause he is a right deyntous (dainty) fish and also a right fervent biter we shall speak next of him. In his leaping time with a dubbe. Ye shall angle to him in March with a minnow hanged on your hook by the nether lip without float or plumb drawing up and down in the stream until ye fele him fast. The other baits recommended for a trout are:—The red worm. The Ineeba also named seven eyes [the River Lamprey]. The Canker that breedeth in a great tree. The red snail. The stone fly. The cow-dung worm. The silk worm. The bait that breedeth on a fern leaf. A cod worm. A flesh fly. Fat of bacon.

*For the Grayling* a somewhat similar, but shorter selection is given.

*The Barbel* is a sweat fish but is a quasy meat and perilous for man's body. And if he be eaten raw, he may be cause of man's death which hath often

been seen. These be his baits. Fresh cheese toasted in a candle. Hawthorn worm. Great red worm. Cod worm. Water dock leaf worm. Hornet worm. In August and for all the year take the tallow of a sheep and soft cheese of each a like amount, and a little honey and grind or stamp them together long and temper it until it be tough and put thereto flour a little and make it into small pellets. And it is a good bait to angle with at the ground. And loke that it sink in the water, or else it is not good to this purpose.

*The Carp* is a dainty fish but there be but few in England and so I write the less of him. But well I wot that the red worm and the minnow be good bait for him at all times.

*The Chevin* [Chub] is a stately fish and his head is a dainty morsel. And because he is a strong biter, he hath the more baits which be these. Red worms, Stone flies, Red snails, Silk worms, Crickets, Cockchafers, Grass hoppers, Bumble bees, Hornets, Young bees, Young frogs, Young mice, Maggots, Cherries.

*For Bream*, which is a noble fish and dainty, the baits are Red worm, butter-flies, Maggots.

*A Tench* is a right good fish and healeth all other manner of fish that be hurt if they may come to him. He is for the most part of the year in the mud. He is an evil biter; his baytes be these. For all the year brown bread toasted with honey in likeness of a buttered loaf, and the great red worm.

*The Perch* is a dainty fish and passing wholesome and a free biter and these be his baits:—a variety of worms including the dung hill worm and the Cod worm, and maggots.

*The Roach* is an easy fish to take and if he be fat and pennyed (probably 'well finned' *i.e.*, in good condition) then he is good meat and these be his baits: Red worm, Cod worm, House flies, Maggots, Fat of bacon.

*The Dace* is a gentle fish to take. The baits mentioned are much the same as those for the roach. For commonly their biting and their baits be like.

*The Bleak* be but a feeble fish yet he be wholesome. The baits are the same as for the Roach and dace.

*The Ruffe* is a right and wholesome fish. The baits are the same as those given for the perch.

*The Gudgeon* is a good fish of the mochenes [*i.e.*, of its size]. Baits: Codworm, Red Worm, Maggots.

*The Minnow* when he shineth in the water then he is a biter. The baits are the same as for the gudgeon only they must be smaller.

*The Eel* is a quasy fish and a ravenor and a devourer of the brood of fish. And for the pike also is a devourer of fish I put them both behind all others to angle. The baits are a great angyll twitch [earth worm] or a minnow.

*The Pike* is a good fish: but for that he devoureth so many as well of his own kinde as of other, I love him the less. And for to take him you shall do this. Take a codling hook and take a roach or a fresh herring, and a wire with a hole in the end and put it in at the mouth and out at the tail down by the ridge of the fresh herring and then put the line of your hook in after and draw the hook into the cheek of the fresh herring.

A float and lead are to be attached to the line, and the tackle is cast to a spot where the pike "useth." An alternative method is described, in which a frog is used, in place of the fresh herring; the frog is sometimes dipped into *asafœtida* in order that it may prove more attractive to the pike.

From the frequency with which the following way of capturing pike appears in old angling works, it

evidently ranked highly as a sporting method in olden times:—And if ye list to have a good sport, then tye the cord to a goose's foot, and ye shall see good hauling whether the goose or the pike shall have the better.

Having thus described fully the special baits for each kind of fish, our authoress gives general directions for keeping and feeding the living baits. The instructions for scouring the maggots are especially quaint, and I doubt if the hardiest and most "manly" of lady anglers of the present day would care to fully carry them out. The maggots are to be first fattened on sheep's tallow and on a cake made with flour and honey, and when ye have cleaned them with sand in a bag of blanket *kept under your gown*, or other warm thing, two hours or three, then be they best and ready to angle with. A list of baits is given to last all the year, and among the baits for roach and dace is the present popular one of simmered wheat. Take wheat and sethe it well, and then put it in blood all a day and a night and it is a good bayte. The practice of placing the boiled wheat in blood is not followed now, but very probably the bait loses in attractiveness from neglect of this detail.

Recent angling writers, with a few exceptions, devote little attention to a very useful and scientific method of determining the bait to be used; viz., the examination of the contents of the stomach of the first fish caught. Nearly all the old angling writers

draw attention to the value of this practice. Juliana Berners recommends it as follows:—For baits for great fish keep specially this rule. When ye have taken a great fish undo the maw, and what ye find there make that your bait, for it is best.

The practical portion of the book concludes with the following list of twelve artificial flies, with directions how to tie them.

*For March* two kinds of Dun Fly are given.

*For April* the Stone Fly, and another fly for the beginning of May.

*For May* the Yellow Fly. The Black Louper.

*For June* the Dun Cutte. The Maure Fly. The Tandy Fly.

*For July* the Wasp Fly. The Shell Fly.

*For August* the Drake Fly.

The most charming portions of this interesting work are the introductory and the concluding parts; the latter dealing with the angling morals which the authoress seeks to inculcate. The work indicates throughout a high ideal of sport, and it is evident that the gross-weight and other fishing competitions of present times would have found no favour in her eyes.

Ye that can angle and fish to your pleasures as this foresaid treatise teacheth and sheweth you, I charge and require you in the name of all noble men that ye fish in no man's severall water: as his pond, stew, or other necessary thing to keep fish in without his license and good will.

And also if ye shall do in like manner as this

treatise sheweth you, ye shall have no need to take of other men's: whilst ye shall have enough of your own taking if you choose to labour thereto, which shall be to you a very pleasure to see the fair bright shining scaled fishes deceived by your crafty means and drawn upon land. Also that you break no man's hedges in going about your disports, nor open no man's gates, but that ye shut them again. Also that ye shall not use this aforesaid crafty disport for no covetousness to the increasing and sparing of your money only, but principally for your solace and to cause the health of your body and especially of your soul. For when ye purpose to go on your disports in fishing you will not desire greatly many persons with you, which might let [*i.e.*, hinder] you of your game. And then ye may serve God devoutly in saying affectuously your customable prayer. And thus doing ye shall eschew and avoid many vices, as idleness which is the principle cause to enduce man to many vices, as is right well known. Also ye shall not be too ravenous in taking of your said game as too much at one time, which ye may lightly do, if ye do in every point as this present treatise sheweth you in every point, which should lightly be occasion to destroy your own disports and other men's also. As when ye have a sufficient mess ye should covet no more at that time. Also ye shall busy yourselves to nourish the game in all that ye may: and to destroy all such things as be devourers of it.

And all those that done after this rule shall have the blessing of God and Saint Peter, which he them grant that with his precious blood was bought.

## CHAPTER II

FOR more than a hundred years after the publication of *The Book of St Albans* no new work on angling was printed in England; there must, however, have been a demand for sporting literature, for between the years 1500 and 1596, no less than fourteen undated editions of *The Book of St Albans* were printed.

About the year 1500 the *Treatyse of ffysshynge wyth an Angle* was printed separately, and it is to be hoped that its publication in that form did not bring it into the "hondys of eche ydle persone."

In 1590 there was published *A Booke of fishing with Hooke and Line and of all other instruments there unto belonging*. Made by L. M.

Leonard Mascall, the author of this book, was a member of an old Sussex family living at Plumstead in that county; he was Clerk of the Kitchen of Mathew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury: he also drew up the Parish Register of Farnham Royal, Buckinghamshire, inserting in it the injunctions of Cromwell concerning the keeping of Registers, and prefixing

some verses on the proper keeping of the book. He was buried in the parish of Farnham Royal, on 10th May 1589.

Mascall appears to have been rather a translator of foreign writers than an author, for among other works, he translated from the Dutch, *A profitable booke declaring dyvers approved remedies, to take out spottes and staines in Silkes*, 1588, and *A very proper Treatise on Limming*. The introduction of the carp into England has been attributed to Mascall, and in a work entitled *The Angler's Sure Guide*, printed 1706, the following passage occurs:—"Carps have not been of very antient standing in England, as appears by what follows: Carps were first brought into England by one Mr Mascall of Plumstead in Sussex, 15 H.8. Anno Dom. 1524 who stored his Ponds with them there."

The fact of the carp being mentioned in the *Treatyse of ffysshing wyth an Angle*, proves the date mentioned to be incorrect, and the following passage in Mascall's book probably gave rise to the above statement:—"The Carpe also is a straunge and daintie fish to take, his baites are not well knowne, for he hath not long beene in this realme. The first bringer of them into England (as I have beene credibly enformed) was maister Mascoll of Plumsted in Sussex, who also brought first the planting of the Pippin in England." It is possible that Mascall, writing, as he was in this case, anonymously, was here attempting to attach either to himself or to



one of his family the credit of the importation of this fish. There were four editions of *A Booke of Fishing* (1590, 1596, 1600, and 1606), and a reprint was published by Mr Satchell in 1884.

There is a copy of the first edition of Mascall's very scarce book in the British Museum. On the title-page there is a small woodcut, representing a man sitting on the left bank of a small stream, fishing with rod and line: on the opposite bank a man is shown setting a "whippe or spring trappe."

The angling portion of the work begins at page 3 and ends with page 23. Since it is practically the same as the *Treatyse of ffysshyng wyth an Angle*, from which it evidently has been copied, no comment upon it is necessary, save perhaps the observation that it contains no acknowledgment of debt.

The remainder of the work is very interesting, as being the first notice of fish culture and the preservation of fish in the English language. It is very doubtful how much of this is original. Mr Satchell has proved in the preface to his reprint (1884) that a considerable portion of it has been taken from *L'Agriculture et Maison rustique de M. Charles Estienne, Docteur a Medicine. A Paris, chez Jacques Du Poys, 1570.*

Indeed, Mascall acknowledges that he took some of his books from "Stephanus in French," and it is by no means unlikely that he also obtained information from some Dutch author. The motives by which

the writer is actuated, when having explained how to catch the fish, he shows how to preserve them, are certainly praiseworthy, and it would be a good thing if more anglers at the present time were influenced by like motives to contribute to the restocking funds connected with the rivers in which they are accustomed to angle.

The second part of the book begins as follows :—

*Here is how to save and preserve fish.*

For so much as I have afore shewed certaine waies and practices how to take fish in rivers, pooles, and standing waters. I will here declare certaine waies how for to maintaine fish, and the chiefest waies to save and preserve them in rivers, pooles and standing waters, against such devourers and raverers as hath and will destroy them, as Herne, the Dobchicke, the Coote, the Cormorant, the Sea - pie, the Kings fisher and such like : as also the Otter, who is a common destroyer of pondes and standing waters, . . . which shall be declared in their places.

The "Hearne," which is "fearfulle and subtill," is to be taken by a hook, baited with a small fish, and placed in water about half a foot deep.

The Otter or "water wolfe" is to be caught "in a wele made and devised for the nonce." A woodcut of the otter weel is given ; it resembles a large eel-basket, differing only in size from the eel weels or baskets in use at the present day.

The "Water-ratte" is hard to take, but he may be caught in a small otter weel or in a more complicated form of trap fitted with a latch and iron spikes,

or if he cannot be caught in either of these ways, he must be poisoned.

*To preserve spawn in spawning time.*

A Chiefe way to save spawne of fish in March, Aprill, and May, is thus, ye shall make faggots of wheate, or rie strawe, all whole straw not bruised, or of reede, binde these faggots together with three bondes, and all about thereon sticke of young branches of willowe. Then cast them in the water among weedes, or by the bankes, and put in each faggot two good long stakes, driven fast to the ground, and let your fagots lie covered in the water halfe a yeard or more. So the fish will come and shed their spawne thereon, and then it will quicken therein, so that no other fish can come to destroy or cate it, and as they waxe quicke they will come foorth and save themselves.

Thus much for the preserving of spawne in the spring and spawning time: this is a good practise to preserve the spawne of all scaled fish. These fagots ye may make and lay in all rivers, poundes, or standing waters. Your fagots had neede to be a yeard and a halfe long, and bound with three bandes not hard, two bandes a foote from the endes, and an other bande in the midst, and lay them as I have afore declared. Also some doe use to hedge in corners in rivers and poundes with willow, and thereon fish doe cast their spawne and so breedes.

Mascall describes a method of taking "Sea pies, Crows, and other Pyes," which is repeated in many subsequent works on angling. Two small ozier twigs are bound together crossways near the end, a bait is attached to them by a short thread, and the twigs are anointed with bird-lime. The trap thus

prepared is placed on a rush or weed, and the bird on flying away with the bait in its bill, becomes so smeared on its wings with the bird-lime, that it cannot fly, falls down, and is caught. The "Kyte," however, is too wily to be caught in this way as he flies away with the bait in his feet.

The following extract shows the author's sportsman-like abhorrence of all poaching methods:—

It is a good thing to haue plentie of fresh water fish, in riuers and pooles, and standing waters: and a great pleasure for man sometimes to take with his angle a dish of fish in those waters whereas fish is plentie and well preserued, not to vse any other engins, but with the hooke: and by such meanes as the lawes of this realme doth permit and allow, not to vse fire, handguns, crossebowes, oyles, ointments, pouders, and pellets made to cast in the waters to stonny and poyson the fish, nor yet to vse all sortes of nets, and such as are deuourers of fish, as bow nets, casting nets, small trammels, shoue nets, and draught nets: which are destroyers of fish before they are growen to any bignesse. These are not meete to be vsed but of certaine Gentlemen in their seuerall waters, I would wish no running waters should be let to any fisher man, without order what mesh, what nets, he or they shall vse to fish with, and in what moneths of the yeare to refraine fishing, vpon paine to forfeite his lease and all such engins.

Mascall goes on to advise restocking with the burbot or eel pout, a fish now nearly extinct in England, and not to be confounded with the viviparous eel pout of salt water:—

Also it shall be good for all Gentlemen and others,

hauing the gouernment of any riuers, brookes, or standing pooles, to replenish them with all such kinde of fish as may there be preserued or bred, aswell of straying as others. There is a kinde of fish in Holand, in the fennes besides Peterborrow, which they call a poult, they be like in making and greatnesse to the Whiting, but of the cullour of the Loch: they come foorth of the fenne brookes, into the riuers nigh there about, as in Wansworth riuier there are many of them. They stirre not all the sommer, but in winter when it is most coldest weather. There they are taken at Milles in Welles, and at wayers likewise. They are a pleasant meate, and some do thinke they would be aswell in other riuers and running waters, as Huntington, Ware, and such like, if those waters were replenished with them, as they may be with small charge. They haue such plentie in the fenne brookes, they feede their hogges with them. If other riuers were stored with them, it would be good for a common wealth, as the Carpe which came of late yeares into England. Thus much for the fenne pult.

Further directions are included for the cultivation of Miller's thumbs, "loches," and cray fish. A description is also given of the methods of snigging and bobbing for eels.

Mascall gives a variety of ground baits with which to attract the different kinds of fish: the first one contains "Salarmoniache eight drams, Scallion onions one dram, fat of veale ten drachms"; this ground bait is intended for trout, which will "come themselves to the smell thereof, and so ye may take them."

*To take Loches or small fish.*

Take the branne of wheate meale, two pound, of

lenten pease halfe a pound, mixe them together, and beate them with a sufficient quantitie of brine, and put thereto halfe a pound of sessame. Then shall ye part it in peeces and throw them here and there: . . . all the small fish will come unto it, and remaine in one place, although they be 300 paces off.

A variety of other ground baits are described, of which the angler must make small pellets, "and cast it where ye will have the fish to come an houre before ye cast in your lines."

The ground bait for the salmon, Mascall acknowledges as "thus much more taken from Stephanus in French."

A very modern-looking illustration and description of the circular drop-net for minnows, such as is used at the present time, is given. He calls it the "Gase for to catch Menowes":—

This Gase, is a round net of small mesh, with a hoope of yeirne, or great wier halfe an intch about, and to let sinke in a ditch, or brooke which is not deepe, and so holde it a while by three strings like a ballans, with a loope in the toppe, and therein to put through a staffe or a poale, . . . ye must hang a small plommet in the middest to make it sinke . . . and the squares must be scarlet or red cloth sowed on.

After discussing the angling laws in force in France, Mascall gives expression to a pregnant lament in reference to the state of angling affairs in his time:—

And being then out of season, they are not so

holesome nor yet good of liking. All these afore mentioned with all other which are out of season, are forbid to be taken and solde in Markets [of France], or otherwise prively eaten, upon the like penaltie afore mentioned. I would to God it were so here with us in England and to have more preservers, and lesse spoylers of fish out of season, and in season: then we should have more plentie than we have through this Realme. Also I would wish that all stoppe nets, and drags with casting nets, were banished in all common rivers through this Realme for three moneths: as in March, Aprill, and May.

In 1600 a book was printed, entitled *Certaine experiments concerning fish and fruite: practised by John Taverner, Gentleman, and by him published for the benefit of others.*

There is a copy of this very rare work in the British Museum; only one edition is now known, though Wood (*Athenæ Oxon.*) states that it was printed several times.

John Taverner, the author, was the Surveyor of the King's Woods on the south side of the River Trent. He died in 1606, and was buried at Upminster in Essex (Wood's *Athenæ Oxon.*). His book, unlike Mascall's work, appears to be original, and not a mere compilation and translation from foreign authors. It is certainly deserving of more attention than it has hitherto received from writers on old sporting literature. The author was evidently a keen naturalist and a scientific observer; his knowledge of the habits of fish was well in advance of the time in which he lived; he scoffs at the heresies

of the spontaneous generation of fish from weeds, which Walton, writing more than half a century later, repeats from Gesner; and as a work on pisciculture, his book is a far more valuable one than Roger North's, written in 1713. Taverner dedicates his book to the "Right Honorable Sir Edmond Anderson Knight, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas."

The book commences: "First it is requisite to speake of ponds," of which he describes two kinds, "the one digged right downe into the ground by labour of man, and the other made with a head in a valley betweene two hils."

He directs that the ponds should be stored in "January, February, or March: after which time it is not good to carry or handle any fish all the summer time, until it be October or November."

The above rule is observed at the present day in regard to the transit of fish for restocking purposes.

He divides fish into two classes, the "ravening" fish, and those which live upon corn, roots, worms, etc. The ravening fish are the pike, the trout, and the eel. As examples of the other class he mentions carp, bream, and tench.

The following is the first mention of the carp family having their teeth in their throat; the credit of first recording this fact has been erroneously awarded to William Lawson, who wrote twenty years later:—

The fore sayd devouring fish have only dog-teeth



or sharpe teeth, wherewith they bite and hold any other fish that they take. . . . The other kind do not so: but having teeth only like unto Man, broad and flat, do grind and chew all their meat before they swallow it: and it is unnaturall for the Carpe, Breame, Tench, or Roach to eat another raw fish, as it is for a sheep or a cow to eat raw flesh. The sharpe and devouring teeth in the Pike, Perch, Trought and Eele, are easily seene and perceived, but so are not the flat grinding teeth in the other kind of fish. Howbeit if you search diligently the head of the Carpe, Breame, or any other of that nature, and of any bignesse, when it is sodden you shall find two neather jawes, having in each jaw a row of flat teeth, like to the eye teeth in a man, and apt to grind and chew withall, with which two neather jawes they grind their meate against a certaine flat bone in the roofe of their mouth, or upper part of their throte.

Yarrell, in his *British Fishes*, quotes from a paper which a Mr Jacobs contributed to the *Hanover Magazine*, in 1763, the following statement in regard to the impossibility of breeding trout in standing waters:—

1. According to the course of nature, no Trouts or Salmon are generated in ponds or standing waters.
2. They cannot be bred there if millions of pregnant eggs were put into them.

Taverner anticipated these observations by about 163 years:—

Neither will the Trought spawne in any standing poole, but will live and grow very fat and good . . . and will also be very fat and good all the winter long by reason he doth not spawne as afore sayd.

He gives the "proportion of fish according to the greatnesse of your pond." Four hundred carp, bream, or tench of 8 or 10 inches long may be kept for every acre of pond. A pond of four acres, however, will better keep 1600, than a pond of two acres will keep 800.

The following appears to be rather an exaggerated estimate of the rate of growth of the pike :—

The Pike is in no wise to be admitted to your great ponds, with your other fish, he is so great a devourer, and will grow so fast having his fill of feeding, that being but eight or ten inches in the beginning of Sommer, he may be eightene or twentie inches before Hollantide, at what time he will eate more fish every day than will suffice a man.

Taverner recommends that the fish-ponds should lie dry every other year, as in this way they can be kept cleaner, more natural food can be obtained for the fish, and overcrowding can be prevented.

The following extract shows the keen powers of observation of the author :—

I have seene a young flie swimme in the water too and fro, and in the end come to the upper crust of the water, and assay to flie up: howbeit not being perfity ripe or fledge, hath twice or thrice fallen downe againe into the water: howbeit in the end receiving perfection by the heate of the sunne, and the pleasant fat water, hath in the ende within some halfe houre after taken her flight, and flied quite awaie into the ayre. And of such young flies before they are able to flie awaie, do fish feede exceedingly.

I was recently told by a head gardener at the Oxford Botanical Gardens that he had been for a long time puzzled why the goldfish in his tanks did not breed; on watching them more closely he observed that when two fish paired off for the exercise of their reproductive functions, they were followed about the tank by the other fish, who promptly devoured the spawn as soon as it was deposited. Subsequently on removing the fish to another tank as soon as they were observed to pair off in this manner, a large stock of young goldfish was ultimately reared. Taverner mentions eels following other fish and devouring their spawn in a similar manner:—

When the Carps, Breams, Tenches, or Roches do lay their spawn in egges in spawning time, you shall many times see sixe, ten, or more small Eeles follow them, and as the spawn falleth from them they eate it, as also Duckes will do the like. Afterward so soone as it is quicke, the Eele, and especially the Perch will devour it in great quantitie before it be able to swimme any thing fast.

The ingendring and breeding of the like fish as aforesaid I have noted to be in this manner, sometime in May, and sometime in June, as the season happeneth to fall out apt for generation, the water by Gods providence having then a naturall warmth to performe the same, the male fish by course of nature, will chase about the female, seeking copulation: and as in all other creatures, so in this the female seemeth to shun and flie from the male, so that you shall see three, foure, or five male fish, chase one female, and so hold her in on everie side, that they will force her

to swimme through weedes, grasse, rushes, straw, or any such like thing that is in the pond, wherein she being intangled and wearied with their chasing, they find opportunitie to joyne in copulation with her, mingling their milt with her spawne, sometime one of them, sometime another, at which time the spawne falleth from her like little egges, and sticketh fast to the sayd weedes : some eight, nine, or ten dayes after which time it quickneth, taketh life, and hath the proportion of a fish : yea two or three dayes before it quicken, if you take such an egge and breake it uppon your naile, you shall perceiue the proportion of a fish therein. After it is quicke it mooveth very little for some fortnight or three weekes, and then it gathereth together into sculles by the shore side, where the water is shallow : howbeit the Tench frie will lie scattering in the weedes, and not flote in sculles.

It is generally stated that the migration of the eel was not properly described until the eighteenth century : it is therefore surprising to find Taverner, in 1600, giving a clear description of this phenomenon.

The method of generation of the eel is one of great interest, on account of the remarkable theories which have from time to time been propounded in regard to it. I have, therefore, in the course of this book drawn attention to the different opinions held on this point by the old angling writers.

Among other theories the following methods of generation of this fish have at different times been described. Oppian held that eels were bred from the slime on their bodies, Aristotle believed that they sprang from the mud, Pliny thought that they

originated from fragments rubbed off their bodies by friction against the rocks, Helmont stated that they came from the May dew, others have expressed the belief that they originate from horse hair, gills of fish, from dead animals thrown into the water, etc.

Perhaps, however, the most extraordinary theory in regard to the propagation of these fish was that elaborately described by a certain North Country weaver, by name David Cairncross, who, as a result of many years of patient research, published in 1862, a small treatise entitled *The Origin of the Silver Eel*, in which he announced that the progenitor of the silver eel was a small beetle. The frontispiece of his book represents a variety of water beetle lying on its back in a pool of water, giving birth to twin eels. It is curious to find that a similar belief was held in Sardinia; according to Jacoby, the water beetle, *Dytiscus roeselii*, is there believed to be the progenitor of the eel, and is accordingly called the "Mother of Eels." According to *The Riverside Natural History* (1888), "the assignment of such maternity to the water beetle is doubtless due to the detection of the hair-worm, or *Gordius*, in the insect by sharp-sighted but unscientific observers, and, inasmuch as the beetle inhabits the same waters as the eel, a very illogical deduction has led to connect the two together."

For a long time it was held that eels were viviparous, and as recently as 1840, Blaine, in his most excellent *Encyclopædia of Rural Sports*, stated that "The eel is

viviparous, and appears to choose the sea as its spawning (?) place." He, moreover, quotes from a Dr Shaw, who held that "both eggs and ready formed young are occasionally observed in the same individuals."

Ovaries were first discovered in the eel in 1707, by Dr Sancassini, of Comacchio; they were subsequently more fully described by Mondini and Müller, and in 1824 were figured by Rathke. In 1873 the male organ was recognised by Dr Syrski. The delay in finding the distinguishing organs of the male fish gave rise to the erroneous idea that eels were hermaphrodites. It was not until quite recently (1896) that the various stages in the reproduction of the eel were fully revealed by Professor Grassi, of Rome.

The occasional presence of small eels in land-locked waters is probably due to their having entered these lakes or ponds, either during flood time, or over land, since:—"There is no doubt that Eels occasionally quit the water, and when grass meadows are wet from dew, or other causes, travel during the night over the moist surface in search of frogs and other suitable food, or to change their situation" (Yarrell's *British Fishes*).

The following is Taverner's account of the migration of the eel:—

And if there run any water from your pond, you shall not possible keepe Eeles out of the same, they will come into the same against the streame.

Their manner of breeding is very uncertaine and unknowne, but undoubtedly they are bred in the brackish or sea water: and at the first full Moone in Maie they begin to come into all great rivers, and out of great rivers into lesser rivers, and out of those lesser rivers into all small brookes, rils and running waters, continually against the streame all the beginning of Sommer: as likewise with the first floud that commeth about Michelmas, they covet to go downe the streame, and will not stay untill they come into the deepe and brackish waters, if they be not taken or letted by the way. I know that some hold the opinion that they breede of the Maie deaw,<sup>1</sup> for prooffe whereof they say if you cut up two turfes of grasse in a May morning, and clap the grassie sides of those turfes together, and so lay them in a river, you shall next day find small young Eeles betweene the sayd turfes: and so you shall indeede for the most part do. Howbeit not therefore they do breede of the deaw. . . . The reason is, at that time of yeare that river being full of such young Eeles, they will creepe into every thing that is sweete and pleasant.

In a marginal note the author states:—

Eeles come from the brackish and sea water. In the river of Severne I have seene great store of these small Eele frie taken going against the streame and so do most other fish in the spring time. Fish covet to go downe the streame in the latter end of the Sommer.

The following list of baits shows that the author was an angler as well as a pisciculturist:—

I have found that the Carpe, Breame, and

<sup>1</sup> See Yarrell's *British Fishes*, 2nd ed., vol. ii., p. 387.

Tench, being used to feeding, will bite at the red worme, paste made of dough, or the grasshopper, most part of the Sommer season. The Tench also is a fish very easilie taken in a Bownet, and whosoever hath of them in his ponds, it behooveth him to take great heede that he be not deceived by leud people.

Taverner incorrectly states that the Roach will not spawn in any ponds:—

The shallow<sup>1</sup> or pond Roch with the red fins will spawne in most ponds. The river Roch<sup>2</sup> and Dace will not spawne in any pond: howbeit if your pond be neare any river, and that there runne any water from it in the Sommer time, you shall find that they will come into the same against the streame, where you would think it unpossible: and so will Pickerell and Perch. And I have heard some affirme very constantly, that water-fowle do often times bring the spawne of such fish in their feathers into ponds. Others will affirme, that the heat of the Sunne may draw up such spawne of fish before it be quicke, and so the same taking life in the moist ayre, may afterward fall downe in a shower of raine into a pond: the reason that hath mooved many men so to thinke, is, because they have found such kind of fish in their ponds, where they are sure that they nor any other have ever put any such. Howbeit surely the same have come into the sayd ponds against the streame, as aforesaid, in Sommer flouds, and not by any such other monstrous generation, as is last afore mentioned.

I will conclude my extracts from this very interest-

<sup>1</sup> Shallow or Rudd, *Leuciscus erythrophthalmus*.

<sup>2</sup> The Roach, *Leuciscus rutilus*.



ing book with the instructions which are given for the transportation of trout:—

The toughts must be very charily handled in their carriage, and a few of them caried in a great deale of faire and cleane water, and that in cold weather, and may be not handled with hands, but in a hand net very charily.

## CHAPTER III

IN all catalogues of old works on angling the following book is included, though except for its misleading title, it contains nothing to warrant its inclusion.

### A BOOKE OF ANGLING OR FISHING

WHEREIN IS SHEWED BY CONFERENCE WITH SCRIPTURES, THE  
AGREEMENT BETWEENE THE FISHERMAN, FISHES, FISHING OF  
BOTH NATURES TEMPORALL AND SPIRITUAL

By SAMUEL GARDINER  
Doctor of Divinitie, London

PRINTED by THOMAS PURFOOT  
1606

The contents of the book are thus summed up by the author:—"The summe of the following Treatise is abridged in these two verses:—

"Ecclesiam pro nave rego mihi climata mundi  
Sunt mare : scriptura retia : piscis homo.



# THE Secrets of Angling:

*TEACHING,*  
The choicest Toolcs Bayres and seasons, for the taking of  
any Filh, in Pond or Riuer: practised and famili-  
arly opened in three Bookes.

By I. D. Esquire.



Printed at London, for Roger Iackson, and are to be sold  
at his shop neere Fleetstreet Conduit, 1613.

Title-page of *The Secrets of Angling*.

[To face page 43.

“ Which I deliver in English thus :—

“ The church I governe as a shippe  
 Wee, Seas with world compare  
 The scriptures are enclosing nettes  
 And men the fishes are.”

Of the old angling works there are three which stand out from the rest and form a class by themselves of pre-eminent interest and value. The first of these, the *Treatyse of ffysshynge wyth an Angle*, we have already dealt with; the second, *The Secrets of Angling*, we have now to discuss; and the third, Walton's deservedly famous *Compleat Angler*, will be considered in a later chapter.

*The Secrets of Angling*, by J. D., was first published in 1613, and while it revealed many secrets of angling, the secret of its author's name was for many years unsolved. Walton attributed the work to John Davors; Howlett and others to Donne or Davies. It was not until 1811 that the author's name was discovered to be John Dennys, from the following entry in the Stationers' Registers, “23 Non. Martii” 1612 (*i.e.* 1613): “Master Roger Jackson entred for his copie under thands of Master Mason and Master Warden Hooper, a booke called The Secrets of Angling, teaching the choysest tooles, bates, and seasons, for the taking of any fish, in pond, or river, practised and opened in three bookes by John Dennys Esquier, Vid.”

Dennys was a member of an old Gloucestershire family residing at Pucklechurch in that county. A

stream, dividing the parish of Pucklechurch from the parish of Dyrham, is one of the sources of a brook called the Boyd, which Dennys mentions in his book, a fact which would afford confirmation, were it needed, of his claim to the authorship of the work :—

And thou, sweet Boyd, that with thy watry sway  
 Dost wash the cliffs of Deignton and of Weeke.  
 And through their Rockes with crooked winding way,  
 Thy mother Avon runnest softe to seeke ;  
 In whose fayre streams the speckled Trout doth play.

Usually when an author attempts to teach the practice of an art in a poem, his work either possesses no poetic value or else is too vague and indefinite to be of any service in teaching the art ; perhaps, however, the most common result of such an attempt is that it fails both as a poem and as a treatise.

In the difficult task of combining poetry and instruction it must be admitted that Dennys, in *The Secrets of Angling*, has been completely successful ; for whether his work be viewed as a poem or as a practical treatise, it deserves the highest praise. From a practical point of view it possesses that merit very rare in angling books, originality ; and the value of the instructions given, is shown by the extent to which they have been copied in the prose works which followed it. Some of the advice, as for instance, that in regard to the colour of the angler's clothes, remains unaltered in angling books at the present day ; while to show the high estimation in

which *The Secrets of Angling* is held by literary authorities, I quote the following from Mr Watkin's valuable article on John Dennys in the *Dictionary of National Biography* :—

As for *The Secrets of Angling* itself, it is sufficient to say that no more musical and graceful verses were ever written on the art of angling. The author has chosen a measure at once sweet and full of power, and its interlinked melodies lure the reader onward with much the same kind of pleasure as the angler experiences, who follows the murmuring of a favourite trout stream.

Four editions, 1613, 1620 (?), 1630, and 1652, and several reprints of *The Secrets* have been published.

Of the first edition only three perfect copies are known, and from one of these in the Bodleian Library I have taken the following copious extracts, selected chiefly on account of their practical bearing. I am able also, thanks to the courtesy of the Librarian of that Institution, to present a photographic facsimile of the title-page.

The book is thus dedicated by the printer, Roger Jackson :—

To the worthy, and my much respected Friend, Mr John Harborne, of *Tackley*, in the County of *Oxford*, Esquire, Worthy Syr, this Poeme being sent vnto me to be printed after the death of the Author, who intended to haue done it in his life, but was preuented by death: I could not among my good friends, bethinke me of any one to whom I might more fitly dedicate it, . . . R. I.

A short poem follows the dedication: "In due praise of this Praise-worthy Skill and Worke," by "Jo. Davies."

The work is divided into three books:—

### THE FIRST BOOKE.

Of *Angling*, and the Art thereof I sing,  
 What kinde of Tooles it doth behoue to haue  
 And with what pleasing bayt a man may bring  
 The Fish to bite within the watery waue. . . .

You *Nymphs* that in the Springs and Waters sweet,  
 Your dwelling haue, of euery Hill and Dale,  
 And oft amidst the Meadows greene doe meet  
 To sport and play, and heare the more the *Nightingale*;  
 And in the Riuers fresh doe wash your feet,  
 While *Prognos* sister tels her wofull tale:  
     Such ayde and power vnto my verses lend,  
     As may suffice this little worke to end.

Having thus invoked the aid of the nymphs, the author proceeds to state "The time for prouiding Angle Rods." He prefers the hazel to the cane rod, and gives his reason for the preference in the following lines:—

So shalt thou haue alwayes in store the best,  
 And fittest Rods to serue thy turne aright;  
 For not the brittle *Cane*, nor all the rest,  
 I like so well, though it be long and light,  
 Since that the Fish are frighted with the least  
 Aspect of any glittering thing, or white:  
     Nor doth it by one halfe so well incline,  
     As doth the plyant rod to save the line.



This is followed by instructions how "to make the line":—

Then get good Hayre, so that it be not blacke,  
 Neither of Mare nor Gelding let it be ;  
 Nor of the tyreling Iade that beares the packe :  
 But of some lusty Horse or Courser free,  
 Whose bushie tayle, upon the ground doth tracke,  
 Like blazing *Comete* that sometimes we see :  
     From out the midist thereof the longest take,  
     At leysure best your Linkes & Lines to make.

The directions for making the cork floats are almost identical with those given in the *Book of St Albans*. The angler at this period is able to buy his hooks:—

Then buy your Hookes the finest and the best  
 That may be had of such as use to sell,  
 And from the greatest to the very least  
 Of every sort pick out and chuse them well,  
 That Hooke I love that is in compasse round  
 Like to the print that *Pegasus* did make.

His *Shank* should neither be too short nor long,  
 His point not over sharpe, nor yet too dull :  
 The substance good that they may indure from wrong ;  
 His Needle slender, yet both round and full,  
 Made of the right *Iberian* mettell strong,  
 That will not stretch or breake at every pull,  
     Wrought smooth and cleane withouten crack or knot  
     And bearded like the wilde *Arabian* goat.

The following is, I believe, the first mention in any angling book of the winder and clearing ring:—

A little Boord, the lightest you can finde,  
 But not so thin that it will breake or bend ;  
 Of *Cypres* sweet, or of some other kinde,  
 That like a Trenchor shall itselfe extend :

Made smooth and plaine, your Lines thereon to winde,  
With Battlements at every other end :

Like to the Bulwarke of some ancient Towne  
As well-wald Sylchester now razed downe.

Of Lead likewise, yet must you have a Ring,  
Whose whole Diameter in length containes  
Three Inches full, and fastned to a string  
That must be long and sure, if need constraines !  
Through whose round hole you shall your Angle bring,  
And let it fall into the watry playne :

Untill he come the weedes and stickes unto,  
From whence your hooke it serveth to undo.

In order that the angler may be prepared for all  
emergencies, he must—

Have twist likewise, so that it be not white,  
Your Rod to mend, or broken top to tye ;  
For all white colours doe the Fishes fright  
And make them from the bayte away to flye ;  
A File to mend your hookes, both small and light,  
A good sharpe knife, your Girdle hanging by :  
A Pouch with many parts and purses thin,  
To carry all your Tools and Trynkets in.

Yet must you have a little Rip beside  
Of Willow twigs, the finest you can wish ;  
Which shall be made so handsome and so wide  
As may containe good store of sundry Fish :  
And yet with ease be hanged by your side,  
To bring them home the better to your dish.  
A little Net that on a Pole shall stand,  
The mighty Pike or heavy Carpe to Land.

Then he is instructed as to “ His severall Toolles,  
and what garment is fitted ” :—

And let your garments Russet be or gray,  
Of colour darke, and hardest to discry :

That with the Raine or weather will away,  
 And least offend the fearefull Fishes eye :  
 For neither Skarlet not rich cloth of ray  
 Nor colours dipt in fresh *Assyrian* dye,  
     Nor tender silkes, of Purple, Paule, or golde,  
 Will serve so well to keepe off wet or cold.

The next twelve verses are devoted to propounding and answering certain objections to the pastime :—

Some youthful *Gallant* here perhaps will say  
 This is no pastime for a gentleman.

And the first book concludes with seventeen verses tracing the development of angling from the time of the Flood :—

When good *Deucalion* and his *Pirrho* deere,  
 Were onely left upon the earth to dwell  
 Of all the rest that overwhelmed were  
 With that great flood, that in their dayes befell,  
     Wherein the compasse, of the world so round,  
 Both man and beast with waters deepe were dround.

Until—

At the last the Iron age drew neere,  
 Of all the rest the hardest and most scant,  
 Then Lines were made of Silke and subtile hayre  
 And Rods of lightest Cane and Hazell plant,  
 And Hookes of hardest steele invented were,  
 That neither skill nor workemanship did want,  
     And so this Art did in the end attaine  
 Unto that state where now it doth remaine.

The second book describes the various baits for the different fish, beginning with the gudgeon. The process of raking the bed of the river, in order to collect the fish and induce them to bite, is described ;

and it will be noticed that, whereas Walton selects the chub as the most suitable fish with which to initiate the young angler, Dennys chooses the gudgeon.

#### FOR THE GOODGION.

Loe, in a little Boate where one doth stand,  
 That to a Willow Bough the while is tide,  
 And with a pole doth stirre and raise the sande ;  
 Where as the gentle streame doth softly slide,  
 And then with slender Line and Rod in hand,  
 The eager bit not long he doth abide. . . .

His baite the least red worme that may be found,  
 And at the bottome it doth alwayes bye. . . .

This Fish the fittest for a learner is  
 That in this Art delights to take some paine ;  
 For as high flying Haukes that often misse  
 The swifter foules, are eased with a traine,  
 So to a young beginner yeeldeth this,  
 Such readie sport as makes him prove againe,  
 And leades him on with hope and glad desire,  
 To greater skill and cunning to aspire.

#### FOR THE ROCHE.

Then see on yonder side, where one doth sit  
 With Line well twisted, and his Hooke but small ;  
 His Corke not big, his Plummets round and fit,  
 His bayt of finest paste, a little ball  
 Wherewith he doth intice unto the bit,  
 The careless *Roche*, that soone is caught withall :  
 Within a foote the same doth reach the ground.  
 And with least touch the float straight sinketh downe.

So for the Roach more baites he hath beside,  
 As of a sheepe the thicke congealed blood,

Which on a board he useth to divide  
 In portions small, to make them fit and good,  
 That better on his hooke they may abide :  
 And of the waspe the white and tender brood,  
     And worms that breed on every hearbe and tree,  
     And sundry flies that quicke and lively be.

## FOR THE DACE.

Then looke where as that Poplar gray doth grow,  
 Hard by the same where one doth closely stand,  
 And with the winde his Hooke and bayt doth throw  
 Amid the streame with slender hazell wand,  
 Where as he sees the *Dace* themselves doe show,  
 His eye is quicke, and ready is his hand,  
     And when the Fish doth rise to catch the bayt  
     He presently doth strike, and takes her strayt.

O world's deceit ! how are we thrald by thee,  
 That dost thy gall in sweetest pleasures hide ?  
 When most we thinke in happiest state to be,  
 Then doe we soonest into danger slide,  
 Behold the Fish that even now was free,  
 Unto the deadly hooke how he is tide,  
     So vaine delights allure us to the snare,  
     Wherein unwares we fast intangled are.

## FOR THE CARPE.

His corke is large, made handsome, smooth, and fine,  
 The leads according, close and fit, thereto,  
 A good round hooke set on with silken twine,  
 That will not slip nor easily undoe :  
 His bait great wormes that long in mosse have bin,  
 Which by his side he carries in a shoole.  
     Or paste wherewith he feedes him oft before,  
     That at the bottom lyes a foote or more.

In regard to fishing with the artificial fly Dennys gives no information, and the instruction in refer-

ence to dibbing with the natural fly, in the following quotation, is his nearest approach thereto :—

FOR THE CHUB AND TROUT.

See where another hides himselfe as slye,  
As did *Acteon*, or the fearfull Deere ;  
Behinde a withy, and with watchfull eye  
Attends the bit within the water cleere,  
And on the top thereof doth move his flye,  
With skilful hand, as if he living were.

Loe how the *Chub*, the *Roche*, the *Dace* and *Trout*  
To catch thereat doe gaze and swimme about.

His Rod, or Cane, made darke for being seene,  
The lesse to feare the warie Fish withall :  
His Line well twisted is, and wrought so cleane  
That being strong, yet doth it shew but small,  
His Hooke not great, nor little, but betweene,  
That light upon the watry brimme may fall,  
The Line in length scant halfe the Rod exceedes,  
And neither Cork, nor Leade thereon it needes.

But by the way it shall not be amisse,  
To understand that in the waters gray,  
Of floating Fish, two sundry kindes there is,  
The one that lives by raven and by pray,  
And of the weaker sort, now that, now this,  
He bites, and spoyles, and kills, and beares away,  
And in his greedy gullet doth devoure,  
As *Scillas* gulfe, a ship within his powre.

And these have wider mouths to catch and take  
Their flying pray, whom swiftly they pursew,  
And rows of teeth like to a saw or rake,  
Wherewith the gotten game they bite and chew.  
And greater speede within the waters make,  
To set upon the other simple crew,  
And as the grayhound steales upon the hare,  
So doe they use to rush on them unware.

Unequal Fate, that some are borne to be  
 Fearfull and milde, and for the rest a pray,  
 And others are ordain'd to live more free,  
 Without controule or danger anyway :  
 So do the Foxe the Lambe destroy we see,  
 The *Lyon* fierce, the *Bever*, *Roe*, or *Gray*,  
 The *Hauke*, the foule, the greater wrong the lesse,  
 The lofty proud, the lowly poore oppresse.

#### FOR THE PIKE OR PEARCH.

Now for to take these kinde of Fish with all,  
 It shal be needfull to have still in store,  
 Some living baites as *Bleiks*, and *Roches* small,  
*Goodgion*, or *Loach*, not taken long before,  
 Or yealow *Frogges* that in the waters craule,  
 But all alive they must be evermore :  
 For as for baites that dead and dull doe lye,  
 They least esteeme and set but little by.

The other kinde that are unlike to these  
 Doe live by corne or any other seede :  
 Sometimes by crummes of bread, of paste or cheese,  
 Or grassehoppers that in greene meadows breed,  
 With brood of waspes, of hornets, doares or bees,  
 Lip berries from the bryar bush or weede,  
 Bloud wormes, and snayles, or crawling Ientiles small,  
 And buzzing flies that on the waters fall.

All these are good, and many others more,  
 To make fit baites to take these kinde of Fish,  
 So that some faire deepe place you feede before,  
 A day or two, with paile, with bole, or dish ;  
 And of these meats do use to throw in store,  
 Then shall you have them byte as you would wish :  
 And ready sport to take your pleasure still,  
 Of any sort that best you like to kill.

Having given the foregoing practical instructions  
 on ground-baiting, the author tells the angler how to

deal with a pike, whose presence in the swim may deter the smaller fish from biting ; most anglers for roach can probably call to mind many occasions, on which after most careful and elaborate ground-baiting their sport has been spoiled by an accident of this kind :—

Thus serving them as often as you may,  
 But once a weeke at least it must be done,  
 If that to bite they make to long delay,  
 As by your sport may be perceived soone :  
 Then some great Fish doth feare the rest away,  
 Whose fellowship and companie they shunne :  
     Who neither in the bait doth take delight,  
     Nor yet will suffer them that would to byte.

For this you must a remedie provide,  
 Some *Roche* or *Bleike*, as I have shew'd before,  
 Beneath whose upper fin you close shall hide  
 Of all your Hooke the better halfe and more,  
 And though the point appeare or may be spide,  
 It makes no matter any whit therefore :  
     But let him fall into the watry brimme,  
     And downe unto the bottome softly swimme.

And when you see your Corke begin to move,  
 And round about to soare and fetch a ring,  
 Sometime to sinke, and sometime swimme above,  
 As doth the Ducke within the watry spring,  
 Yet make no haste your present hap to prove,  
 Till with your float at last away hee fling,  
     Then may you safely strike and hold him short,  
     And at your will prolong or end your sport.

But every Fish loves not each bayte alike,  
 Although sometime they feede upon the same ;  
 But some doe one, and some another seeke,  
 As best unto their appetite doth frame,



The *Roche*, the *Bream*, the *Carpe*, the *Chub*, and *Bleik*,  
 With paste or Corne their greedy hunger tame,  
 The *Dace*, the *Ruffe*, the *Goodgion* and the rest,  
 The smaller sort of crawling wormes love best.

The Chavender and chub doe more delight  
 To feede on tender Cheese, or Cherries red,  
 Black snayles, their bellies slit to show their white,  
 Or Grashoppers that skip in every Meade ;  
 The *Pearch*, the *Tench*, and *Eele*, doe rather bite  
 At great red wormes, in Field or Garden bred,  
 That have been scow'rd in mosse or Fenell rough,  
 To rid their filth, and make them hard and tough.

The third book deals with "What time is best to  
 Angle in aright," first, however, proceeding—

To shew what gifts and qualities of minde  
 Belongs to him that doth this pastime love.

The list is rather a long one, and is calculated to  
 deter a modest man from attempting to learn a  
 pastime requiring the possession of so many excellent  
 qualities. At first the author shows that expensive rods  
 and tackle do not of themselves make the angler :—

For what avails to Brooke or Lake to goe,  
 With handsome Rods and Hookes of divers sort,  
 Well twisted Lines, and many trinkets moe,  
 To finde the Fish within their watry fort,  
 If that the minde be not contented so,  
 But wants great gifts that should the rest support.  
 And make his pleasure to his thoughts agree,  
 With these therefore he must endued be.

Then of the necessary qualities of the successful  
 angler we are told :—

The first is Faith, not wavering and unstable  
 But such as had the holy *Patriarch* old.

The second gift and qualitie is Hope,  
The anchor-holde of every hard desire.

The third is Love, and liking to the game.

Then followeth Patience.

The next quality suggests dry fly-fishing :—

The fift good guift is low Humilitie,  
As when a lyon coucheth for his pray  
So must he stoope or kneele upon his knee.

The sixt is painefull strength and courage good.

Next unto this is Liberalitie.

The eight is knowledge how to finde the way  
And make them bite when they are dull and slow.

The ninth is placabilitie of minde,  
Contented with a reasonable dish,  
Yea though sometimes no sport at all he finde,  
Or that the weather prove not to his wish.

The tenth is thanks to that God, of each kinde,  
To net and bayt doth send both foule and Fish,  
And still reserve inough in secret store,  
To please the rich, and to relieve the poore.

Th' eleaventh good guift and hardest to indure,  
Is fasting long from all superfluous fare,  
Unto the which he must himselfe inure,  
By exercise and use of dyet spare,  
And with the liquor of the waters pure,  
Acquaint himselfe if he cannot forbear,  
And never on his greedy belly thinke,  
From rising sunne untill a low he sincke.

The twelfth and last of all is memory,  
Remembring well before he setteth out,  
Each needfull thing that he must occupy,  
And not to stand of any want in doubt.

Then the author gives instructions as to the season and time not to angle :—

First, if the weather be to dry and hot,  
Or that it seem'd *Apollo* had forgot  
His light foote steedes to rule with stedfast raine.

He condemns all cold winds and high floods, also the time when the trees are stript of their leaves in autumn :—

All windes are hurtfull if too hard they blow,  
The worst of all is that out of the East,  
Whose nature makes the Fish to biting slow,  
And lets the pastime most of all the rest ;  
The next that comes from countries clad with Snow,  
And *Articque* pole is not offensive least,  
The Southern winde is counted best of all,  
Then, that which riseth where the sunne doth fall.

In turn we are instructed as to the best time and season to angle :—

But if the weather stedfast be and cleare,  
Or overcast with clouds, so it be dry,  
And that no signe nor token there appeare,  
Of threatning storm through all the emptie skie,  
But that the ayre is calme and voide of feare,  
Of ruffling windes or raging tempests hie,  
Or that with milde and gentle gale they blow,  
Then it is good unto the brooke to goe.

And when the flouds are fall'n and past away,  
And carried have the dregges into the deepe,  
And that the waters waxe more thin and gray,  
And leave their bankes above them high and steepe,

The milder streame of colour like to whay,  
 Within his bounds his wonted course doth keepe,  
 And that the wind i South or else by-West,  
 To Angle then is time and seasons best.

After enumerating at some length the haunts of each kind of fish, the author rightly concludes that experience is the best guide :—

But here experience doth my skill exceed,  
 Since divers Countries divers Rivers have ;  
 And divers Rivers change of waters breed,  
 And change of waters sundry Fish doth crave,  
 And sundry Fish in divers places feede,  
 As best doth like them in the liquid wave,  
 So that by use and practice may be knowne,  
 More then by art or skill can well be showne.

He then tells us “The best houres of the day to Angle” :—

From first appearing of the rising Sunne,  
 Till nine of clocke low under water best  
 The Fish will bite, and then from nine to noone,  
 From noone to foure they doe refraine and rest,  
 From foure againe till *Phæbus* swift hath runne,  
 His daily course, and setteth in the West :  
 But at the flie aloft they use to bite,  
 All summer long from nine till it be night.

The following verse is added “least the Angler leave his Toolles behinde” :—

Light Rod to strike, long line to reach withall,  
 Strong hooke to holde the fish he haps to hit,  
 Spare Lines and Hookes, what ever chance doe fall,  
 Baites quicke and dead to bring them to the bit,  
 Fine Lead and Quils with Corks both great and small,  
 Knife, File and thred and little Basket fit,  
 Plummets to sound the depth of clay and sand,  
 With Pole and Net to bring them safe to land.

And now we are arived at the last,  
 In wished harbour where we meane to rest ;  
 And make an end of this our journey past :  
 Here then in quiet roade I thinke it best  
 We strike our sailes and stedfast Anchor cast  
 For now the Sunne low setteth in the West,  
 And yee *Boat-Swaines*, a merry *Carroll* sing,  
 To him that safely did us hither bring.

On the reverse of the last page the following cryptic lines appear:—

*Wouldst thou catch Fish ?  
 Then here's thy wish ;  
 Take this receipt,  
 To annoynt thy Baite.*

Thou that desir'st to fish with Line and Hooke,  
 Be it in poole, in River, or in Brooke,  
 To blisse thy baite, and make the Fish to bite :  
 Loe, here's a meanes, if thou canst hit it right,  
 Take Gum of life, fine beat, and laid in soake,  
 In Oyle, well drawn from that which kills the Oake.  
 Fish where thou wilt, thou shalt have sport thy fill,  
 When twenty faile, thou shalt be sure to kill.

*Probatum.*

*It's perfect and good,  
 If well understood ;  
 Else not to be tolde  
 For Silver or Golde.—B. R.*

FINIS.

The initials are attributed by Sir John Hawkins to the Mr R. Roe mentioned by Walton, but in the Bodleian copy of Dennys' work the initials are unquestionably as given above and not R. R.

## CHAPTER IV

IN the same year in which Dennys' poem appeared, *Britannia's Pastorals* were written by William Browne.

The title-page of the first edition of *Britannia's Pastorals* is undated, but the introductory verses to the reader are addressed from the Inner Temple, 18th June 1613.

These poems contain (p. 105) the following verses descriptive of angling for pike :—

Now as an Angler melancholy standing  
Upon a greene bancke yeelding roome for landing,  
A wrigling yealow worme thrust on his hooke,  
Now in the midst he throwes, then in a nooke :  
Here puls his line, there throwes it in againe,  
Mendeth his Corke and Baite, but all in vaine,  
He long stands viewing of the curled streame ;  
At last a hungry Pike, or well-growne Breame  
Snatch at the worme, and hasting fast away  
He knowing it, a Fish of stubborne sway  
Puls up his rod, but soft : (as hauing skill)  
Wherewith the hooke fast holds the Fishes gill.  
Then all his line he freely yeeldeth him,  
Whilst furiously all up and downe doth swimme  
Th' insnared Fish, here on the toppe doth scud,  
There underneath the banckes, then in the mud ;

And with his franticke fits so scares the shole,  
That each one takes his *hyde*, or starting hole :  
By this the Pike cleane wearied, underneath  
A willow lyes, and pants (if Fishes breath)  
Wherewith the Angler gently puls him to him,  
And least his hast might happen to vndoe him,  
Layes downe his rod, then takes his line in hand,  
And by degrees getting the Fish to land,  
Walkes to another Poole : at length is winner  
Of such a dish as serues him for his dinner.

In the year following the publication of Dennys' poem, a prose version appeared anonymously, under the title of *The Pleasures of Princes*. Gervase Markham, the author of this conversion, is one of the most interesting characters in angling literature. He was the third son of Robert Markham, of Cotham, Northamptonshire ; was born about 1568, and died in 1637. By profession he was a soldier, and served as captain under the Earl of Essex in Ireland, but appears to have turned to literature as a means of gaining a living. He was a most versatile author. "No subject, indeed, appears to have been rejected by Markham : husbandry, housewifery, farriery, horsemanship, and military tactics, hunting, hawking, fowling, fishing, and archery, heraldry, poetry, romances, and the drama all shared his attention and exercised his genius and industry" (Drake's *Shakespeare and his Times*).

Markham was a most unscrupulous writer ; not only did he usually omit to mention the sources from which he compiled his works, but also he was

in the habit of writing several works on the same subject under different titles; indeed in order to protect themselves from this latter device the book-sellers obtained from him the following agreement, which is recorded in the Stationers' Registers:—

14 July 1617

15 Regis Jacobi.

Memorandum That I Gervase Markham of London gent. Do promise here after Never to write any more book or bookes to be printed, of the Deseases or cures of any Cattle, as Horse, Oxe, Cowe, sheepe, Swine and Goates etc. In witnes where of I haue here unto sett my hand the 14th Day of Julie 1617.  
GERUIS MARKHAM.

In 1613 *The English Husbandman*, by Gervase Markham, was published. It contained no mention of angling, but was divided into three parts, "a former part, before the first part: Being an absolute perfect Introduction into the Rules of true Husbandry," the "first Part contayning the manner of plowing and manuring, etc.," and the second part, "contayning the art of Planting, grafting, etc.," concluded with a promise if the work was well received, of another book of husbandry, "contayning the feeding, breeding, and diseases of cattle and other arts of Husbandry."

The book appears to have met with a good reception, for in the following year (1614), *The second booke of the English Husbandman* was published, "contayning the orderings of the Kitchen Garden . . . a discourse of the generall art of fishing with



the Angle, and otherwise; and of all the hidden secrets belonging thereunto. Together with the choyce, ordering, breeding, and dyeting of the fighting cocke. A worke never before printed by any author."

The angling portion of this book was also printed separately in 1614, and again later under the titles of *The Pleasures of Princes*, *Goodmen's Recreations*, etc.

This angling portion is practically a prose version of *The Secrets of Angling*, by John Dennys, with slight adornments and enlargements, taken from the *Book of St Albans*, and Mascall's *A Book of Fishing with Hook and Line*; but no acknowledgment is here made of the sources of the work. Subsequently, however, when inserting into the fourth (1631) and following editions of his *Country Contentments* the same treatise on angling, Markham acknowledged the source of his information in the following fashion:—

The whole Art of Angling: as it was written in a small Treatise in Rime, and now for the better understanding of the Reader, put into Prose, and adorned and enlarged.

The following extracts from the *Pleasures of Princes* comprise almost all the angling information which is not taken either from Dennys, Mascall, or the *Book of St Albans*:—

#### THE ANGLE ROD OF MANY PIECES.

There be other Anglers, and many of the best and approvedst judgments; which allow the Angle rod of

many pieces ; as those which are made of cane, each piece exceeding the other one degree, in such even proportion that being fixed, and thrust one within another they will show as one even, and most straight rush-growne body without any crookednesse or other outward evill favourednesse : these pieces would not be more than four foot in length a piece, and three such pieces, which make twelve foot are sufficient for the stocke of the Rod, besides the top, now for those ends which are the sockets, into which you fit the other canes, you shall hoope them about with fine plates of brasse, an inch and a halfe broad, well sodered, and smoothly filed, which will keep the same from cleaving : and for the top of this Rod, the round whalebone is thought the best, and surely in my conceipt so it is, both for this and any other Rod whatsoever, for it is tough, strong, and most plyant : these Rods are most made to have the small canes thrust down into the wide canes, so that a man may walk with them as with a staffe, and when he pleaseth to draw them forth, and use them as occasion shall be offered : the only exception which is taken at these kinds of Rods, is the bright colour of the cane, which reflecting into the water oftentimes feareth the Fish, and makes them afrayd to bite. But if you fish in deepe, and thicke waters, there is no such matter, for the shadow of the rod is not discerned through the Sunne, only in shallow, and cleere Brookes it is a little hindrance, and therefore he which is a Master in this Art will Umber, and darken the Rod, by rubbing it over a gentle fire with a little Capons grease, and brown of Spaine mixt together.

Markham recommends a line of three hairs for a gudgeon or minnow ; the *Book of St Albans* recommends only one hair for the minnow.

The instructions in regard to the clothing of the

angler are the same as those given in the *Secrets of Angling*, but Markham is not satisfied with Dennys' very exhaustive catalogue of the virtues necessary for an angler:—

Now for the inward qualities of the mind, albeit some Writers reduce them under twelve heads, which indeed whosoever injoyeth cannot chuse but be very compleat in much perfection, yet I must draw them into many more branches.

The first, and most especiall whereof, is, that a skilfull Angler ought to bee a general Scholler, and seene in all the liberall Sciences, as a Gramarian, to know how eyther to Write or discourse of his Art in true tearmes, either without affection or rudenesse.

Markham also requires the angler to be an astrologer, a meteorologist, a geographer, an arithmetician, and a musician.

After describing the seasons for angling and the haunts of the fish in similar terms to Dennys', he describes the different baits.

Dennys in his *Secrets of Angling* neglects the subject of angling with the artificial fly, only alluding in his mention of fly-fishing to dibbing with the natural fly. Markham makes amends for this omission by giving the following list of flies and instructions for tying them:—

Lastly for your dead flies, which are most proper for the Trout, or Grayling, you shall know that the dun Fly is good in March, being the lesser, but the greater dun Fly will serve the latter end of February:

the stone Fly is good in Aprill, the red Fly and the yellow Fly in May, and part of June, the wasp Fly, and the shell Fly in July, and the cloudy darke Fly in August.

Now for the making of these Flies, the cloudy darke Fly is made of blacke wooll: clipt from betweene a sheepes eares, and whipt about with blacke Silke, his wings of the under mayle of the Mallard, and his heade made blacke and suitable, fixed upon a fine piece of corke, and folded so cunningly about the hooke, that nothing may be perceived but the point, and beard only. The Shell-fly is made of fine greene flaxe, and the wings of the wings of a Pew-glead: the Wasp-fly is made of blacke wooll lapt about with yellow silke, and the wings of the downe of the Buzzard; the Tawny-fly is made of tawny wooll, and the wings set one contrary to another, and made of the white downe of a widgeon: the Moorish fly is made of fine flocks, shorne from a greene gray russett, and the wings of the blackest may be of a Drake: the bright Yellow fly is made of yellow wooll, and his wings of a red cocks yellow maine, the sad yellow fly is made of blacke wooll with a twisted yellow silke, like a list, whipt downe on eyther side, and the wings of the wings of a Buzzard, set on with blacke thred: the blacke Fly is made of blacke Wooll, and lapt about with the hearle of the Peacock's tayle, his wings with the browne feathers of the Mallard, and some of his blew feathers on his head: the red Fly is made of red Wooll, lapt about with blacke silke, and the wings of the male of a Mallard, with some of the red feathers of a capon, the stone Fly is made of blacke wooll, made yellow under the wings, and under the tayle with silke, and the wings of Drake's downe: and the greater dun Fly is made of blacke Wooll, and his wings of the dun feathers of a Drakes tayle, the lesser dun Fly

is made of dun Wooll, and his wings of the male of a Partridge.

Now for the shapes, and proportions of these flies, it is impossible to describe them without paynting, therefore you shall take of these severall flies alive, and laying them before you, try how neere your Art can come unto nature by an equall shape, and mixture of colours; and when you have made them, you may keep them in close boxes uncrushed, and they will serve you many yeeres.

Methods for preparing a variety of pastes for bottom-fishing are described:—

1. Made from Bean flower, rabbit's fat or cat's fat, virgin wax, sheep's suet, and honey. These ingredients pounded in a mortar will make a paste which will keep for a year.

2. Fat of a sheep's kidney, new cheese, wheat flour, and honey.

3. Sheep's blood, honey, fresh cheese, and grated crumbs of white bread. These ingredients are to be well kneaded together, and a small pellet of the paste thrown in when fishing.

4. Bread crumbs and ripe cherries with the stones removed.

Markham concludes his list of pastes, by giving the following solution of the cryptic rhyme at the end of the *Secrets of Angling*:—

Lastly, if you take Venus Turpentine, some time washt, and beaten, and mixt it with as much life Honey, and then dissolve them in Oyle of Polypody, and so keepe them in a close glasse: then when you

angle annoynt your baite but with this confection, and though the water be never so unseasonable, or the Fish never so ill disposed to bite, yet be sure you shall not lose your labour, but take, when all men else faile of their purpose, for the secret hath been rarely approved, and hitherto hath been maintained with great secrecie.

In the eleventh edition of the *Cheap and Good Husbandry*, published 1664, twenty-seven years after Markham's death, a slightly different description of this ointment is given :—

Lastly, if you take the oyle of Aspray, and coculus Indie, and Assafoetida beaten, and mix with as much life honey, and then dissolve them in the Oyle of Polypody, and so keepe in a close glass; then when you angle annoint your bait with this confection, though the weather be never so unseasonable, etc.

In describing the methods of angling for the different kinds of fish, Markham appears to be ignorant of the habits of the barbel, which he identifies with the grayling as follows:—

The Barbell, or Grayling which some call the Umber, are very subtill, and crafty Fishes: therefore you must be careful that your bayts be sweet, and new, and when you angle for them doe in all things as you doe for the Trout, for they bite aloft in the Summer, and at the bottome in the Winter. Your lines must be extra ordinarilly strong, and your hooke of a threepeny compasse, for they are Fishes of waighty bodies.

Directions, which are apparently taken from

Mascall's book, are given for "preserving fish from all sorts of devourers."

The angling portion of the *Pleasures of Princes* appears unaltered in several of Markham's books, which were issued under different titles, as *Cheape and Good Husbandry*, *The Way to get Wealth*, etc.

In the *Booke of Cheape and Good Husbandry* (1616) two chapters on making fish ponds are given, and in the 1623 edition of the same work a woodcut of "a Platform for ponds" is added.

Markham appended another work on angling to *The Whole Art of Husbandry* by Conrad Heresbach, which he edited in 1631. "*The Whole Art of Husbandry* contained in Foure Bookes. . . . First written by Conrade Heresbatch, a learned Nobleman, then translated by Barnaby Googe, Esquire, and now Renewed, Corrected, enlarged and adorned with all the experiments and practices of our English Nation, which were wanting in the Former Editions. By Captaine Gervase Markham."

The first edition which Markham published in 1614 contained no reference to angling. On comparing Markham's edition of Conrad Heresbach's work with the translation by Barnaby Googe, I find the whole of the angling portion has been added by Markham, though no note to that effect is given: in the original work there is merely a brief treatise on fish ponds.

Markham's addition on angling, is practically a

condensation of the *Pleasures of Princes*. It commences as follows:—

I will not enter here into any large Enconiums, touching the praise of this art of Angling. It shall suffice me that all men know it, that few good men but love it, and a world of pore men live by it; neither will I stand upon the use and vertue thereof, because it is eyther for profit or recreation, nor upon the Antiquitie, because no man living knew the beginning; nor upon anything that is linked unto it by the Curious.

It is clear that in preparing this book Markham was pressed either for time or space for the twelve essential virtues of the angler given by Dennys, which were not sufficient for him in the *Pleasures of Princes*, he here curtails as follows:—

Touching the man, howsoever some would fixe upon him twelve vertues, some twenty, & some more, some lesse, yet I must contract them and say, if he be Tullies honest man, he is then the Anglers sufficient man: there is required in him much patience and constancy, the one will take from him Anguish, the other error: he must love the sport earnestly, for No Love, no Lucke; he must have humble Thoughts and humble Gestures, for he must not disdain to kneele, to lye groveling, to stand barehead, nay to doe any humble action to attaine his purpose: he must be of strong constitution, for he is like to undergoe the worst terrors of Tempests.

Dennys tells the angler to buy his hooks, but in this work Markham is the first writer to recommend the fisherman to buy also his rods in preference to



making them; "indeed these Rods are the most sufficient for any ordinary Angling whatsoever, and because there is so great choise of them to be bought almost in every Haberdashers Shop, I will not trouble you with any further relation of them, but leave them to your best election."

Markham still seems to regard the barbel as a free riser at the fly:—

As thus you may buy these bare hookes, so you may also buy all manner of Flyes for every month in the yeere, and for every Fish that biteth at those baits, especially the Trout, the Chevin, and the Barbell. Now if you will be so industrious to make these things yourselfe, then having provided Wyer, Silke, wool, Feathers, and the like, lay but the examples before you and undoe one, and you shall finde it most easy to make an hundred.

A curious little book, the exact date of publication of which I have been unable to ascertain, entitled *The Young Sportsman's Instructor. In Angling, Fowling, Hawking, Hunting, Ordering Singing Birds, Hawks, Poultry, Conies, Hares, and Dogs, And how to Cure them*, by G. M. Sold at the Gold Ring in Little Brittain, price 6d., has been attributed to Gervase Markham.

Mr Pearson, in producing a partial reprint of this work in *The Angler's Garland*, 1871, gives the date as about 1597. But apart from the style of the book, which is very different from that of the familiar angling works of that period, it contains the following

passage, which renders so early an origin an impossibility :—"Read some of these in a curious Book lately printed called the *Angler's Sure Guide*. Sold at the Ring in Little Brittain." The book here referred to was the *Angler's Sure Guide*, by R. H., printed in 1706 by G. Conyers, at the Ring in Little Brittain.

The *Bibliotheca Piscatoria* mentions an edition of *The Sportsman's Instructor* in 1652, of a similar size, and with the same number of pages. I have not been able to find any other evidence of the existence of such an edition, and there is no entry of it in the Registers of Stationers' Hall.

The size of this diminutive work was  $2\frac{5}{8}$  by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches ; Mr Pearson in his reprint makes it considerably smaller, viz.,  $1\frac{7}{8}$  by  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inch.

From the passage quoted above it would seem that *The Young Sportsman's Instructor* was published about 1706 or 1707 (seventy years after Markham's death). Unfortunately at this period there is a hiatus in the records of Stationers' Hall, the Licensing Act of Charles II. having expired and that of Anne not having been passed until 1710, so no confirmation on this point can be obtained from that useful and reliable source.

*The Young Sportsman's Instructor* will be dealt with in a later chapter : here it is sufficient to state that it differs from Markham's books in containing no references to the angler's many virtues, upon which Markham was so fond of dilating, but giving instead

detailed and practical instructions to the angler in regard to selecting a swim, plumbing the depth, preparing the bait, and the method of placing it on the hook: it also contrasts the different styles of tackle suitable for a large river like the Thames, with those suitable for a smaller river such as the "New River." In fact, it conveys the impression of having been written by a practical angler, a qualification which is not betrayed in any of the other works attributed to Markham.

I have entered thus fully into my reasons for believing that Markham was not the author of this book, because its authorship has hitherto been attributed to him by all the angling bibliographers. The fact that his initials are affixed to the book, and that it has been included in some of the posthumous editions of his works, has probably led to this error. At the time when it was published there was evidently a demand for Markham's books, which appear then to have occupied a position comparable with that held by Mrs Beeton's various works at the present day: therefore a reason existed for fathering upon him the works of later and unknown authors.

During the period when Markham was writing, William Lawson edited, with notes, an edition of Dennys' *Secrets of Angling*, and also wrote a work entitled *A New Orchard and Garden*, a book which was bound up with Markham's *Country Contentments*, and sold with it under the collective title of *A Way to get Wealth*.

The notes which Lawson appended to Dennys' work are decidedly practical in character, and possess far greater value in this respect than the writings of his contemporary, Markham.

*The Secrets of Angling*, augmented with many approved experiments. By W. Lawson. Printed at London for Roger Jackson and are to be sold, etc. The first edition of this work was undated: the *Bibliotheca Piscatoria* gives the date as about 1620, and it must have been earlier than 1624 when the publisher died.<sup>1</sup>

Lawson modestly commences his edition as follows:—

TO THE READER,

It may seem in 'me presumption to add this little comment to the work of so worthy an author. . . . What to me is doubtfull, I have, as I can, explained; what wants in my judgment, I have supplied as the time woull suffer: what I passe by, I approve.

Lawson strongly condemns a top-heavy rod, and also the use of floats:—

I utterly dislike your southern corks. First they

<sup>1</sup> *Stationers' Register*, 16th January 1625. Francis Williams. Assigned over unto him by Mistris Jackson wife of Roger Jackson deceased and by a full court holden this day, all her estate in the copies here-in-after mentioned . . . xiiij. . . . 5. *The way to get wealth. New Orchard & Gardinge, his method. The husbandmans practice.* Al being the works of Gervis Markham, whereunto is added Butler on Bees, *The Secrets of Angling*, with Maskall's boke of Cattle.

affright the fish, in the bite and sight, and because they follow not so kindly the nimble rod and hand. Secondly they breed weight to the line, which puts it in danger, & hinders the nimble jerk of the rod, and loades the arm. A good eye and hand may easily discern the bite.

He was in the habit of making his own hooks. In regard to the shape he gives the following instructions:—"The best form for ready striking and sure holding and strength, is a straight and somewhat long shanke and strait nib'd, with a little compasse, not round in any wise for it neither strikes surely nor readily, but is weak, as having too great a compasse."

In explanation of Dennys' line about the hook,

His point not over sharp, nor yet too dull,

Lawson says:—"He means the hook may be too weak at the point, it cannot be too sharpe, if the mettall be of good steele."

The best portion of Lawson's addition is his description of fly-fishing for trout. He supplies the noticeable deficiency in Dennys' poem in this respect, as follows:—

The trout makes the angler most gentlemanly, and readiest sport of all fishes: if you angle with a made flye, and a line twice your rods length or more (in a plaine water without wood) of three haire, in a darke windy day from mid afternoone, and have learned the cast of the flie, your flie must counterfeit the May-flie, which is bred of the Cod bait, and is called the water fly: you must change his colour

every moneth, begining with a dark white, and so grow to a yellow, the form cannot be well put on a paper, as it may be taught by slight: yet it will be like this forme. [Here Lawson gives a figure.]

The head is of black silk or haire, the wings of the feathers of a mallart, teele, or pickled hen-wing. The body of Crewell according to the moneth for colour, and run about with a black haire: all fastened at the taile, with the thred that fastened the hooke. You must fish in, or hard by the stream and have a quick hand and a ready eye, and a nimble rod, strike with him, or you lose him. If the winde be rough and trouble the crust of the water, he will take it in the plaine deeps, and then, and there commonly the greatest will rise. When you have hookt him, give him leave, keeping your line streight, and hold him from roots and he will tire himself. This is the chief pleasure of angling. This flie and two linkes among wood or close by a bush, moved in the crust of the water, is deadly in an evening, if you come close. This is called bushing for trouts.

In reference to the mysterious ointment mentioned at the end of *The Secrets of Angling*, he says that "that which kills the oake, I conjecture to be ivy, till I change my minde. This excellent receipt divers anglers can tell where you may buy them."

Lawson concludes his book by giving the angler several hints, and among them the following:—

Barre netting, and night hooking, where you love Angling.

He that is more greedy of fish than sport, let him have three or four angles fitted & baited, and laid in several pooles, you shall sometime have them all sped at once.

If you go forth in or immediately after a showre, and take the water in the first rising, and fish in the streame at the ground with a red worme, you may load your sede, if there be a store. Thus may any botcher kill fish.

I have seen the above method practised with great success on the Dartmoor streams by the local fishermen. They wait till the water is discoloured and rising, in consequence of recent rains, then these "botchers" rush off and catch with worms their great store of fish.

On the subject of rods, Lawson writes :—

I use a rod of two parts, to joyne in the midst when I come to the river, with two pins, and a little hempe waxed, thus the pins joyne it, the hempe fastens it firmly.

A Whale bone made round no bigger than a wheat straw at the top, yields well, and strikes well.

## CHAPTER V

IN 1651 was published *The Art of Angling*, wherein are discovered many rare secrets, very necessary to be known by all that delight in that recreation. Written by Thomas Barker. An Ancient Practitioner in the said Art.

Barker, the author of this work, was a writer of an entirely different stamp from Mascall and Markham. He was, as he confesses in his preface, no scholar; and therefore unable, even if he had wished to do so, to abstract from foreign sources the material for his book. In fact he appears to have written with a view to conveying the information which he had acquired from a life-long experience of angling. His remarks on fly-fishing form perhaps the most interesting portion of his work, and these were copied and acknowledged by the great Izaak Walton.

The high sporting spirit which is so pleasing a feature in most of the old angling works is unfortunately absent from this work of Barker's; if Walton is rightly called the common father of anglers, and Nobbes the father of trollers, the title of father of



poachers must, I am afraid, be assigned to Thomas Barker. His motto appears to have been—catch fish—fairly, if you can—anyhow, catch fish.

In his second edition (1657 and 1659), he was the first to publish and advocate the use of the salmon roe; he appears to have taken more delight in snaring, snagging, and trimmering pike than in catching them by angling, because the former methods were likely to catch more fish. Perhaps these pot-hunting proclivities were the result of his professional calling, which was that of a cook.

There are no grounds for the statement in the *Dictionary of National Biography* that “at the time of writing this treatise he gained a livelihood by accompanying gentlemen on fishing expeditions, or giving instruction at home in the use of baits and tackle.” He gained his livelihood at that time, as formerly, in the capacity of cook, and this he tells us himself in his second edition. “I have been admitted into the most Ambassadors’ Kitchens that have come into England this forty years, and do wait on them still at the Lord Protector’s charge, and I am duly paid for it.” Also:—

. . . for forty years and  
In Ambassadors Kitchens learn’d my cookery.

All that is known of the life of Barker has been gathered from the dedicatory epistle of his book, which is as follows:—

GENTLEMEN,—I doe present this my Epistle, as

I have named it, to the Right Honourable, and Gentlemen · Anglers of the Citie of London, and else-where within the Realm of England. If the Reader do finde anything herein delightfull, I shall heartily rejoyce: For the favour I have found in them shall never be buried in oblivion by me, and so I bid the world adieu: For I am grown old; and therefore am willing to set forth my true experience that I have been gathering these fifty years, and the true grounds of Angling, having spent many pounds in the gaining thereof, as is well known where I was born and educated, which is Bracmeal in the libertie of Salop, being there a Free-man, and Burgesse of the same Citie. If any Noble or Gentle Angler, of what degree so ever he be, have a mind to discourse on any of these experiments; I live in Henry the seventh's gifts, the next door to the Gate-house in Westminster, my name is Barker, where I will be ready to satisfie them. I doe crave pardon for not writing Scholler like; but my meaning shall be true, as I will maintain during life, which is not like to be long, that the younger frie may have my experiments at a smaller charge than I had them: for it would be too heavie for every one that loveth that pleasure, to be at the charge as I was first in my youth, the losse of my time, with great expences; therefore I thought it fit in my discretion to let it be understood, and take a little pains to set forth the true grounds and waies of experience and understanding, both for the fitting of the Rods and Tackles for the ground Baits and Flies, with directions for the making thereof, with observations for the times and seasons for the ground Baits and Flies, both day and night, with the dressing thereof: for age taketh the pleasure from me, with many Crosses, as is now known to many.

THOMAS BARKER.

Barker does not lay so much stress on the weather as the writer who preceded him:—"Thus must you goe to work with your Flies, light for darknesse and dark for lightnesse with the Winde in the South, then that blows the Flie in the Trouts mouth. Though I set down the Wind being in the South, if the weather be warm, I am indifferance where the Winde standeth either with ground Bait or Menow, so that I can cast my Bait into the River." He thus anticipated Walton in expressing indifferance to the direction of the wind, provided that the other conditions were favourable.

Barker must have been an exceedingly skilful angler, or else very richly endowed with the fisherman's proverbial gift for exaggeration; there are very few anglers nowadays who, with the most modern and improved appliances, could land the greatest trout that swims on a single hair.

The first thing you must gain, must be a neat taper Rod, light before, with a tender hazel top which is very gentle. If you desire to attain my way of Angling (for I have angled these fourty years) with a single hair of five lengths, one tyed to another for the bottom of my Line, and a Line of three haired links for the upper-most part, and so you may kill the greatest Trout that swims with Sea room.

Hee that Angles with a Line made of three haired links at the bottom, and more at the top, may kill Fish: but he that Angles with one hair shall kill five Trouts to the others one, for the Trout is very quick sighted; therefore the best way for night or day, is to keep out of sight. You must Angle always with the

poynt of your Rod down the stream ; for a Fish hath not the quicknesse of sight so perfect up the stream, as opposite against him.

The following very useful directions are given for scouring and feeding worms :—

When you have gathered your worms out of the Dunghill, you must gain the greenest Moss you can finde, then wash the earth very clean out of it, then provide an earthen pot ; so put your Moss into the pot ; within two dayes you shall finde your worms so poor, that if you bait some of them on your hook, you shall see that with throwing of them two or three times into the water, they will dye and grow white : now the skill is when these worms be grown poor ; you must feed them up to make them fat and lustie, that they may live on the hook : that is the chieftest point. To make them lustie and fat, you must take the yolk of an Egg, some eight or ten spoonful of the top of new milk, beaten well together in a Porringer, warm it a little, untill you see it curdle ; then take it off the fire, and set it to cool ; when it is cold, take a spoonfull and drop it upon your moss into the pot, every drop about the bignesse of a green pea, shifting your Moss twice in the week in the Summer, and once in the Winter : thus doing, you shall feed your worms fat, and make them lustie, that they will live a long time on the hook, so you may keep them all the year long.

The description given of angling with a minnow more resembles spinning than trolling ; it contains the first mention of the swivel. The line used is thicker than that used for bottom-fishing, “two silks and two hairs twisted for the bottom next your hook,

with a Swivell nigh the middle of your Line, with an indifferent large hook."

Having described the method of baiting the hook with the minnow, he continues: "you must alwayes be Angling with the poynt of your Rod down the stream, with drawing the menow up the stream little by little, nigh the top of the water; the Trout seeing the bait, cometh at it most fiercely, so give a little time before you strike: This is the true way, without lead, for many times I have had them come at the lead and forsake the Menow, so he that tryeth shall prove it in time; let us goe to Angling with the Flie, which is a delightfull sport."

The rod for fly-fishing must be "light and tender." The upper part of the line may be as thick as the angler pleases, but

for the lower part, next your Flie, must bee of three or four haired links. If you can attain to Angle with one hair, you shall have the more rises and kill more Fish: be sure you doe not over-load yourself with the length of your Line: before you begin to Angle make a tryall, having the winde in your back, to see at what length you can cast your Flie, that the Flie light first into the water, and no longer; for if any of the Line falleth into the water before the Flie, it is better unthrown then thrown: be sure you be casting alwaies down the stream with the Winde behinde you and the Sun before; it is a speciall poynt to have the Sun and Moon before you; for the very motion of the rod drives all the pleasure from you, either by day or night in all your Anglings, both for Worms and Flies; so there must be a great care of that:

Let us begin to Angle in March with the Flie; If the weather prove Windie, or Cloudie, there are severall kinds of Palmers that are good for that time.

First, a Black Palmer ribbed with silver; the second, a black Palmer with an Orange-taunie body; thirdly, a black Palmer with the bodie made all of black: fourthly, a red Palmer ribbed with gold, and a red hackle mixed orange cruel; these Flies serve all the year long morning and evening, Windie and Cloudie. Then if the Aire prove bright and clear, you must imitate the Hawthorn Flie, which is all black and very small, the smaller the better. In May take the may Flie: imitate that, which is made severall wayes; some make them with a shammie body, ribbed with a black hair; another way made with Sandy-Hogs wooll, ribbed with black silk, and winged with a Mallards feather, according to the fancie of the Angler. There is another called the Oak-Flie, which is made of Orange colour Cruel and black, with a brown wing; imitate that: . . . the smaller the Flies be made, and of indifferent small hooks, they are the better; these sorts I have set down, will serve all the year long, observing the times and seasons: Note, the lightest of your Flies for cloudie and darknesse, and the darkest of your Flies for lightnesse, and the rest for indifferent times; that a mans own Judgement, with some experience and discretion must guide him: If he mean to kill Fish, he must alter his Flies according to these directions.

Now, of late, I have found that Hogs wooll, of severall colours, makes good grounds; and the wooll of a red Heyfer makes a good body; and Bears wooll makes a good ground; so I now work much of them, and it procureth very much sport.

Barker next describes fishing with the natural fly, to which method of angling he gives the name of

“doping”: he then proceeds to relate, how his Lord, one evening, directed him to catch a good dish of trout before six in the morning, and the means by which he provided the dish in time. At first, the night being very dark, he used two lobworms on his hook; as the night became a little lighter, he put on a large white palmer; on it becoming lighter still, he changed his fly for a red palmer; and at last in full daylight he put on a black palmer.

In fishing for carp, Barker recommends a ground-bait of brewer's grains, mixed with blood, over night, and a hook bait of paste or a worm early in the morning. For perch he recommends a ground of chopped lobworms at night, and a hook bait of a worm or a minnow in the morning, giving the preference to the latter, which he transfixes through the back with his hook, and allows to swim about buoyed up by a cork or quill.

Mr Marston, in his very interesting book on *Walton and the Earlier Fishing Writers*, states that Barker is the first author to “describe the use of the reel or winch and the gaff in angling for Salmon or other fish.” This is not the case, for the passage which Mr Marston quotes from Barker, describing the use of the winch in salmon-fishing, does not appear in the first edition of Barker published 1651, but in the second edition of 1657 and 1659. Walton's first edition appeared in 1653, and this contained no mention of the winch, but in his second edition, 1655, Walton is the first to mention the use of the winch

for salmon-fishing (*Compleat Angler*, ed. 2, pp. 188 and 189):—

Note also, that many use to fish for a Salmon, with a ring of wyre on the top of their Rod, through which the line may run to as great a length as is needful when he is hook'd. And to that end, some use a wheele about the middle of their rod, or nearer their hand, which are to be observed either by seeing them, or a larger demonstration of words.

To Barker, however, belongs the credit of first mentioning the use of the winch in angling, and it appears to have been invented by a namesake of his. He mentions it in his first edition, in reference to trolling for pike:—

One of my name was the best Trouler for a Pike in this Realm, he laid a wager that he would take a pike of four foot long, of Fish, within the space of one moneth with his Trouling Rod: So he trouled three and odd days and took many great Pikes, nigh the length, but did not reach the full length till within the space of three dayes of the time, then he took one and won the wager. The manner of his Trouling was, with a Hazel Rod of twelve foot long, with a ring of wyre in the top of his rod, for his Line to run through; within two foot of the bottom of the Rod, there was a hole made for to put in a wind, to turn with a barrell, to gather up his Line and loose at his pleasure; this was his manner of Trouling.

In his accurate description of a trimmer and the following passages, the unsportsmanlike side of Barker's character appears:—

But I will pawn my Credit, that I will shew a way,



either in Maior, Pond, or River, that shall take more Pikes than any Trouler with his Rod: And thus it is. First, Take a forked stick; a Line of twelve yards wound upon it, at the upper end, leave about a yard long, either to tye a bunch of sags or a Bladder, to Buoy up the Fish and to carry it from the ground; the Bait must be a live Fish either a Dace, or Godgin, or Roach, or a small Trout, the forked stick must have a slit in one side of the fork to put in the Line, that you may set your live Fish to swim at a gage, that when the Pike taketh the Bait, he may have the full libertie of the Line for his feed.

There is a time when Pikes go a Frogging up Ditches, and in the River to Sun them, as in May, June and July, there is a speedy way to take them, and not to misse scarce one in twenty. You must take a Line of six or eight foot long, arm a large hook, of the largest size that is made; arm it to your Line, lead the shank of your hook very handsome, that it may be of such weight as you may guide the hook to your pleasure; you may strike the Pike you see with the bare hook where you please; this Line and Hook doth far exceed snaring.

The principall sport to take a Pike, is to take a Goose or Gander or Duck, take one of the Pike Lines I have shewed you before; tye the Line under the left wing, and over the right wing, and about the bodie, as a man weareth his belt; turn the Goose off; into a Pond, where Pikes are: there is no doubt of sport, with great pleasure, betwixt the Goose and the Pike: It is the greatest of sport and pleasure that a noble Gentleman in Shropshire doth give his friends entertainment with.

Barker gives very practical and detailed instruction in fly-tying:—

Now to show how to make Flies: learn to make

two Flies, and make all: that is, the Palmer ribbed with silver or gold, and the May Flie; these are the ground of all Flies.

Wee will begin to make the Palmer Flie: You must arm your Line on the inside of the hook; take your Scisers and cut so much of the brown of the Mallards feather as in your own reason shall make the wings, then lay the outmost part of the feather near the hook, and the poynt of the feather towards the shank of the hook, then whip it three or four time about the hook with the same silk you armed the hook; then make your silk fast; then you must take the hackle of the neck of a Cock or Capon, or a Plovers top, which is the best; take off the one side of the feather; then you must take the hackle silk; or cruell, gold, or silver thred; make all these fast at the bent of the hook then you must begin with cruell, and silver, or gold, and work it up to the wings, every bout shifting your fingers, and making a stop, then the gold will fall right, then make fast; then work up the hackle to the same place, then make the hackle fast; then you must take the hook betwixt your finger and thumb, in the left hand, with a needl or pin, part the wings in two; then with the arming silk, as you have fastened all hitherto, whip about it as it falleth crosse betwixt the wings, then with your thumb you must turn the poynt of the feather towards the bent of the hook: then work three or for times about the shank; so fasten; then view the proportion.

Having described how to tie the "May flie," the author gives the reader the following invitation:—

If any worthie or honest Anglor cannot hit of these my directions, let him come to me, he shall read and I will work, he shall see all things done according to my aforesaid directions;

The rest of the book is devoted to directions for cooking the different kinds of fish.

In 1657 the second edition of Barker's book appeared. It was now entitled *Barker's Delight; or, the Art of Angling*, and was printed by J. G. for Richard Marriot; two years later a second issue of this edition was printed for Humphrey Moseley.

In place of the Epistle to the Reader, there is in this edition a Dedicatory Epistle to the "Right Honorable Edward Lord Montague, Generall of the Navy." Following this epistle there are seven sets of verses in praise of Mr Barker's exquisite *Book of the Art of Angling*.

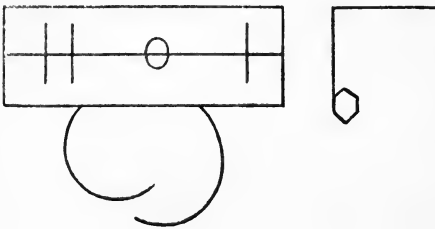
The portion of the book dealing with the cookery of the fish is considerably enlarged. A summary in verse is appended to the sections dealing with the different fish, the method of angling for trout being thus summarised:—

The rod light and taper, thy tackle fine,  
Thy lead ten inches upon the line ;  
Bigger or lesse, according to the stream,  
Angle in the dark, when others dream :  
Or in a cloudy day with a lively worm,  
The Bradlin is best ; but give him a turn  
Before thou do land a large wel grown Trout.  
And if with a flye thou wilt have a bout,  
Overload not with links, that the flye may fall  
First on the stream for that's all in all.  
The line shorter than the rod, with a naturall flye :  
But the chief point of all is the cookery.

The chief addition to the angling portion deals with "the way to take a Salmon":—

I will now shew you the way to take a Salmon.

The first thing you must gain must be a rod of some ten foot in the stock, that will carry a top of six foot pretty stiffe and strong, the reason is, because there must be a little wire ring at the upper end of the top for the line to run through, that you may take up and loose the line at your pleasure; you must have your winder within two foot of the bottom to goe on your rod made in this manner, with a spring, that you may put it on as low as you please.



The Salmon swimmeth most commonly in the midst of the river. In all his travells his desire is to see the uppermost part of the river, travelling on his journey in the heat of the day he may take a bush; if the fisherman espy him, he goeth at him with a speare, so shortneth his journey.

The angler that goeth to catch him with a line and hook, must angle for him as nigh the middle of the water as he can with one of these baits: He must take two lobworms baited as handsomely as he can, that the four ends may hang meet of a length, and so angle as nigh the bottom as he can, feeling your plummet run on the ground some twelve inches from the hook: if you angle for him with a flie (which he will rise at

like a Trout) the flie must be made of a large hook, which hook must carry six wings, or four at least; there is judgement in making those flies. The Salmon will come at a Gudgeon in the manner of a trouling, and cometh at it bravely, which is fine angling for him and good. You must be sure that you have your line of twenty six yards of length that you may have your convenient time to turne him, or else you are in danger to lose him: but if you turn him you are very like to have the fish with small tackles: the danger is all in the running out both of Salmon and Trout, you must forecast to turn the fish as you do a wild horse, either upon the right or the left hand, & wind up your line as you finde occasion in the guiding the fish to the shore, having a good large landing hook to take him up.

The fish being killed, if it be not boyled well, then all your labour and pains is lost.

At the time at which I am writing, a correspondence is being carried on in the columns of *The Fishing Gazette*, under the heading, "When was the Dry Fly First Described"; it might appear from the following lines that the merits of the floating fly were not unknown to Barker:—

Once more, my good brother, Ile speak in thy eare,  
Hogs, red Cows, & Bears wooll, to float best appear,  
And so doth your fur, if rightly it fall;  
But alwayes remember make two and make all.

I think, however, that Barker here refers to the fly floating *in* the water, and not upon the surface of the water.

Appended to the book is the following epistle to

his "Noble Lord," in which for the first time in angling literature the so-called "Heresy of the Salmon Roe" is described:—

NOBLE LORD,—I have found an experience of late, which you may angle with, and take great store of this kind of fish: first it is the best bait for a Trout that I have seen in all my time, and will take great store, and not faile, if they be there. Secondly, it is a speciall bait for Dace, or Dare, good for Chub, or Bottlin, or Grayling. The bait is a roe of a Salmon, or Trout, if it be a large Trout, that the spawnes be any thing great. You must angle for the Trout with this bait as you angle with the brandlin, taking a paire of cisers and cut so much as a large Hasel nut, and bait your hook, so fall to your sport, there is no doubt of pleasure.

If I had known it but twenty years agoe I would have gained a hundred pounds onely with that bait. I am bound in duty to your Honour, and not to carry it to my grave with me. I do desire that men of quality should have it that delight in that pleasure: The greedy Angler will murmur at me, but for that I care not. For the angling for the scale-fish, they must angle either with cork or quill, plumming their ground, and with feeding with the same bait, taking them asunder that they may spread abroad that the fish may feed and come to your place, there is no doubt of pleasure angling with fine Tackles, as single haire lines at least five or six length long, a small hook with two or three spawnes, the bait will hold one week. If you keep it on any longer, you must hang it up to dry a little: when you go for your pleasure again, put the bait in a little water it will come in kind again.

*Sic vale feliciter*

THOMAS BARKER.





Being a Discourse of  
**FISH and FISHING,**  
Not unworthy the perusal of most *Anglers.*

---

*Simon Peter said, I go a fishing: and they said, We also wil go with thee. John 21. 3.*

---

London, Printed by T. Maxey for RICH. MARRIOT, in  
S. Dunstons Church-yard Fleetstreet, 1653.

Title-page of the First Edition of Walton's *The Compleat Angler.*



It is unnecessary to deal at any length with, or to quote extracts from a work so generally known as Walton's *Compleat Angler*. This book may be regarded from two points of view, its literary, and its practical side. It is from its literary merit, however, that it has gained its great and lasting popularity. So much is this the case, that among the most enthusiastic admirers of Walton there are many who take no interest in the art of angling. As the writer of Walton's life, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, says:—"Walton is not read as an instructor; he is an Idyllist and as such is unmatched in English prose."

Moses Browne, who in 1750 edited the first edition of Walton published after the author's death, fully appreciated the literary value of the work as distinct from its practical utility. In his preface (1759 Edition) he says:—

And it is so happy to have this, which is very singular and uncommon to recommend it, that it has found the way to render itself exceedingly agreeable to Readers of all tastes, who have ever perused it. Not only the Lovers of this Art, but all others, who have no Inclination in the least to the Diversions of Angling that it treats of, have joined in giving it their mutual Suffrage and Commendation; an Instance of which I have the Pleasure to remember, and not improperly in this place to its Honour, that on a Time when I took the Freedom to present it to the amiable and deservedly admired Countess of Hertford late Duchess of Somerset (a name that wrings a Throb of Anguish from my Heart) with

an earnest request to peruse it; she was afterwards pleas'd to tell me (with a Condescension strangely engaging) "That I had really deceived her into a Disappointment she never should have expected from me; for that contrary to all she had conceived of it by the Title, she had never read a more entertaining Book than the *Compleat Angler*, nor could I have made her a more pleasing Present." It was impossible for her fine Discernment and Genius not to have made this Discovery; and it is no more than a just and Candid Criticism must allow to the Merit of this little accomplished Piece.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most marked features of the style of the *Compleat Angler* is the vividness with which the personality of the author is portrayed; it is interesting to note how this point has struck different editors. In 1759 Moses Browne exclaims:—"I think there are hardly any Writings ever shewed more the Features and Limbs, the very Spirit and Heart of an Author;" and Mr Andrew Lang in 1896 writes:—

There are authors whose living voices, if we knew them in the flesh, we seem to hear in our ears as we peruse their works. Of such a kind was Mr Benjamin Jowett, sometime Master of Balliol College, a good man, now with God. It has ever occurred to me that friends of Walton must have heard his voice as they read him, and that it reaches us too, though faintly.

<sup>1</sup> Moses Browne was a country parson with a small living and a large family of thirteen children; the Duchess of Somerset was his former patroness: the sycophancy of his allusion to her is thus explained.

It was evidently Walton's wish to produce this effect, for he himself says that the "whole discourse is a kind of picture of my own disposition": and that he was successful in reflecting his own disposition in his book is further evidenced by the verses addressed to him in commendation of his work by his brother-in-law, Robert Floud:—

This book is so like you, and you like it,  
For harmless mirth, expression, art, and wit,  
That I protest ingenuously, 'tis true,  
I love this mirth, art, wit, the book, and you.

For a complete life of Walton I must refer my readers to one of the numerous editions, which have been, and still are being published of his works: here it is only necessary to state, that he was born at Stafford on 9th August 1593, and that he died at Winchester on 15th December 1683.

The statement made originally by Wood (*Athenæ Oxon.*), that he was a sempster (haberdasher) by trade, appears by the light of more recent investigations to be erroneous, for he is now known to have been apprenticed to an ironmonger in London, named Thomas Grinsell, to have been made free of the Ironmongers' Company on 12th November 1618, and in his marriage license to have been described as an ironmonger.

The first edition of the *Compleat Angler* made its appearance in May 1653. There appear to have been two issues of this edition: in the first issue a misprint occurs in the last verses in the book, the

word "contention" appearing in place of the word "contentment":—

And if contention be a stranger then,  
I'll ne'er look for it, but in heaven again.

The facsimile reproduction of the title-page of the *Compleat Angler* given in this book is a photograph of the title-page of the first edition of Walton in the Bodleian Library, which is one of the first copies printed, and contains the error mentioned above.

It is needless to say that a first edition of the *Compleat Angler* is now a very rare and an extremely valuable book; a copy was sold in 1907 for £1290.

The second edition was published in 1655, and was much altered and considerably enlarged. Auceps is here introduced, and Venator takes the place of Viator. The first edition terminates:—"Pisc: And the like be upon my honest Scholar. And upon all that hate contentions, and love quietnesse and vertue, and Angling. Finis." The second edition ends:—"Pisc: And the like be upon my honest ingenious Scholer, and upon all that love Vertue, and to be quiet, and go a fishing. Study to be quiet. 1 Thes. 4, 11."

The third edition was published in 1661, and there was also a second issue of this edition with a fresh title-page dated 1664; in this edition the "Laws of Angling" were for the first time included.

The fourth edition, issued in 1668, is merely a corrected reprint of the second edition.

The fifth edition was published in 1676, and with it

were incorporated Charles Cotton's *Instructions how to Angle in a Clear Stream*, and Colonel Venables' *Experienced Angler*. The fifth edition was the last issued during the life of Walton; and the work appears to have been in danger of being lost sight of, when Moses Browne in 1750, at the instigation of Samuel Johnson, "undertook the employment of introducing a favourite author of the last age, who seemed exposed to the unkindness of being forgotten (a fate many excellent writers have suffered) to an Acquaintance with the Readers of my own time."

There were three editions published by Moses Browne in 1750, 1759, and 1772.

In 1760 the first of the celebrated editions by Sir John Hawkins appeared: three other editions were issued by this editor during his lifetime, in 1766, 1775, and 1784.

Considerably over one hundred editions have now been published of the *Compleat Angler*, ranging in price from 3d. to £10. Of these editions the most exhaustive is the one published in 1836 by Sir Harris Nicolas: and the most sumptuous is the one edited by Mr R. B. Marston, the editor of the *Fishing Gazette*, and known as "The Lea and Dove" edition.

Mr J. E. Harting has issued an edition of Walton from the naturalist's point of view. In his preface he gives the following estimate of Walton's knowledge of natural history:—

It is not to be denied that many of Walton's state-

ments concerning animals and plants, judged by the present standard of knowledge, are inaccurate. Derived from ancient authors and translations of the classics rather than from personal observation, they were even at the time of printing them in 1653, old, secondhand, and to some extent erroneous.

However, some of the statements in Mr Harting's book seem hardly derived from personal observation, for the following sentence occurs in a footnote referring to the habits of the chub :—

They are so eager in biting that, when they take the bait, you may hear their jaws snap like those of a dog.

Now in Sir John Hawkins' edition (published in 1760) the following passage occurs, referring to the habits of the chub :—

They are so eager in biting, that, when they take the bait, you may hear their jaws chop like those of a dog.

The statement will not, I think, be accepted as accurate by modern anglers.

In regard to the value of the *Compleat Angler* as a practical guide to the art of angling, it must be acknowledged that it does not deserve all the praise which has been so liberally bestowed upon it by many of its editors, who probably have not been conversant with the earlier writers on the pastime. For instance, Moses Browne (7th edition) writes :—

He seems an Original and Model to all that have come after, as Virgil appears among the Writers

(ever since) of *Georgics* and *Pastoral: An Author*<sup>1</sup> who has writ latest of Angling says: "This Art seems to have arrived at its highest Perfection almost at once, and to have been the same in Mr Walton, as that of Poetry was in Homer. The Improvements that are made by the Generality of later Writers, are indeed so few, and for the most Part so trivial, rather adding to, and perplexing his Words, like the Commentators on the Greek Poet, than either clearing up or enlarging his Sense; that I could not," says he, "but wonder at seeing so much done to so little Purpose." They, at best, do but every one, represent the Jay in his furtive Plumes; the reading of this Volume will detect them, and sink their Value, by restoring all they have injuriously borrowed, to their right Owner.

If the *Compleat Angler* were to be considered and estimated solely on the ground of the originality of its teaching, I am afraid that Walton would be stripped of some of his plumes.

The "twelve kinds of artificial made flies" described by Walton are clearly taken from Leonard Mascall's *Booke of Fishing*. The directions for fly-fishing are taken from Barker, and the source of the instructions is acknowledged; Walton is also indebted to Barker for his description of the method of fishing with the natural fly.

Walton evidently writes with more authority when he deals with the coarse fish, and with spinning for trout; his description of the latter method and the directions he gives for baiting the hook are a distinct advance on Barker's instructions for spinning.

<sup>1</sup> John Williamson in *The British Angler*, 1740.

We have already seen that Walton is the first writer to mention the use of the winch in salmon-fishing. The scanty description, however, which he gives of angling for salmon suggests the conclusion that he had little or no practical acquaintance with this branch of the sport. It is in fact evident that Walton was essentially a "coarse" fisherman; some editors<sup>1</sup> deem it incumbent upon them to apologise for this "failing" on the part of their author: personally I do not think that any such apology is needed, for float-fishing is essentially the branch of angling which best conduces to contemplation, and hence most fitly fulfils the requirements of "The Contemplative Man's Recreation."

In his second edition Walton makes the first mention of the strange method of dipping the bait into tar, in order to render it more attractive to tench; this practice was recommended in nearly all the treatises which followed the *Compleat Angler*, and it is even adopted by some anglers at the present day. The more practical, however, of the angling authors who followed Walton usually expressed their doubts as to the value of the tar in inducing the fish to bite: for instance, Chetham recommends this proceeding in a very half-hearted fashion:—

And as you use your Worms, put them by them-

<sup>1</sup> Mr Andrew Lang writes:—"A bait-fisher may be a good man, as Izaak was, but it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle."



selves in a little Tar a little before used only, and try whether it advantages your Sport, which many affirms it do's, but I could never observe any advantage by it.

Among the many ridiculous theories which Walton mentions in regard to the propagation of the eel, it is surprising to find one so accurate as the following:—

For they say, that they are certain that Eeles have all parts fit for generation, like other fish, but so smal as not to be easily discerned, by reason of their fatness; but that discerned they may be; and that the Hee and the She Eele may be distinguished by their fins. (1st edition.)

According to Jacobi the dorsal fin is lower and less developed in the male than in the female eel.

The above extract is the more remarkable when it is remembered that the male organ of the eel was not recognised until 1873.

Anglers of to-day should be grateful to Walton for the elevating influence exercised in popular opinion on behalf of their pastime by his delightful and charming book. They owe to him a book, which even now at this distant period has some value as a practical work; but they are above all indebted to him for the high principles of the sport which he inculcates. Mr Marston<sup>1</sup> thinks that "if these words of Walton had not been ringing down the centuries ever louder and louder, our fresh-water fisheries would have long ago been destroyed. These

<sup>1</sup> *Walton and the earlier Fishing Writers*, by R. B. Marston.

and many passages in which unfair and unseasonable fishing is denounced have kept alive the true sporting instinct among anglers, and enabled them of late years, when by combination they became powerful, to obtain from our government laws for the protection of their interests which as individuals they asked for in vain." The passage to which Mr Marston specially refers concludes as follows:—

But above all the taking fish in spawning time, may be said to be against nature; it is like taking the dam from the nest when she hatches her young.

It is a matter for regret that the Mundella Act for the enforcement of the fence-months for coarse fish in England is not universal in its application, and that the large extent of the Norfolk Broads is exempt from its provisions. It is not so much the loss of the fish taken during the fence-months which is to be deplored, as the demoralising effect which the "taking Fish in spawning time" exercises on the sporting instincts of those who indulge in such practices. I have known anglers so lost to all sense of shame, that they have actually incurred the expense of setting up the specimen fish, which they have caught during spawning time, thus affording a permanent tribute to their lack of sportsmanlike instinct.

## CHAPTER VI

DR MARTIN LLUELYN, if one may judge from his "Song against fishing," which was included in his book, *Men-miracles, with other poemes*, printed in 1646, appears to have shared Mr Andrew Lang's contempt for coarse fishermen:—

You that fish for Dace and Roches,  
Carpes or Tenches, Bonus noches,  
Thou wast borne betweene two dishes,  
When the Friday signe was Fishes.  
Angler's yeares are made and spent,  
All in Ember weekes and Lent.

    Breake thy Rod about thy Noddle,  
    Through thy wormes and flies by the Pottle,  
    Keepe thy Corke to stoppe thy Bottle,  
    Make straight thy hooke, and be not afeard,  
        To shave his Beard ;  
    That in case of started stitches,  
    Hooke and Line may mend thy Breeches.

He that searches Pooles and Dikes,  
Halters Jackes and strangles Pikes,  
Let him know, though he thinke he wise is,  
'Tis not a sport but an Assizes.  
Fish so tooke, were the case disputed,  
Are not tooke, but executed.  
    Breake thy rod, &c.

You whose Pastes fox Rivers throat,  
 And make Isis pay her Groat,  
 That from May to parcht October,  
 Scarce a Minew can sleepe sober.  
 Be your Fish in Oven thrust,  
 And your owne Red-Paste the crust.  
 Breake thy Rod, &c.

Hookes and Lines of larger sizes,  
 Such as the Tyrant that troules devises,  
 Fishes nere, beleive his Fable,  
 What he calls a Line is a Cable.  
 That's a Knave of endlesse Rancor,  
 Who for a Hooke doth cast in an Anchor.  
 Breake thy Rod, &c.

But of all men he is the Cheater,  
 Who with small fish takes up the Greater,  
 He makes Carpes without all dudgen  
 Make a Jonas of a Gudgen.  
 Cruell man that slayes on Gravell  
 Fish that Great with Fish doth Travell.  
 Breake thy Rod, &c.

Though not published until 1694, the *Northern Memoirs*, calculated for the Meridian of Scotland. . . . To which is added, *The Contemplative and Practical Angler* by way of Diversion, is declared on the title-page to have been "Writ in the Year 1658, but not till now made publick, By Richard Franck, Philanthropus. Plures necat Gula quam Gladius."

Franck, who was born at Cambridge about the year 1624, was a Cromwellian trooper and an Independent. He may certainly claim to have exemplified in his book, the truth of the motto, which he selected for his title-page: for he

administered with his pen, to his political opponent Isaak Walton, a more severe castigation than he ever succeeded in inflicting with his sword. And it is chiefly owing to this vigorous and virulent attack, that he has obtained his posthumous notoriety; although the intrinsic merit of his book was such, that he was honoured by a reprint in the year 1821, edited by Sir Walter Scott.

Like the majority of anglers of the present day, Franck does not believe in going to the trouble of making his own fishing-tackle, when it could be bought ready made at the shops. He thus expresses his views upon this point, and commences his attack upon Walton, in his preface:—

Thus far I enter the Angler's List, and resolve to encounter this critical Age by promulgating the Series of the Art of Angling. But to shape out Rods, twist Lines, and appropriate Times and Seasons, with variety of Waters, and Mutability of Baits; as also the making of Instruments, arming of Hooks, forming the accurate Proportion of Flies, shaping of Corks, staining of Quills, forming of Swivels, and drawing out Wiers, besides casting of Plumbs, and moulding of Shot, I resolve against; for it's nothing my Business, though a Task neither intricate nor tedious to the several and various Artificers pregnant in the Art. For that end you may dedicate your Opinion to what scribbling Putationer you please; The *Compleat Angler* if you will, who tells you of a tedious Fly Story, extravagantly collected from antiquated Authors, such as Gesner, Dubravius, &c. but I rather commend you to famous Isaac Owldham, whose Experiences sprung from the Academy of Trent.

Franck's book, which is written in the form of a dialogue between Arnoldus, the instructor, and Theophilus, the pupil, contains the following interesting reference to the old statute, which forbade masters to feed their apprentices upon salmon more than three times a week :—

*Arnoldus.*—The Firth runs here that washeth and melts the Foundations of the City, but relieves the Country with her plenty of Salmon ; where the Burgomasters (as in many other parts of Scotland) are compell'd to reinforce an ancient Statute, that commands all Masters and others, not to force or compel any Servant, or an Apprentice, to feed upon Salmon more than thrice a Week.

*Theophilus.*—Is there such a Law in force now ?

*Arnoldus.*—Yes sure, for ought I know it remains to this Day : and the Reason of it is, as I conceive, from the plenty of Salmon in these Northern Parts ; that should the Inhabitants daily feed upon them, they would inevitably endanger their Health, if not their Lives, by Surfeiting ; for the abundance of Salmon hereabouts in these Parts is hardly to be credited.

In dealing with fly-fishing, Franck returns to his attack upon Izaak Walton :—

*Arnoldus.*—For indeed the frequent exercise of Fly-fishing, though painful, yet it's delightful ; more especially when managed by the Methods of Art, and the practical Rules and Mediums of Artists. But the Ground-bait was of old the general Practice, and beyond dispute brought considerable Profit ; which hapned in those Days, when the Curiosity of Fly-fishing was intricate and unpracticable. However Isaac Walton (late Author of the *Compleat Angler*) has imposed upon the World this monthly Novelty,

which he understood not himself; but stuffs his Book with Morals from Dubravius and others, not giving us one Precedent of his own practical Experiments, except otherwise where he prefers the Trencher before the Troling-rod; who lays the stress of his Arguments upon other Mens Observations, where-with he stuffs the indigested *Octavo*; so brings himself under the Angler's Censure, and the common Calamity of a Plagiary, to be pitied (poor Man) for his loss of Time, in scribbling and transcribing other Mens Notions. These are the Drones that rob the Hive, yet flatter the Bees they bring them Honey.

*Theophilus*.—I remember the Book, but you inculcate his *Erratas*: however it may pass Muster among common Mudlers.

*Arnoldus*.—No, I think not; for I remember in Stafford, I urged his own Argument upon him, that Pickerel-weed of it self breeds Pickerel. Which Question was no sooner stated, but he transmits himself to his Authority, viz. Gesner, Dubravius, and Androvanus. Which I readily opposed, and offered my reasons to prove the contrary; asserting, that Pickerels have been fished out of Pools and Ponds where that weed (for aught I knew) never grew since the Nonage of Time, nor Pickerel ever known to have shed their Spawn there. This I propounded from a rational Conjecture of the Heronshaw, who to commode her self with the Fry of Fish, because in a great measure part of her Maintenance, probably might lap some of her Spawn about her Legs, in regard adhering to the Segs and Bull-rushes, near the Shallows where the Fish shed their Spawn; as my self and others without curiosity have observed. And this slimy Substance adhering to her Legs, &c. and she mounting the Air for another Station, in probability mounts with her. Where note, the next Pond she happily arrives at, possibly she may leave the Spawn behind her, which my *Compleat Angler*

no sooner deliberated, but drop'd his Argument, and leaves Gesner to defend it; so huff'd away: which rendred him rather a formal Opinionist, than a reform'd and practical Artist, because to celebrate such antiquated Records, whereby to maintain such an improbable Assertion.

*Theophilus*.—This was to the Point, I confess; pray go on.

*Arnoldus*.—In his Book intituled the *Compleat Angler*; you may read there of various and diversified Colours, as also the Forms and Proportions of Flies. Where, poor Man, he perplexes himself to rally and scrape together such a parcel of Fragments, which he fancies Arguments convincing enough to instruct the Adult and Minority of Youth, into the slender Margin of his uncultivated Art, never made practicable by himself I'm convinc'd. Where note the true Character of an industrious Angler, more deservedly falls upon Merrill and Faulkner; or rather upon Isaac Ouldham, a Man that fish'd Salmon but with three Hairs at Hook; whose Collections and Experiments were lost with himself.

Apart from this attack upon Walton, the *Northern Memoirs* do not call for much notice. In dealing with the salmon, a good description is given of a kelt:—

Besides, the Salmon is incident, as other Fish are, to various Accidents; more especially if we consider the female Fish, who in the Spring (as other Females do) drops her Eggs (but some call it *Spawn*) which makes her infirm: and if it so happen that she lags behind her natural Mate in the fall of the Leaf, she is then prohibited the benefit of Salt-water to bathe her Fins, and carry off her slimy Impurities, which is the natural Cause of her kipperish Infirmary, that alters her delicate Proportion of Body, and blots out



the beautiful Vermilian Stain and sanguin Tincture of Blood, which vividly and transparently shines through her rubified Gills; so that now she begins to look languid and pale, her Fins they sag, and her Scales by degrees lose their natural shining Brightness; as also her regular and well compos'd Fabrick of Body, looks thin, lean, and discoloured: and her Head that grows big, and disproportionable, as if distemper'd and invaded with the Rickets; over whose Chaps hangs a callous Substance, not much unlike to a Falcon's Beak; which plainly denotes her out of Season, and as plainly as any thing demonstrates her Kippar.

Franck, although he wrote only one year after Barker's book was published, makes no mention of it, and probably had never seen it, but was acquainted with the use of salmon roe as a bait; and it is probable that the use of this bait originated in Scotland. In connection with the chub, salmon roe is thus mentioned:—"But for salmon spawn if you bring him that novel, you do your business and his too."

*Northern Memoirs* contains the first mention of the spinal cord of the ox as a good bait for chub; the use of this lure, which at the present day forms the most highly prized winter bait for chub, is thus described:—"But September approaching, you must bring him Beef Pith, for which he shall sacrifice all he has, and give you his Carcase in exchange for his Commons."

The notes on this book by Sir Walter Scott are not of much interest, with the exception, perhaps, of the following passage, in which the love of the

poet for the picturesque leads the editor to condone that which the modern angler would condemn as the most arrant poaching :—

The angler is naturally jealous of whatever appears to interfere with his own favourite pastime. But an old spearman may be allowed to state, in favour of the picturesque and manly sport of “burning the water,” that the salmon so killed have been too long in the fresh water to rise at a fly; nor can it be otherwise, as the burning can only be practised when the river is low and the pools very clear, and, consequently, where there are no newly-run fish for the amusement of the angler.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Walter Scott makes no comment here on the use of the salmon roe. In Letter VI., however, of his novel, *Red Gauntlet*, he mentions this bait and apparently approves of its use, for he makes Darsie Latimer say of little Benjie, “that he thought I would like a fresh trout or twa for breakfast, and the water being in such rare trim for the saumon raun, he couldna help taking a cast,” and in a footnote thus explains the passage :—“The bait made of salmon-

<sup>1</sup> It appears that Sir Walter Scott had once a narrow escape from a ducking when engaged in this “manly sport.” “Salmon are likewise taken by what is termed leistering, or burning the water. The practice consists in attracting the salmon by means of a candle and lantern, or sometimes of lighted wisps of straw, and in then endeavouring to strike them with a spear or leister. This unhallowed practice is noticed in Mr Lockhart’s *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, on one occasion when the great bard was present. Mr Skeen, who accompanied the party, relates how Sir Walter fell over the gunwale of the vessel, and that, had it not been for his assistance, he would have made an awkward dive of it.”—Blaine’s *Rural Sports*.

roe salted and preserved. In a swollen river, and about the month of October, it is a most deadly bait."

Regarded as a practical manual on angling, *The Experienc'd Angler; or, Angling Improv'd*, by Robert Venables, published in 1662, was a very great advance on any of the preceding works on the subject.

Robert Venables, the author, who was born about 1612, entered the Parliamentary army when the Civil War broke out. In 1645 he was Governor of Tarvin, and received a wound at the siege of Chester in October of that year.

During 1649 he was fighting in Ireland in command of a foot regiment. He left Ireland in 1654, and was then appointed by Cromwell to the command of the forces sent to attack the Spaniards in the West Indies. This expedition proved a failure, chiefly on account of the lack of co-operation between Venables and Penn, who was the Admiral in command of the Fleet, and both these commanders were imprisoned in the Tower on their return to England. After a little more than a month's imprisonment, Venables was released on surrendering his general's commission. He subsequently assisted in the restoration of the Monarchy, and in 1660 was appointed Governor of Chester. He died in July 1687.<sup>1</sup>

At the close of his chequered career, Venables

<sup>1</sup> *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

seems to have found in angling: "A rest to his mind, a cheerer of his spirits, a diversion of sadness, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness."

The facsimile reproduction of the frontispiece by Vaughan, which faces this page, is a photograph from a copy of the first edition of Venables' book in the Bodleian Library. It gives a very good idea of the tackle of the period. The knob at the butt of the rod on the extreme left of the plate closely resembles the rubber button which has recently been added to spinning rods, an addition which tackle-makers nowadays claim as quite a recent invention. The osier pannier is practically unaltered at the present time. The figure of a winch at the top of the plate is a great improvement on the unintelligible diagram with which Barker's book is illustrated.

In his preface Venables thus quaintly describes the advantages of angling:—

Further, these delights [hunting and hawking] are often prejudicial to the Husbandman in his corn, grass and fences; but in this pleasant and harmless Art of Angling a man hath none to quarrel with but himself, and we are usually so entirely our own friends, as not to retain an irreconcilable hatred against our selves, but can in short time easily compose the enmity; and besides our selves none are offended, none endamaged; and this Recreation falleth within the capacity of the lowest fortune to compass, affording also profit as well as pleasure.

Following the preface there is a letter from



Sold by Rich: Marriot in S.<sup>t</sup> Dunstons Church yard.  
Vaughan sculp.

Title-page of Venables' *Experienc'd Angler*.



the great master himself in commendation of the work :—

To his ingenious Friend the Author on his Angling Improv'd.

Honoured Sir,—Though I never (to my knowledge) had the happiness to see your face, yet accidentally coming to a view of this Discourse before it went to the Press; I held my self obliged in point of gratitude for the great advantage I received thereby, to tender you my particular acknowledgment, especially having been for thirty years past, not onely a lover but a practicer of that innocent Recreation, wherein by your judicious precepts I find my self fitted for a higher Form; which expression I take the boldness to use, because I have read and practised by many Books of this kind, formerly made publick; from which (although I received much advantage in the practick) yet (without prejudice to their worthy Authors) I could never find in them that height of judgment and reason, which you have manifested in this (as I may call it) Epitome of Angling, since my reading whereof I cannot look upon some notes of my own gathering, but methinks I do *puerilia tractare*. But lest I should be thought to go about to magnifie my own judgment, in giving yours so small a portion of its due, I humbly take leave with no more ambition than to kiss your hand and to be accounted,—Your humble and thankful Servant,

I. W.

The *Experienc'd Angler* is systematically arranged in four chapters, the first dealing with "When to provide Tools and how to make them"; the second with "Divers sorts of Angling: first, of the Flie"; the third treating "Of the Artificial Flie," and the fourth "Of Angling at the ground."

In the first chapter Venables chooses the cane in preference to the hazel rod, on account of the length, lightness, and casting power of the former. The remainder of this chapter contains nothing original.

In the second chapter the author takes "leave to dissent from the opinion of such who assign a certain fly to each Moneth, whereas I am certain scarce any one sort of flye doth continue its colour and virtue one Moneth; and generally all flies last a much shorter time, except the stone fly (which some call the May fly) which is bred of the water-cricket, which creepeth out of the River, and gets under the stones by the water side, and there turneth to a fly, and lyeth under the stones; the May fly and the reddish flye with ashie gray wings."

Like most pike anglers, Venables would not agree with the late Sir Courtenay Boyle, who said that "A fly is one of the best baits for pike that you can possibly have, whether in a lake, river, or brook." This appears from his list:—

What fish rise best at the fly, both natural and artificial. In general, all sorts of flies are very good in their season, for such fish as will rise at the flie, as Salmon, Trout, Umber, Grayling, Bleak, Chevin, Roch, Dace, &c. Though some of these fish do love some flies better than other; except the fish named I know not any sort or kind that will (ordinarily and freely) rise at the flie, though I know some do angle for Bream and Pike with artificial flies, but I judge the labour lost, and the knowledge a needless curiosity, those fish being taken much easier (especially the Pike) by other wayes: All the forementioned



sorts of fish will sometimes take the flie, much better at the top of the water, and at another time much better a little under the superficies of the water, and in this your observation must be your constant and daily instructor (for if they will not rise to the top, try them under) it not being possible (in my opinion) to give any certain rule in this particular.

The following are plainly the observations of a practical fisherman:—

You may also observe (which my own experience taught me) that the fish never rise eagerly and freely at any sort of flie, untill that kind come to the waters side. . . . Sometimes they change their flie (but its not very usual) twice or thrice in one day; but ordinarily they seek not for another sort of flie, till they have for some dayes even glutted themselves with a former kind, which is commonly when those flies die and go out. Directly contrary to our London Gallants, who must have the first of every thing, when hardly to be got, but scorn the same when kindly ripe, healthful, common and cheap.

The following extracts are from the chapter “Of the Artificial Flie” :—

But here I must premise, that it is much better to learn how to make a flie by sight than by any Paper-direction can possibly be expressed, in regards the Terms of Art do in most parts of England differ, and also several sorts of flies are called by different names; some call the flie bred of the water Cricket or Creeper a May-flie, and some a Stone-flie; some call the Cadbait flie a May, and some call a short fly of a sad golden green color, with short brown wings, a May-flie: and I see no reason but all flies bred in May, are properly enough called May-flies. Therefore

except some one (that hath skill) would paint them, I can neither well give their names nor describe them, without too much trouble and prolixity. . . .

When you angle with the artificial flie, you must either fish in a River not fully cleared from some rain lately fallen, that had discoloured it; or in a Moorish River, discoloured by moss or bogs; or else in a dark cloudy day, when a gentle gale of wind moves the water.

In the chapter "Of Angling at the ground," a form of tackle is described resembling that which is now known as a "Paternoster":—

When you angle at ground for small fish, put two hooks to your line fastned together thus; Lay the two hooks together, then draw the one shorter than the other by nine inches, this causeth the other end to over-reach as much as that is shorter at the hooks, then turn that end back to make a bought or bouthe, and with a Water-knot (in which you must make both the links to fasten) tye them so as both links may hang close together, and not come out at both ends of the knot; upon that link which hangeth longest, fasten your Lead near a foot above the hook, put upon your hooks two different baits, and so you may try (with more ease and less time) what bait the fish love best: and also very often (as I have done) take two fish at once with one Rod: You have also by this experiment, one bait for such as feed close upon the ground, as Gudgeon, Flounder, &c. and another for such as feed a little higher, as Roch, Dace, &c.

The method of examining the contents of the stomach of the first fish taken is given in greater detail than in the *Treatyse of ffysshyng with an Angle*:—

The first fish you take cut up his belly, and you may

then see his stomach; it is known by its largeness and place, lying from the Gills to the small guts; take it out very tenderly, (if you bruise it your labour and design are lost) and with a sharp Knife cut it open without bruising, and then you may find his food in it, and thereby discover what bait the fish at that instant takes best, flies or ground-baits, and so fit them accordingly.

Venables thus discourses on the up or down stream controversy:—

And here I meet with two different opinions and practises, some alwayes cast their flie and bait up the water, and so they say nothing occurreth to the fishes sight but the line; others fish down the River and so suppose (the rod and line being long) the quantity of water takes away, or at least lesseneth the fishes sight; but the other affirm, that rod and line, and perhaps your self are seen also.

Double hooks for salmon are generally supposed to be a new invention, and John Bickerdyke in his excellent and practical manual, *Angling for Game Fish* (1889), asserts that "Double hooks are also a comparative novelty, and much abused by old-fashioned anglers." That such is not the case is clearly shown by the subjoined extract from the fourth edition of the *Experienc'd Angler* (1676):—

Young Salmons under a quarter of a yard long, have tender mouths, so as they are apt to break their hold: to obviate which inconvenience, I have known some that use to fasten two hooks together, in like manner as some double Pike hooks lately used in Trowling are made, not with the points opposite

to one another, but about a quarter of a Circle from each other, and on them they make their Flie, that if one Hook break hold, the other may not fail.

Following closely upon the *Experienc'd Angler* appeared "*The Gentleman's Recreation*: in Four Parts, viz.: Hunting, Hawking, Fowling, Fishing, Collected from Antient and Modern Authors Forrein and Domestick, &c. 1674." To the second edition of this work, published in 1677, a folding plate is added, in which are very roughly delineated fourteen kinds of fish.

Judging from the introduction, the author of this work, Nicholas Cox, appears to have been of a somewhat credulous disposition; among other impossible stories he relates the following:—

In the year of our Lord 1180, near Orford in Suffolk, there was a fish taken in the perfect shape of a man; he was kept by Bartholomew de Glanville in the Castle of Orford above half a year; but at length not being carefully looked to, he stole to the sea and was never seen after. He never spake, but would eat any meat that was given him, especially raw fish, when he had squeezed out the juice: He was had to church, but never shewed any signe of Adoration.

The angling instructions appear to have been taken chiefly from Venables' *Experienc'd Angler*; the description of the shape of the hook and the instructions for plumbing the depth of the water are taken practically verbatim from this source.

An ingenious method of ground-baiting with worms is described:—

If you will bait a stream, get some tin boxes made full of holes, no bigger than just fit for a worm to creep through; then fill these boxes with them, and having fastened a plummet to sink them, cast them into the stream with a string tied there to, that you may draw them forth when you list. By the smallness of the holes aforesaid, the worms can crawl out but very leisurely, and as they crawl the fish will resort about them.

This is the first angling work to mention the use of a catgut line:—"Also a line made of the smallest Lute string is very good, but that it will soon rot by the water." Pepys, however, in his *Diary* anticipated this; for on 18th March 1667, he made the following entry:—"This day Mr Caesar told me a pretty experiment of his, angling with a minikin, a gut-string varnished over, which keeps it from swelling, and is beyond any hair for strength and smallness. The secret I like mightily."

Cox is, I believe, the first angling writer to mention the Torgoch or Welsh charr (*Salmo perisii*):—

Of the Torcoth. The Torcoth is a fish having a red belly but of what continuation I know not; for that let the Welshmen speak, who best know him: for I have heard he is only to be found in the pool Lin-peris in Carnarvonshire: I only name him that you may know that there is such a fish.

The author concludes his book as follows:—

I shall conclude this Treatise with the experi-

mental observations of an ingenious Gentleman, who hath practised the Art of Fishing many years, and therefore the more fit to give Directions for the right use of the Angle.

The directions which follow are entitled "Experimental Observations and useful Directions for the right use of the Angle; and is a true and brief Epitome of the whole Art and Mystery of the Fishing Recreation." These directions were taken almost verbatim from Barker's *Delight*.

The book concludes with the following angling song:—

Come lay by all cares, and hang up all sorrow,  
 Lets Angle to day, and ne're think of to morrow;  
 And by the Brook-side as we Angle along,  
 We'll cheer up our selves with our sport and a Song.

Sometimes on the Grass our selves we will lay,  
 And see how the watery Citizens play;  
 Sometimes with a Fly stand under a Tree,  
 And choose out what Fish our Captives shall be:

Thus void of all care we're more happy than they  
 That sit upon Thrones and Kingdoms do sway;  
 For Scepters and Crowns disquiet still bring,  
 But the Man that's content is more blest than a King.

In 1676 the second part of the *Compleat Angler*, being *Instructions how to angle for a trout or grayling in a clear stream*, by Charles Cotton, was published; and was sold, either separately, or in conjunction with the parts by Venables and Walton, under the title of the *Universal Angler*.

The incorporation of this book with Walton's

*Compleat Angler* has rendered it so well known, as to here need very little notice.

The love of angling appears to have united Walton and Cotton in a firm bond of friendship, for, apart from their love of this sport and their Royalist sympathies, they could have had but little in common; the one a retired tradesman, possessed of a considerable property, the other, a dun-pursued gallant, who had squandered what little property he had inherited from a spendthrift father; the one, "A man well known, and as well beloved of all good men," and the biographer of those pious men, Dr Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr Richard Hooker, and Mr George Herbert; the other, a writer, who chose "for the exercise of his poetical talent—a burlesque of an epic poem—a version of the most licentious of Lucian's dialogues—and a ludicrous delineation of some of the most stupendous works of nature—in all which we meet with such foul imagery, such obscene allusions, such offensive descriptions, such odious comparisons, such coarse sentiment, and such filthy expression, as could only proceed from a polluted imagination, and tend to excite loathing and contempt."

The addition of Cotton's portion to Walton's work justifies the title of the *Compleat Angler*, by supplying that instruction in fly-fishing, of which Walton's portion was so noticeably deficient.

Regarded in a strictly practical light, the *Instructions how to angle for a trout or grayling in a clear*

*stream* must be considered an epoch-marking work in the development of fly-fishing. In this book we seem suddenly to spring from the coarse methods of its predecessors, and to approach to those scientific methods of fine fishing, by which alone fly-fishing can be successfully practised at the present day. Compare, for instance, the following description of "the bright dun gnat" with any previous description of an artificial fly:—"There is also a very little bright Dun Gnat, as little as can possibly be made, so little as never to be fisht with, with above one hair next the hook."

In another place Cotton writes, "In case of a frost and snow, you are to Angle only with the smallest Gnats, Browns and Duns you can make." Cotton is at his best when he deals with the May fly; he says:—

Of these, the Green-Drake comes in about the twentieth of this Month, or betwixt that, and the latter end (for they are sometimes sooner, and sometimes later, according to the quality of the Year) but never well taken till towards the end of this Month and the beginning of June. . . .

Of these the Green-Drake never discloses from his husk, till he be first there grown to full maturity, body, wings and all, and then he creeps out of his cell, but with his wings so crimpt and ruffled, by being prest together in that narrow room, that they are for some hours totally useless to him, by which means he is compelled either to creep upon the flags, sedges, and blades of grass (if his first rising from the bottom of the water be near the banks of the River) till the Air, and Sun, stiffen and smooth them; or if his



first appearance above water happen to be in the middle, he then lies upon the surface of the water like a Ship at Hull (for his feet are totally useless to him there, and he cannot creep upon the water as the Stone-Flie can) untill his wings have got stiffness to fly with, if by some Trout, or Grayling he be not taken in the interim (which is ten to one he is) and then his wings stand high, and clos'd exact upon his back, like the Butterfly, and his motion in flying is the same. His body is in some of a paler, in others of a darker yellow (for they are not all exactly of a colour) rib'd with rows of green, long, slender, and growing sharp towards the tail, at the end of which he has three long small whisks of a very dark colour, almost black, and his tail turns up towards his back like a Mallard, from whence questionless he has his name of the green-Drake. . . .

I should now come next to the Stone-Flie, but there is another Gentleman in my way: that must of necessity come in between, and that is the Grey-Drake, which in all shapes, and dimensions is perfectly the same with the other, but quite almost of another colour, being of a paler, and more livid yellow, and green, and ribb'd with black quite down his body, with black shining wings, and so diaphanous and tender, cob-weblike, that they are of no manner of use for Daping; but come in, and are taken after the Green-Drake, and in an Artificial Flie kill very well.

Apart from his instructions in fly-fishing, Cotton would be worthy of a high place among the teachers of angling, for his description of that skilful form of fishing known as "up-stream worming," or "swimming the worm":—

The third way of Angling by hand with a Ground-bait, and by much the best of all other, is,

with a Line full as long, or a yard and a half longer than your Rod, with no more than one hair next the hook, and for two or three lengths above it, and no more than one small pellet of shot for your plum, your Hook little, your worms of the smaller Brandlings, very well scour'd, and only one upon your hook at a time, which is thus to be baited: The point of your hook is to be put in at the very tagg of his tail, and run up his body quite over all the arming, and still stript on an inch at least upon the hair; the head and remaining part hanging downward; and with this line and hook thus baited you are evermore to angle in the streams, always in a clear, rather than a troubled water, and always up the River, still casting out your worm before you with a light one-handed Rod, like an artificial Flie, where it will be taken, sometimes at the top, or within a very little of the Superficies of the water, and almost always before that light plumb can sink it to the bottom, both by reason of the stream, and also that you must always keep your worm in motion by drawing still back towards you, as if you were angling with a flie; and believe me, whoever will try it, shall find this the best way of all other to angle with a worm, in a bright water especially; but then his rod must be very light and pliant, and very true and finely made, which with a skilful hand, will do wonders; and in a clear stream is undoubtedly the best way of angling for a Trout, or Grayling with a worm, by many degrees, that any man can make choice of, and of most ease and delight to the Angler. To which let me add, that if the Angler be of a constitution that will suffer him to wade, and will slip into the tail of a shallow stream, to the Calf of the leg or the knee, and so keep off the bank, he shall almost take what fish he pleases.

## CHAPTER VII

THE *Angler's Delight*, by William Gilbert, Gent., was published in 1676. The author of this work certainly cannot be said to have fulfilled the claim, which he makes in his preface, to "have here laid open the whole Art and Mystery of Clean, Neat, and Gentile Angling, in a far more Plain, and Easie Way, than ever was yet in Print; All from Experience, and not Borrowed from other Books, and many things never before heard of, by most People," for in the first part of the book, dealing with angling in general, he entirely shirks giving practical instructions, except where he extracts, almost verbatim, from Walton, the method of spinning for trout. In the second part, in which he deals with the method of fishing in the Hackney River, he seems to be more solicitous for the refreshment of the angler than anxious to instruct him in "Gentile Angling."

The author commences with the pike, because he is "the King and Commander of all Fresh-Water Fish." He gives full directions how to catch this

fish with bank-runners and trimmers, but dismisses the more legitimate methods of pike-fishing, in these words:—

Many use to Troule for a Pike; but that is so easie, that I shall not spend time in giving Directions: For it will be far easier learnt; by once going with any Person that understands it, in ones day time, than is possible to be taught by Printed Directions. So much for the Taking of him. Now for the dressing of him.

After a very brief description of fishing for perch with a live minnow, Gilbert remarks: "And this is sufficient for Mr Peach; For, every Boy can Catch him, he is so Bold."

The second part of the book, which deals with "The Method of Fishing in Hackney River," is of a more practical character than the first part. Here the necessary tackle is fully described, and an illustration is given of five different sizes of hooks, suitable respectively for bleak or gudgeon, roach or dace, roach, chub and perch, or barbel.

When you have provided all the tackle that "you can possibly use; then go to Mother Giberts, at the Flower-de-Luce at Clapton, near Hackney, and while you are drinking of a Pot of Ale, bid the maid make you two or three Penny-worth of Ground-Bait, and some Paste (which they do very neatly, and well); and observing of them, you will know how to make it yourself for any other place; which is too tedious here to insert."

The following is, I believe, the first description of the method of using leger tackle :—

If you fail in your expectations of Chub-Fishing, then be upon the Drable for a Barbel, which is in this nature: You must have a strong Line, of about six yards long of Hair and Silk; which must be put (before you fasten it to your rod) through a piece of Lead . . . , that it may slip to and fro, if any thing bite at it.

It is evident that Gilbert did not follow Dennys' advice :—

And never on his greedy belly thinke,  
From rising sunne vntill a low he sincke,

for he concludes his book with the following suggestion :—“And if you have a boy to go along with you, a good Neats-Tongue, and a bottle of Canary should not be wanting: To the enjoyment of which I leave You.”

*The Angler's Vade-Mecum*, by James Chetham, was published in 1681; a second edition, considerably enlarged, was published in 1689, and a third edition, or rather a reprint of the second, appeared in 1700.

James Chetham lived at Smedley, near Manchester. He was born on 29th December 1640; he matriculated at St Edmund Hall, Oxford, on 11th April 1660, but did not proceed to a degree; and died in 1692.

*The Angler's Vade-Mecum* bears throughout the

impression of having been written by a thoroughly practical angler. The author, to a considerable extent, has availed himself of the writings of his predecessors, a fact which he honestly acknowledges in his preface, where he says he is "not a little beholden to the Labours and Industry of Markham, Walton, Venables, and Cotton, and others." On the whole, however, it is an original and a very useful treatise, and it served for many years, not only as a model, but also as a fruitful source of information, to other angling writers.

Amongst the most remarkable features of this book are the weird ointments with which the angler is directed to annoint his line :—

#### Ointments to Allure Fish to the Bait.

Next follow Ointments and Receipts, which I have read and been informed of, by several knowing Anglers, and are practised for the better furtherance of this Sport; and some have such confidence, that they affirm they'll not only allure, but even compel Fish to bite. . . . And the first shall be one highly commended by Monsieur Charras, (Operator and Apothecary Royal to the present French King, Lewis the Fourteenth) in his *Pharmacopœia*, printed at London, Part the Second.

Take Man's Fat and Cat's Fat, of each half an Ounce, Mummy finely powdred three Drams, Cummin-seed finely powdred one Dram, distill'd Oyl of Annise and Spike, of each six Drops, Civet two Grains, and Camphor four Grains, make an Ointment according to Art; and when you Angle anoint 8 inches of the Line next the Hook therewith, and keep it in a pewter box. . . .

Here is another pleasing allurements :—

Take the Bones or Skull of a dead Man, at the opening of a Grave, and beat the same into powder, and put of this powder into the Moss wherein you keep your worms, but others like Grave-earth as well.

The following prescription for the *Unguentum Piscatorum Mirabile*, which, “if in the hand of an Artist, prodigiously causes Fish to bite,” is contained in the second and third editions only :—

R/ Of Man's Fat, Cat's Fat, Heron's Fat, and of the best Assafœtida, of each two Drams, Mummy finely powdered two Drams, Cummin Seed finely powdered two Scruples, and of Camphor, Galbanum, and Venice Turpentine, of each one Dram, Civet grains two ; make according to Art, &c.

The man's fat is to be obtained from the dissecting-rooms, and most of the other ingredients from the apothecaries' shops.

The instructions which Chetham gives for fishing with paste differ very little from those given in the angling manuals of the present time for roach fishing :—“When you Angle with Paste, have a small Hook, quick Eye, a nimble Hand and Rod ; and that somewhat stiff too, or both bait and Fish are lost ; and, you must strike at the very first time you perceive them bite.”

Chetham recommends the use of a “good Microscope, or magnifying Glass,” to examine the contents of the stomach of the first fish caught, so that :—“You may (with some Pleasure and Delight to you)

easily discover the very true colour, proportion and shape of the Fly ; and some do it pretty well without a glass."

The practice which some fishermen adopt, of affixing a gentle to the hook of their fly, is mentioned in *The Angler's Vade-Mecum*:—

If you put a Cod-bait or Gentle, either natural or artificial, but Natural better, at point of your Dub-fly Hook, they will take the Dub fly better, especially the Salmon Smelt.

*The Angler's Vade-Mecum* is the first book to suggest the whipping of a bristle to the hook, to prevent the cod-bait slipping down ; a similar practice is frequently made use of at the present time in worm-fishing, to prevent the worm from slipping down the hook.

The angler is usually recommended to cast above a rising trout, and then to let the fly float down to the fish. Chetham, however, writes:—

When you see a Trout rise, cast the Fly behind him, and then gently draw it over his Head, and if of the right colour, and you scare him not, he's your own.

Though Chetham approves of snaring pike (he appears to have indulged frequently in this amusement during his undergraduate days at Oxford), and of setting night lines, he draws the line of fair angling at night fishing for trout:—

In the Night usually the best Trouts bite, and will



rise ordinarily in the still deeps ; but not so well in the Streams. And although the best and largest Trouts bite in the Night (being afraid to stir, or range about in the Daytime;) yet I account this way of Angling both unwholsom, unpleasant and very ungentiel, and to be used by none but Idle pouching Fellows. Therefore I shall say nothing of it, only describe how to lay Night Hooks ; which, if you live close by a River side, or have a large Moat, or Pond at your own House, will not be unpleasant, sometimes to practice. But as for Damming, Groping, Spearing, Hanging, Twitcheling, Netting, or Firing by Night, I purposely omit them, and them esteem to be used only by disorderly and rascally Fellows, for whom this little Treatise is not in the least intended.

To *The Compleat Troller ; or, The Art of Trolling*, by a Lover of the Sport, 1682, belongs the distinction of being the first monograph written in connection with the sport of trolling ; and a most excellent and exhaustive monograph it is. The subject, in fact, is so fully dealt with, that *The Compleat Troller* forms the groundwork of all subsequent books on the pike, and the author, Robert Nobbes, certainly deserves the title of "Father of Trollers," which subsequent writers on the pastime have bestowed upon him.

Robert Nobbes was born at Bulwick in Northamptonshire on 21st July 1652, and took his M.A. degree at Cambridge in 1675. He was Vicar of Applethorpe and Wood Newton, Northamptonshire, 1676 to 1690, and was subsequently appointed Rector of Sausthorpe, Lincolnshire, in 1702. He died about 1706.

Though not the first book to mention trolling, *The Compleat Troller* is an original work throughout, the only manuals on the subject, which the author appears to have read, being Dennys' *Secrets of Angling*, Walton's *Compleat Angler*, and Nicholas Cox's *Gentleman's Recreation*, to the last two of which he refers in his preface "To the Reader."

Prefixed to *The Compleat Troller* are two prefaces, one to James Tryon, Esquire, of Bulwick, Northamptonshire, the other to the Ingenious Reader: there are also four sets of verses, two from appreciative friends to the author, and two by the author himself. Of these latter, one is "On the Antiquity and Invention of Fishing," and is largely borrowed from Dennys' *Secrets of Angling*. The other, entitled "The Fisherman's Wish," is given below:—

Would I might live near Avon's flow'ry brink,  
And on the World, and my Creator think ;  
Whilst others strive ill gotten goods t'embrace,  
Would I near Welland had a dwelling place.

Would I these harmless pastimes might pursue,  
And uncontroll'd might Ponds and Rivers view :  
Whilst others spend their time in base excess,  
In Drinking, Gaming, and in Wantonness.

Would I might let my fancy feed its fill,  
And daily by fresh Rivers walk at will,  
Whilst others toyl in Hunting, and perplex,  
Are with unquiet Recreations vex.

Would I might view the Compass of the Sky,  
The flaming Chariot of the Worlds great eye,  
And fair Aurora lifting up her head,  
Blushing to rise from old Tithonus bed.

Would I might walk in Woods and Forrests long,  
In whose cool Bowers the Birds sing many a song ;  
And in the Verdant Meadows fresh and green,  
Would I might sit and Court the Summers Queen.

*Sic optat*, R. N.

In the first chapter, "Of the Name and Nature of a Pike," Nobbes thus illustrates the doctrine of the survival of the fittest :—

This Commonwealth among the Fishes, is much like Mr Hobbes's State of Nature, which is but Status Belli, the Great Ones always devour the less ; such is the Government, or rather Anarchy in the Waters, where might will be sure to overcome right, and the weakest go still to the Walls.

The second chapter treats "Of the Parts and Lineaments of a Pike," and in the third chapter, "Of the Age and Growth of a Pike," the rapid growth of pike in a brook or river is noted :—

Jacks or Pickerills grow faster than great ones, and I have observed in a cleer and springing Brook, that a Jack spawn'd in March will take a Bait in October following, and will be increased to Eighteen Inches the next March. In standing water, as Motes and Ponds, he grows nothing so fast ; for to try the experiment, I have taken one out with a Cast-net in May, Measured him and Mark'd him on his Tail, and about Michaelmas I have taken the same fish, as appear'd by the Mark, and then measured him again and he hath not increased in length above two Inches, and very little in Breadth. A River Fish will grow very fast till he come to be 24 or near 30 Inches, then he stands a little more at astay, and spreads himself in thickness ; after that he will grow

a long time, and be much longer growing to his full bigness from 30 Inches, than he was encreasing to that proportion.

The fourth chapter treats "Of the Seat and Harbour of a Pike," and states that the harbour is amongst or near a bank of weeds, especially "Flags and Bullrushes."

The best and securest way of Fishing these wide Reaches, is by drawing the bait along the sides next to you, except you can search the breadth of it, and throw over to the farther side; but that is but dull and slow Sport, and it will spend a great deal of time to Troll the length of a Furlong.

The haunts of the pike vary according to the season of the year, and the "Pike, like a Person of Quality, hath both a Winter and a Summer House. . . . A Ford that is cleer and gravelly at the bottom, especially if it have a Spit adjoyning to it that is indifferent deep and weedy, is looked upon as a probable place: for though they generally affect a deep Water, yet they will get as near as they can to a Ford or a Shallow; there they delight themselves, and sport with the little fry."

The fifth chapter treats "Of the best Seasons for Trolling," Nobbes considering that December and January are generally too cold for this sport. "February is the first and none of the worst Months he [*i.e.*, the troller] can pitch upon for his sport; . . . March is very seasonable and auspicious

to the Troller, excepting the time of Spawning ;” the fish are said to be then rather fastidious in feeding, and are apt to leave the bait and not to gorge it ; they are therefore better then taken with snap tackle. “ April will make him amends for his former sufferings ; and is a Month so inviting to Sport, that it is both pleasant and profitable. . . . The beginning of May is likewise very seasonable, especially if it hits with the Proverb to be Cold and Windy ; towards the latter end of it the Weeds spring up, and are very offensive to the Hook ; then begins the Trollers Vacation, which continues till the latter end of August or the beginning of September.” The author considers October the best of the autumn months ; November is also good, if it is not too cold.

The sixth chapter deals with the “ Feed of a Pike and when he is fattest,” while the seventh treats “ Of the Baits for Trolling,” and here Nobbes enumerates a variety of baits, but gives the preference to a roach or a dace for thick water, and to a gudgeon for bright and clear water.

There are still many old Thames fishermen who have a hankering after that form of angling, now illegal in the Thames—trolling with the dead gorge ; they would probably agree with the reasons given by Nobbes for preferring this method to fishing with snap tackle :—

I never admired this way of Snap, as thinking it

too quick and surprising, to give any diversion; the Sport of Trolling consisting more in the managing the Bite, in the playing of a Pike, and his eager biting and running with the Bait, then just a word and a blow, snapping him up and putting him into the Bag.

The eighth chapter treats "Of the Pouch-Hook," and it is evident that the pattern of the dead gorge trolling hook has altered very little since the time of Nobbes, an illustration being given of this tackle, both with a single and with a double hook. Nobbes preferred the single hook form, because he thought that it played the bait better. In this and in a later chapter the author does not consider that a baiting needle is necessary:—

You need not that which they call the Arming Wyre to help you thrust it out of the Tail of the Bait. . . . Some have besides the running Wire a Knitting Needle on purpose, but if the first joint of your Wire be stiff and strong, it may very well be done with that.

The ninth chapter treats "Of the Trolling Line":—

The best material for the composure of your Line, is green or blew Silk, which Cerulean is most resembling and agreeable to the Water; but it is possible it may be only a fancy that that colour is of more consequence than another; yet sometimes the pleasing of the fancy, does so much enliven and encourage the Fisherman, that it makes him the more active and laborious, and so by that means is the occasion of all his sport; and if his fancy diverts

him another way, he will take the less care and pains in his present pastime.

The above explanation applies with equal, or perhaps with greater force, to the success which some fly-fishermen are apt to attribute to a particular fly of their own tying or design.

The best way of preserving it [*i.e.*, the line], is to wax it sometimes with Bees-wax, and when it is wet to wind it up loosely in long foldings, that the Air may come in to dry it, or else let it dry at length, and then wind it upon a Roll: with such usage, a Silk Line will last beyond your expectation. . . .

Some make them [*i.e.*, their lines] of Silk and Silver, thinking that way to preserve it; tho' the addition of Silver may be rather to please their fancy and the gaiety of their humour, then to keep their Line from perishing: such as they should have Silver Hooks to their Silver Lines, that if it cannot take Fish it self in the Water, it may take them ready caught, and so be useful in saving their credit. . . .

As to the length of the Line, it is good to have enough, and far better to have than to lack; . . . As to the precise length of it, that need not be determined, about 30 yards is a good medium for the Pouch, I cannot see any reason why it need be so long at Snap.

The tenth chapter discourses as follows "Of the Pole":—

Supposing your Hook be good, and your Line strong, you may make the better shift with an indifferent Pole; though some that are more curious in their Tackling than painful and patient in their Fishing, will not stir a foot without all the formalities

of an exquisite Fisherman: such precise Crafts Masters as these, can spend their time in admiring their Instruments, and sufficiently delight themselves with the commendation of their own Materials. This is certain and undeniable, that the longer the Pole is, if it be streight and light, you will find the more benefit in playing the Bait and throwing it from you; for if there be Flags or Reeds between the Bank and the main deep, you can very hardly play your Bait with a short Pole.

The eleventh chapter gives instructions "How to Bait the Hook, and to play the Bait." The directions for baiting the hook are excellently stated. The method of threading the bait on the hook I have already quoted; the instructions are continued thus:—

The point of your Hook must be even with the belly of the Bait; for if it hang on either side, it may hinder and check the Pike, who will probably lay his mouth upon it; for when he chops cross the Fish, he may be pricked, and so leave you only the hopes of another Bite; when you have so put through the Fish, then tie the Tail of the bait fast to the joynt of the Wire with strong Thred, which will both make it hang streight upon the Hook, and preserve it from outward violences; for if it be not well fastened, the weeds will have so much power over it, that they will soon tear it down to the Gills, and so separate the Hook from the Bait; some fasten it with a Needle.

Supposing then that you cast out a very fair throw, it may be a dozen or sometimes twenty yards, which may easily be done if the River requires it; let it first have a little time to sink, then feel it, and draw it gently towards you; for



a Pike often takes it at the first sight before it gets to the bottom, and if you snatch it hastily, you may chance to give him such a discouragement, that you may be deprived of your expected sport: after you have given it an easie motion towards you, let it have the liberty of sinking again, then draw it slowly and softly, for if you jerk it too quick and hastily, you will not give him leave to hold upon the Bait; . . . When you have raised your Bait so high towards the top, it may be within two or three foot, that you can perceive it to glister; you may then comfort your self with the hopes of a Pike that may rise at it, as he often does, and therefore it is not prudence to bee too hasty in taking out the Bate.

The following is, I think, the earliest description of trailing:—

In some places they Troll without any Pole or any playing of the Bait, as I have seen them throw a Line out of a Boat, and so let it draw after them as they Row forward; but that must be a careless and unsafe way, for so they may have Bites and Offers so, yet it must certainly check the Fish so much that he will never Pouch it; I cannot tell what Art they may have at the Snap, though it is very improbable to have any as they go to work, without either Pole or Stick.

The twelfth chapter describes “How to strike Pike and how to land him”:—

Now when you have a Bite, and the Fish goes down the Stream with it, we are apt to conceive it is a small Jack; but on the contrary if he sails slowly up with the Bait, it is a sign of a good one; for the greater sort bite more calmly and moderately than the less; for they snatch, and away with it without

any care or deliberation. Old Fish are more wary and cunning, they are sooner taken with a Line laid for them all night, then by Trolling.

Nobbes gives very good advice in regard to the landing of the fish :—

When you have after all this divertisement brought him to the Bank, you will find something to do, before you can confidently call him your own; for if you go unadvisedly to take him out, either by the Back or the Tail, or any part of his Body, though you may think his best is past, and his dancing days are done, yet he may cut you another Capor; and if he has had a little breathing time, he may give another leap, when you do not expect it; the best way then, is to use fair means, and invite to the land, by persuasions, not compulsions, taking him by the Head, and putting your fingers into his Eyes, which is the fastest hold. If the Water be low, so that the Bank rises some distance from it; you must not fear catching an Ague, by laying your Belly level with the ground, especially if you have no contrivance to guide him out to a more commodious place: some will adventure to take him by the Gills, though that hold is neither so secure nor so safe for the Fisher; because the Fish in that heat of passion, may accidentally take revenge upon his Adversary, by letting him blood in his Fingers, which way of Phlebotomizing is not esteemed so good, because some are of opinion, that the teeth of a Pike are Venomous, and those Wounds very difficult to be healed.

Nobbes does not recommend, nor does he appear to have had any experience of, the use of a landing-net, which he supposes "is made in the fashion of a little Sparrow Net." He somewhat sarcastically con-

cludes his reference to the use of this implement as follows:—

This is a very quaint and delicate way of Trolling; such as use it must have their Attendants to assist them; that, as the Philosopher said, *Omnia mea mecum Porto*. So they will have their Servitors to carry their Implements and Tools after them; these are of more power on Shore, then in the Water, and have more Authority to command their retinue by the Land, than the Fish in the Waters.

The thirteenth chapter deals with “How to preserve a River for Trolling.” A description is here given of the different forms of nets, of which “The first and greatest, which may be called the Arch-Enemy, is the Drag, which is as unmerciful as an Epidemical Disease.”

The fourteenth chapter, giving a description of the rivers and a recipe for cooking a pike, concludes this very exhaustive and interesting manual on the pike.

## CHAPTER VIII

IT would seem that Nobbes and the preceding authors had exhausted all the material available for works on angling, for in the books which immediately follow, the reader looks in vain for new methods or instructions.

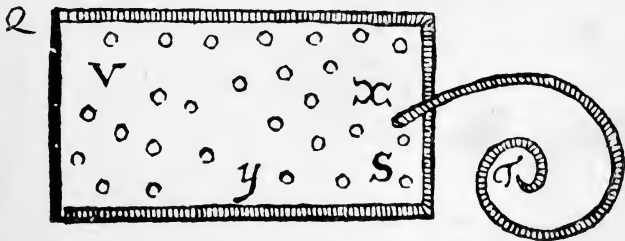
In chronological order the next books to be dealt with are *Profit and Pleasure United; or, the Husbandman's Magazine*. By J. S., 1684, and *The School of Recreation; or, the Gentleman's Tutor to those most Ingenious Exercises of Hunting, Racing, . . . Fishing, . . .* By R. H., London, printed for H. Rhodes, 1684.

To the second edition of *Profit and Pleasure*, published in 1704, the author's name, J. Smith, is affixed. The authorship of *The School of Recreation* has been attributed by some to Richard Howlett, the author of *The Angler's Sure Guide*; it has also been suggested that the initials R. H. are those of the publisher, H. Rhodes, transposed; only the initials of the author are given in the Stationers' Registers, so this point cannot now be definitely settled.

These books do not call for any further notice, as their angling contents are mere repetitions of the instructions contained in earlier treatises.

One does not usually look for striking originality in encyclopædic works, and one certainly does not find this characteristic in that otherwise excellent encyclopædia of sport, *The Gentleman's Recreation*, by Richard Blome, 1686. The only new method described in the angling portion is the following elaborate and ingenious method of carp-fishing:—

But all this while you are detained from the chief Secrets, which in Truth should not be made common. You must be first assured that the place where you Fish for Carps is provided therewith, which to know make use of these following Directions, not that they tend barely to make the Discovery and no more; for you must find other necessary uses made of them, for Instance, you Bait your Fish thereby, and make them bold; you also obtain a safe and sure place for your Hook to rest on, which is a good Convenience: and you are also assured that there are Carps in the place: the Figure shews the Form.



Frame some Bords together of such Length and Breadth; as you think fit, but for want of other Con-

venience, an old Door may serve the purpose, but the larger your Platform is, so much the better. The end Q is that which must be the Water side, at the Letter S make a hole to receive a good strong Cord, fastened with a knot on the inner side, then store over your Door with strong Earth or Clay about two Inches Thick; and so stiff, that it may not easily dissolve, nor work off with the Water, then stick the said Earth full of Beans (prepared as hereafter) at every four Inches Distance; the Letters V Y denote them; they must be very gently put in, so as a Carp may easily Bite them out, yet so fast as not to be washed out by the Water, when all is fixed, let the end Q be put into the Water sloping downwards, then when the Hole is close; on the bottom fasten the cord T, at the Root of some Tree; the next Morning visit your Baits, pull out your Door Leasurably; if the Carps have eaten the Beans, tis a good sign of catchsome, but if not try it a second Day and Night; if you then find the Beans unmoved, conclude there are no Carps. If you find the second time your Baits eaten, Replenish them, and think not your time lost. In case the bottom of the Water where you set your Door be clean and smooth, then remove your Door, casting in two or three Handfuls of the aforesaid Beans; but in case the Ground, be Muddy, Weedy, Rooty, or the like, let the Door be rebaited and returned to the place where it was, for there you may boldly let fall your Hook.

The way of ordering your Beans is thus. Take half a Bushel of Beans, and let lye seven or Eight Hours in warm Water, then Boil them in a large clean Earthenware Pot in four Ounces of Honey, and as many grains of Musk; then boil them about a quarter of an Hour, and so preserve them, for your use to bait upon your Door. . . . When you perceive that Carps are in the place, and that they bite your Bait, then the Night before you Fish do thus; Put in

some of your aforesaid Beans into some River Water to Boil, and when they begin to bubble, put the quantity of two small Beans of Aloes-cicatrina into your Pot to about a Handful of your Beans, and let it boil a little; when the Beans are cold bait your Door with them, the effect will be this; The Carp will eat them as before, and withall fall a purging and scouring whatever is within them; and consequently will be exceedingly Hungry, so as to bite at any thing; then Early in the Morning Bait your Hook (which should be strong and large) with your biggest Beans, and let the point of your hook but just pierce the skin of your Bean (but note that the Beans wherewith you Bait your Hook, must not be of the bitter ones); your Hook must have a Foot of Line to Trail on the Water, and your Line must be of Green Silk, with a Device to let go store of it as you see occasion. When you perceive your Float to Sink, then strike him, but upright not slanting; and when once he is hit, let him have Line enough to tire himself.

An improved form of landing-net is described in this book. It is of a V shape, and is strung upon a forked stick; various other kinds of nets are mentioned, and an excellent description is given of the method of throwing the cast-net.

According to Isaak Walton, "He that views the ancient Ecclesiastical Canons, shall find hunting to be forbidden to churchmen, as being a turbulent, toilsome, perplexing recreation; and shall find angling allowed to clergymen, as being a harmless recreation—a recreation that invites to contemplation and quietness." The principles laid down in a

work, entitled *Three Dialogues on the Amusements of Clergymen*, are not equally indulgent to the sport of angling.

These dialogues were found in manuscript, when Dr Josiah Frampton's library was sold in 1729 or 1730. They were written in 1686, but were not then published by the author, for fear of giving offence. They were printed in 1796, when all fear of hurting the feelings of anyone mentioned in them had passed away.<sup>1</sup>

The author at the time these dialogues were written was, according to his own account, "a very incorrect young man. I had," he says, "entered into the ministry with little attention to the duties I had taken on me to discharge. I loved society, and was fond of country diversions: and though I was fond also of my book, I would at any time have left it for a day's diversion with the hounds—a ramble in the woods with my gun—or a game of cards, and a dance in the evening." It happened that while Mr Frampton with these frivolous inclinations held the curacy of Wroxall, in Warwickshire, Dr Edward

<sup>1</sup> From a letter dated 11th April 1797, and signed "Will. Gilpin," it appears that the publication of these letters was due to William Gilpin, Prebendary of Salisbury, and the author of *Forest Scenery*. On the strength of this letter, the authors of the *Bibliotheca Piscatoria* state that these dialogues were written by William Gilpin under the pseudonym of Josiah Frampton. This, however, is manifestly impossible, as a comparison of the dates, on which the dialogues and the letter were respectively written, will show.



Stillingfleet, then Dean of St Paul's, and afterwards Bishop of Worcester, came to pay a visit in the neighbourhood. While on his visit this eminent divine was seized with a "violent fit of the gout," an attack which may possibly have accounted for the severity of some of his criticisms, and his host, Sir Richard Burgoin, having been at the same time called away owing to a domestic affliction, the Dean appears to have passed the time by discussing with the curate the amusements inappropriate for clergymen. The Dean held the opinion that the clergy had then injured the respectability of their characters by mixing too much with the amusements of laymen.

The dialogues are written in an amusing strain, and contain several witty anecdotes: the following is told of a clergyman, who was so fond of hunting that he was led thereby to neglect his clerical duties. On one occasion, when he was out hunting, the fox took to earth, "on which he cried out, 'Gentlemen, I must leave you: This puts me in mind, that I have a corpse to bury at four o'clock this evening; and I fear that I shall be an hour too late.'"

After hunting and shooting had been discussed, the conversation turned on angling:—

"You have said nothing against fishing. Do you allow me to suppose this amusement to be a clerical one? It is silent, quiet, and may be contemplative."

"I am afraid," said the Dean, "I shall be thought too rigid if I abridge a clergyman of this amusement: and yet I cannot bring myself to allow him any

amusement, which arises from destroying life. To fishing is affixed a peculiar cruelty. An impaled worm writhing upon a hook: or the convulsions of a fish under the operation of having a barbed hook extracted from its bowels; are ideas which greatly hurt my feelings. Catch your fish with a net and you have my leave."

"But," said I, "Sir, the trout, and I believe other fish, inhabit such little rapid rivulets, as are accessible only to a fly. Nets are accommodated chiefly to large rivers; and they require a boat and other apparatus, which a clergyman cannot always command. Besides, the use of nets is commonly forbidden as too destructive. But the angling rod is generally allowed, and easily procured: and many a clergyman who lives near a trout stream, may find it convenient to bring a dish of fish, which costs him nothing, now and then, to his family."

"There is some force no doubt," answered the Dean, "in what you say: and if the fish can be caught in no other manner I know not how to object, but still if I were the clergyman, I should leave other people to catch them."

"But," said I, "Sir, many of our great churchmen have indulged themselves in this amusement. That skilful casuist, and able divine, Dr Donne, I have heard, was once an able angler; your worthy predecessor, Dr Nowel, was likewise a great proficient in angling. Our present worthy primate<sup>1</sup> also I have been told, was inferior to neither of them in his love for angling. And good Mr Walton, whose lives I have heard you speak of as models of easy writing and good sense, wrote a book (though it never perhaps caught your attention), intitled, *The Compleat Angler; or, The Contemplative Man's Recreation*.

"Indeed," said the Dean, "you have drawn up

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Sheldon.

against me a most formidable body of evidence : but will you give me leave to challenge them? Donne, you know, was esteemed in the early part of his life, an incorrect man : and I suppose you are not much acquainted with his opinion on the subject after he became a pious divine.

“For my predecessor, Dr Nowel, I have a high reverence ; and I have heard, as you have, that he was an able angler. But I have heard also that he made it a rule to give all his fish to the poor ; which looks as if the good man was not quite easy in his business ; but thought some kind of expiation necessary. . . . As to my friend Walton (whom I much esteem) though I allow him to be a pleasing writer, I doubt whether he is a deep reasoner. How angling can be called the contemplative man’s Recreation, I cannot see. That the contemplative man may lay his rod on the bank, and take out his book, or meditate on a subject, I can easily conceive. But what has that to do with angling? While he is following his profession, and attending to his fly, I should not give much for the produce of his contemplation.”

The curate next points out that the Apostles were fishermen, and that “our Saviour himself bids Peter cast his hook into the sea.” To which the Dean replied that Peter did not cast his hook into the sea for amusement. However, he would not censure angling too harshly, out of respect to the memory of his father, who was both a very able angler and a most humane man, and felt for every living creature except a fish.

It is evident from the high opinion in which the Dean held the game of shuttlecock, that he would

have regarded badminton as admirably adapted for the clerical profession.

I then asked the Dean, if he had ever heard of the game of shuttlecock? or if he would laugh at me for mentioning it to him as a good domestic exercise?

“Laugh at you!” said the Dean; “I know no game, that I value more. It has all the characters of the amusement we want. It gives us good exercise—it makes us cheerful—and has no connection with our pockets: and if I may whisper another truth in your ear, it does not require much skill to learn. When my legs were in better order, I have spent many a rainy half-hour with Sir Roger, at Shuttlecock in his hall. . . . Laugh at you! so far from it that I respect the man, who invented shuttlecock.”

In 1696 the first edition of *The True Art of Angling*, by J. S., was published. From the publishers' point of view this must have been a very successful work, for it ran through eleven editions, the last appearing in 1770. After the first two editions the title was changed to *The Compleat Fisher; or, The True Art of Angling*.

As is pointed out in the *Bibliotheca Piscatoria*, it is probable that the author of this work was the J. Smith, Gent., who wrote *Profit and Pleasure United*, for, apart from the initials, certain similar passages in the two books suggest this conclusion. Compare, for instance, the following extracts:—

*Profit and Pleasure*.—Which Line must be either of Silke or Haire, though the latter I prefer before the former; and in twisting or breading, you must observe an exact evenness, least one haire being

shorter than the rest, the whole stress lye upon it, and it breaking render the rest too weak.

*Compleat Fisher*, 3rd edition.—Yet I prefer the Horse-hair as the best; and in twisting or braiding, observe an exact evenness, for one Hair being shorter than the rest in a Link, the whole stress will lye on that, and in breaking renders the rest much the weaker, and often a good Fish is lost for want of this observance.

*Profit and Pleasure*.—If he lye still or move slowly after he has taken the Baite, and you cannot find which way his head lyes, strike directly upward, and you will hardly miss him.

*Compleat Fisher*.—If you find after he has taken the Bait, he lies still, as sometimes he will, move your hand gently, to get notice which way his Head lies, lest in striking you happen to pull the Bait out of his Mouth, if that cannot be discerned strike directly upward.

*The True Art of Angling* was printed for George Conyers at the Golden Ring, and John Sprint at the Bell in Little Brittain: it has been stated that the author of this book was John Sprint, the printer here mentioned. The following note, which is attached as a footnote to a poem entitled "The Art of Angling," in Ruddiman's *Collection of Scarce Pieces*, is of interest in this connection:—

The medicinal virtues of these and other river fish are set forth with a profundity of physical knowledge, in a treatise written in Hebrew by that learned Rabbi Soloman Jarchi: a translation whereof into English, under the title of *The Complete Fisher*, hath

passed through six editions, which is an incontestable argument of its vast merit. But it is fit the Reader should be apprized, that the sly Bookseller, the better to palm his translation off on the world as an original, hath transposed the initials of the true author's name; for the title page saith, by J. S. instead of S. J., Soloman Jarchi. Wolfi Biblioth. Hebr.

Beyond the above statement there do not appear to be the slightest grounds for supposing that Rabbi Soloman Jarchi<sup>1</sup> was in any way the author of this book. It is perhaps possible that one or two of the Choice Secrets, such as that for taking fish in the hands, may have been taken indirectly from some work of Soloman Jarchi's, but even this I do not think is likely. *The True Art of Angling*, moreover, is not a book which deals much with the medicinal properties of river fish.

*The True Art of Angling* is compiled to a certain extent from previous works, but at the same time it contains an appreciable amount of original matter. The following passage is an almost verbatim extract from Chetham's *Angler's Vade-Mecum*:—"Cast the Fly behind a Trout at his rising, and so with a gentle Hand draw it over his Head, so that not scaring him, he will quickly take it if it be the right colour." Again the peculiar method of ground-baiting for

<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Soloman Ben Jarchi was born at Troyes, in Champagne, in the year 1040. He died in France in 1105. His writings, which were very numerous, were partly elucidations of the Talmud, and partly commentaries on the Old Testament (*Dict. Univ. Biogr.*).

carp, described in Blome's *Gentleman's Recreation*, is repeated here.

The following advice on carp-fishing is, I think, given for the first time :—

If you fish for Carp, cut no Weeds in the River, nor on the sides, to make a convenient standing, for then they will perceive they are laid wait for, and forsake that Haunt not returning in a considerable time.

A method for taking fish in the hands is described. The hands having been anointed with cinquefoil, nettles, and house leek juice, the fish will come to them and may then be taken out. These directions are repeated in many subsequent angling books.

The miraculous, but I should imagine, rather wet, feat of walking on the water can be accomplished according to this book, by tying a "thick leather gut," well blown up, under the arm-pits, and attaching leather drums to the feet.

The popularity of this book was probably due to its low price of sixpence, and the handiness of its size, 24mo. To the third edition (1704), an abstract of Gilbert's *Method of Fishing in Hackney River* was added, while in the second issue of the fourth edition (1796) a list of various angling stations was substituted for this abstract.

*The True Art of Angling* is of considerable interest in regard to certain points of similarity between it and *The Young Sportsman's Instructor*; both were exceedingly small books, both were printed for G.

Conyers at the Ring in Little Brittain, and both were sold for sixpence. They were, moreover, with Gilbert's *Angler's Delight*, the earliest works to advise the adoption of specific methods for special rivers. These points of resemblance seem to me to suggest the probability that the success of *The True Art of Angling* induced Conyers, who at the time was publishing posthumous editions of Markham's works, to publish (sometime between 1706 and 1716) another book, similar in price but of even smaller size, and to affix to it the initials of the well-known writer Gervase Markham.

Another very interesting point in this connection is, that the fourth edition (1716) and some of the subsequent editions of *The True Art of Angling* contain an advertisement of *The Young Sportsman's Instructor in Angling, Hawking, Hunting, Ordering of Singing Birds, Connies, Dogs, their Diseases and Cure*. Price 6d.

A work which attained some popularity about this period was *The Innocent Epicure; or, the Art of Angling*, a poem, London, 1697. The preface is signed by N. Tate, who states that the poem was sent to him by an unknown author, "with Commission to Publish or Suppress it" as he thought fitting. Tate submitted it to several experienced anglers, who agreed in their opinions that it far surpassed anything which had been published in prose on the subject, even in the useful and instructive part of the work, and that it contained not only all the



necessary instructions, but also "several Uncommon and Surprising Remarks." But in spite of these statements the poem could not possibly at any time have possessed any practical value.

The two following extracts will serve to illustrate its practical utility as well as its poetical style :—

Hair best with Hair, and Silk with Silk agrees ;  
But mixt, have each their Inconveniences.

Fineness in Angling's th' Anglers nearest Rule ;  
Tho Prudence still must regulate in all.  
For Wise Men will not trust a single Hair  
With Weight, which dead, it could not easily bear.

If the author used a hair line of sufficient strength to lift the dead weight of the fish he hoped to catch, he certainly did not fish very fine.

In 1700 there was published *The Genteel Recreation ; or, the Pleasure of Angling*, a poem. With a Dialogue between Piscator and Corydon, by John Whitney, A Lover of the Angle, London, Printed in the Year, 1700.

The preface of this work concludes in the following half apologetic manner :—

I make no question, but some will find fault and I expect it, but when I consider the world affords both wise Men and Fools, and both find equal admirers I am satisfied ; as to the verse there is faults and folly enough, but grant Poetical License, if in pleasing nobody I have pleased myself, and that's all the reward I desire.

It was certainly fortunate for the author that he

was so easily pleased, for this collection of bad rhymes hardly deserves the name of a poem, and contains very little of angling interest to recommend it. John Whitney, however, was evidently a practical angler, and the book contains a few useful hints, such as the following remarks in the preface on the method of scouring worms :—

I use to scour my Worms without Fenil or Grass, as most do about me, tho they use them commonly just taken out of the ground, when I first take my worms, I put them into a large earthen Pan, that they may have room to crawl and purge out their earth and slime for about twenty four hours; then I wrap them in a Greasy Dish Clout which hath been used much, but not to salt meat, then I lay moist clean Moss in the bottom of the Pan, with worms in the clout and cover them over with more, in three days they'll begin to eat their way through the clout, and in the Moss scour themselves, when hungry; they'll return to the clout again to feed, and in a weeks time be fit for use. I kept some months with once a week changing the Clout and Moss.

Whitney was not a believer in the old method of adding tar to the worm to render it more attractive :—

A worm well scour'd without the help of stinking tar,  
That was her bait and that was best by far,  
Tho to my cost I've try'd and certain know,  
That Tarr's strong stench hath little here to do,  
But kill the worm, but I confess that fishes smell,  
Or that my apprehension is but ill,  
For I have seen them to my flote and Lead repair,  
And gently touch them with insulting care.

This book is the first I believe to recommend the use of the floating fly. It is not recommended, however, for the purpose of circumventing the wily trout, but in order to prevent the fly being taken by the minnows :—

Sing next the trouble of the Angling Rod,  
The little Menow, and his blind abode,

He'll nibble and do all that e'er he can  
To raise your passion, yet you must not swear,  
For frightening other Fishes that are neer.  
All baits he loves, and nothing will deny  
His Appetite, except it be the Fly,  
And this must on the water swim, if low,  
'Tis certain gone as other baits I know.

The Dialogue between Piscator and Corydon contains nothing of any interest, and therefore calls for no comment. The book concludes with a post-script describing a day's netting of the great Fish Pond at Winckhurst: "I can justly sum up of that day's action, that we took two Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Carps."

A list of angling books, written by William White, Crickhowell, Brecknockshire, about the year 1806, thus describes *The Angler's Sure Guide* :—

*The Angler's sure Guide ; or, Angling improved*, by R. H. Esqre., 8vo, 1706. It is the most Elaborate Work of Fishing and making the Tackle now extant, the Author is imagined to have been a Barrister at Law, when after 40 Years practice in the Art of Angling he devoted the remainder of his Life to the

Writing the above Copious and Instructive treatise, which runs as far as 296 pages of very close Letterpress with a frontispiece of a Man in the proper Habit Fishing, the cuts of the Fish are on a single Leaf, and very indifferently Executed.

Robert Howlett, the author of *The Angler's Sure Guide*, thus commences his preface: "The Principles and Practice of the ingenious Art of Angling, are known to bear an antient Date; Amos 4, 2, Hab. 1, 15, and are so admirably defined and propagated, especially by that great Practitioner, Master, and Patron of it, Dr Donne, in his *Secrets of Angling*, that I have seen little more added to his Documents, than some Experiments. And indeed his seems to be the best Foundation of all Superstructures of this Kind: and upon that Basis chiefly have I raised mine; not intended so much to instruct the Beginner in the Rudiments of this Art, as to improve the Knowledge of the Proficient." A perusal of this work, however, reveals the fact that it was not so much based upon Dennys' *Secrets*, as upon Chetham's *Angler's Vade-Mecum*, and also that Venables, Cotton, and Walton have been extensively drawn upon.

Apart from the copious extracts from these authors, the book contains a great deal that is original, and must be pronounced by far the most practical and useful manual of its time.

Very full instructions are given for making a ground-rod, a fly-rod, a "Travelling Rod," and a

dapping rod. From his description of the fly-rod, it is evident that Howlett was acquainted with Venables' *Experienced Angler*:—"But a Fly-Rod ought not to be so very taper; yet both so as to ply and bend gently and equally; the equal and proportionable bending being the main thing to preserve the Line, next the Skill of the Angler;" "but," says Venables, "my opinion is that the equal bending of the Rod chiefly (next to the skill of the Angler) saveth the line."

The author recommends that the ground- and fly-rods should be at least 16 or 18 feet long for large rivers. The butt or stock of the travelling rod must contain four tops, one for trout, another for barbel, another for carp, and the last for small fish; the joints of this rod, which must not exceed two feet and two or three inches in length, are six in number: all the tops are to be tipped with whalebone.

Howlett recommends the use of Indian Grass instead of hair for very fine fishing, and gives instructions for dressing it with the fat skimmed from boiled fresh meat. The grass thus treated "will last a long time, and be sounder and stronger than the best single Hairs: especially if you oyl them, when you find they become too dry by long keeping. Or if you cannot get Indian-Grass, make use of the smallest and soundest Bowel or Lute-strings you can procure." The catgut is to be dressed in the same way as the grass, and is to be carefully tested every time before it is used.

Chetham alludes to having heard "an Angler lately, highly commend a Dibbing Line made of white Virginal Wyre, the brittleness or stiffness of it" being tempered by heating it in a charcoal fire. Howlett also mentions the use of these lines: "Some use well Neal'd Wire-Lines of several sizes, both to angle for some Fish, and dap with for others; but they are very apt to kink, and then break at that place." An attempt has been made in recent years to introduce the use of these lines, but the objections, mentioned by Howlett, have not as yet been overcome.

In dealing with the various methods of placing the shots and bullets on the line, mention is made of a plan adopted in Shropshire:—

In Shropshire, they use no Lead at all on this Line, but neatly cover the shank of the Hook with a very thin Plate of Lead made taper, so as to slip the Bait upon it, that the Lead may not hang in the Weeds or Stones, nor the Fish catch hold of it instead of your Bait, as Trouts will; nor take distaste at the sight of it, as some may.

The method of making a self-cocking float is thus described:—

But when I fish with a Float at any Depth, and with a Lead so small as will not make my Float to sink, or without any Lead, and yet would have my Float to cock; I put into my Float, if a Quil-Float, one Shot, or more, as I see cause, and stop the Float with a wir'd Plug, or cement it in the middle, as in Sect. 22 of this Chapter.

The angler is recommended to have all his quill floats tipped with red, and the method, not a very elegant one, of so colouring them is described. In "Float-Angling at Leiger" the addition of a small float above the float ordinarily used, is recommended, "to keep that Float from whirling, and the Line from twisting or snarling."

The second chapter deals very exhaustively with the way to procure the different kinds of baits, how to preserve them, and how to bait the hook with them, while the third chapter treats "Of alluring Ointments." Many of the receipts are the same as those given by Chetham.

The forerunner of the spike, which is now fitted to most fly-rods, appears from a description given in Chapter IV. of this book to have been a socket of horn or of wood armed with an iron spike; it was chiefly used when landing a fish single-handed; the iron spike was fixed in the ground, then the rod was inserted into the socket, and the fish netted out.

In dealing with the natural history of the salmon, Howlett reverses the theory, which is advanced nowadays, that salmon eat nothing in fresh water. He seems to think that the salmon go to the sea for a course of free purgation, to recover from the effects of the aldermanic over-feeding in which they have indulged during their sojourn in fresh water:—

For Salmon being Fish of Prey, and great Feeders, Nature directs them to the salt Waters, as Physick to purge and cleanse them, not only from their

Impurities after Spawning, but from all their muddy terrene Particles and gross Humours, acquired by their extraordinary excessive Feeding all the Summer in fresh Rivers. . . . And when they are fatted and glutted with their long, excessive Feeding in fresh Rivers, and have spawn'd in the latter end of the Year, repair to the Sea for Warmness, and to be purged from their gross Humours by the Calidity of the Saline Water; and when Winter is over, return to their Summer Habitations.

Howlett is, I believe, the first author to describe the method of fixing rings to a rod. In dealing with salmon-fishing he gives the following directions:—

About Four Inches above your Tumbrel strike into your Stock a Loop made of stiff Iron-Wire, up to the Head, for the Line to run through, having first made Two little Holes in your Stock with a very small Awl, to let in the sharp Ends of the Loop, lest you flat the Head of the Loop by driving it in: After the same manner drive in such Loops all the way up your Stock, about a Foot and a half, or Two Foot, one Loop from another; and be sure to place the Loops so, that they may stand in a direct Line one against another, that your Silk-Line may run smooth through them all.

When you have thus looped the Stock of your Rod, loop also the top after this manner; Take small Brass-Wire, Neal it very well, and therewith make Loops of the same Fashion as the other, but somewhat longer, and bind them on your Top length-ways, with a strong well waxed Silk, so far only as to leave the Eye of the Loop unbound, to be turned up, for your Silk-Line to run through, as those on your Stock; place them about half a Yard one from another, and right against one another, as you were directed to do on the Stock, till you come to the



small end of the Top ; so that when the Splices both of Top and Stock are bound together (when you come to use your Rod) the Loops on your Top may range with the Loops on your Stock in a strait Line ; and at the very point End of your Top, bind on one of your Loops, that the Head or Ring part of the Loop may just over-reach the Top-point, and not turned up as the rest are to be, but lie strait out, through all which Loops draw your Silk-Line when you come to fish ; but be sure all your Loops both on Stock and Top, when put together, be exactly and directly even against one another, otherwise your Silk-Line will not run clear.

Mention is made of some record trout, but the author declines to vouch for the accuracy of the measurements, as he was not *Occulatus Testis* of either : the first one mentioned was taken in a cast-net at Newbury, and measured 45 inches in length. Howlett considers that this fish ought to have been presented to King Charles II., who at the time of its capture was staying in Newbury, and it would have been presented to him "as a Rarity, had not those Proud Epicurean Belly-Gods been more intent in sacrificing to their own Net, and gratifying their covetous, greedy Appetites, than in paying a dutiful Reverence to their Sovereign."

Another trout is alluded to, which was caught at Tyrone, in Ireland, and measured 46 inches in length.

Howlett also gives a very marvellous instance of the rapid growth of some trout, which were placed in a freshly made fish pond at Lewisham : seven brace

of trout, the largest not measuring more than 7 inches, were placed in this pond, which was fed only by springs; in thirteen months' time, the pond was cleaned out, and then three brace of fish were taken out, each measuring over 20 inches in length.

In angling for trout "with the Ground-Line in clear Water at bottom," the angler is recommended to thread his worm on the hook with the aid of a baiting needle. The method recommended for angling with worms in clear water, either at the top, or at mid-water, is evidently taken from Cotton's instructions.

It appears from this book that it was sometimes the custom to use as many as four artificial flies on the line at the same time.

Howlett describes a very lazy way of legering. A small hawk bell is suspended on a forked stick, round which the line is wound, and "When you have a Bite, the Bell will give you sufficient Notice without your Watching; and the Line wound on the Fork, by its running off, will not only give you time to take hold of your Rod, but also prevent checking the Fish before he gorges your Bait."

In dealing with the pike, Howlett borrows largely from Nobbes. According to this book a one-year-old pike ought to be called a shottrel, a two-year-old a pikerel, a three-year-old a pike, and a four-year-old a luce.

Howlett was of opinion that the leaded hooks usually used in trolling were often the cause of the

pike leaving the bait without gorging it ; he therefore dispensed with the leaded shank to the trolling hooks, merely placing a bullet on the hook within the mouth of the bait.

The author considered it too tedious to wind up his line on the winch in trolling : he preferred to gather it up round the four fingers of his left hand in hanks of about 8 or 10 inches long.

It is interesting to compare Howlett's account of toads killing carp, with the account in Walton's book of these fish being killed by frogs ; they both seem to be referring to the same case :—

But how they so often come to decay unknown, is mysterious ; nor can I dive into the cause of it, unless it should be by such Destruction, an Acquaintance of mine once told me, viz. That he had three Ponds very near his House, one above another, well stor'd with Carps, (no Pikes in them at all) which he preserved with all the Care he could by staking, &c. only took out now and then a Brace, or two, for his own Use ; He was a Man well beloved of his Neighbours ; but still he found his Ponds grew very thin of Fish, more than formerly ; At last walking by the sides of his Ponds, in the Spring of the Year, he spied a great Water-Toad upon the very Head of one of his biggest Carps ; which causing him to look more narrowly about his Ponds, he found two more large Carps with Toads, on their Heads in like manner ; which he took up with a Net, Toads and all. And from thence concluded, his Carps were destroy'd no other way, without his Knowledge ; and thereupon he made it his Business, to destroy all the Frogs and Toads he could find about his Ponds, by laying them dry, &c. And after a few Years, found his Fish to

increase and multiply, much more than they did many Years before.

A very ingenious method is described for making a luminous float to be used for carp-fishing at night. It consists in placing a glow-worm inside a swan-quill float. In dealing also with carp-fishing the author recommends the use of a boom, similar to that now used in sea-fishing, for the purpose of keeping two hooks apart. The boom consists of a piece of brass wire 12 inches long; the line is whipped to the middle of the wire, "so as the two Hooks and Wire may hang even at the End of the long Line, like a Pair of Scales."

In angling for tench the angler is recommended to nip off the head of the worm, which is threaded on the hook tail first with the head left hanging unthreaded. The success achieved by nipping off the head of the worm is attributed either to the worm being thus prevented from creeping into the mud or under stones, or else to the worm more closely resembling the chopped up portions of worms thrown in as ground-bait. In hot weather when the tench are swimming nearer the surface of the water, the float may be dispensed with, and the bait drawn up and down in the water among the weeds.

In describing bream-fishing, Howlett refers the reader to Mr Isaak Walton, in his *Compleat Angler*.

A very unsportsmanlike way of fishing for roach below London Bridge is described: a heavily

weighted line, furnished with about a dozen roach hooks on bristles, lies on the bottom of the river, the angler holding one end of the line in his hand ; after feeling two or three tugs, he pulls up ; and frequently takes several fish at once ; the hooks are baited with either small white snails or with periwinkles.

Various receipts are given for cooking the different kinds of fish, and a chapter is devoted to describing the preservation of fish in stews and fish ponds. This very exhaustive treatise then concludes with a chapter on the Laws concerning Angling, and an Appendix containing Prognostics of the Weather and other useful hints.

## CHAPTER IX

THE next book to be dealt with is, *The Young Sportsman's Instructor, In Angling, Fowling, Hawking, Ordering Singing Birds, Hawks, Poultry, Conies, Hares, and Dogs, and how to Cure them*, by G. M. Sold at the Gold Ring in Little Brittain, price 6d. In a former chapter I have already stated my reasons for not according to this book a date of publication earlier than that of *The Angler's Sure Guide*.

The following extracts, taken from a copy of the first edition in the Bodleian Library, are written in a far more practical style than that of any of the instructions contained in Markham's books :—

Let your Line be in thickness and length according as the Rivers or Ponds you fish in require. For Fishing in the Thames let your Line be of a great length, usually 5 yards long; for the New River a Line of 2 yards is sufficient; in Hackney River as long a Line it requires as the Thames, and also as long a Fishing-cane.

In none of Markham's angling treatises is such

attention paid to detail as in the following paragraphs from *The Young Sportsman's Instructor*:—

7. All your Tackling in Order, go to the River, and find a Place, if you can, that hath a gravelly or smooth Bottom, and about 2 or 3 yards in depth, the Stream not too swift, then about a yard from the place you design to Fish at, cast in a quarter of a Peck of Grains, or as many more if you please, dip them first in the River, that they may sink the better, and about an Hour after you may begin to fish; for by that time its probable the Fish may have found them. If you have not Sport in an Hour, you may conclude there is none, or else that Pearch and Pike are there, that live on small Fish.

8. Then plumb the Ground, and fish about 2 Inches from the Bottom; the best Summer Bait, except in *April* and *May*, their Spawning time, when they are not gone, should be large Wheat, ordered as Furmety, which may be kept 15 or 20 days in Water or Beer, putting in fresh as the Skin grows upon it, if you keep it in Water, when you put any in a Box for present Angling, put Wort, or Ale, or Beer to it a while, or you may boyl good Grain, as Wheat, Malt, &c., in Milk till it's soft, or in sweet Wort which is full as good, and peel off the outward Rine, which is the bran, and so use it; or if you please you may fry it in Milk and Honey, or steep it in strong scented Oyls, as Spike, Amber, Ivy, Polypody, Anise, Turpentine, oyl of Peter, Assa Faetida, &c.

Your Hook thus baited with a Corn, the point covered with a thin Rind, that you may see the White on one side, cast in your Line above the Stream, near the side, the Float being upright, swimming down the Stream, when you see the Float sink, strike pretty quick, according to the strength of your Line; if the Fish is too large, make use of your landing Net, and after the catch-

ing 3 or 4 Fishes, cast in a handful of Grains, and now and then lifting the Float above Water, and so you may catch many Fishes.

The following is the passage in which reference is made to *The Angler's Sure Guide*:—

To Angle with an artificial Fly, that is, a Fly in the likeness of a natural Fly; you must have Fur, Feathers, Wool, Down, Silk, Worsted, Bears hair, Spaniels hair, Dogs hair, Sheeps Wooll, Mo-hair, Cow-hair, Camlets, Furs, Hackles or Feathers of a Cocks neck or tail of several Colours, Silk of all Colours, Wire and Twist, Silver Twist, Gold Twist, Silver and Gold Wire (Read some of these in a Curious Book lately printed called, *The Angler's sure Guide*. Sold at the Ring in Little Brittain), and the like, suitable and proportionable to the Fly you would imitate.

Mr Pearson's reprint is not a complete one; it terminates with the instructions given for obtaining worms by shaking the earth by driving a poker into the ground. Mr Pearson appends the following note to his reprint: "The above was also reprinted in an altered and extended form, with the same woodcut, in a larger work, entitled, *The Compleat Husbandman and Gentleman's Recreation*, 18mo, 1s.; and in *The Husbandman's Jewel*, 18mo, 1s., both printed for G. Conyers, at the Ring in Little Brittain, circa 1654." This note as far as the date is concerned is incorrect. *The Young Sportsman's Instructor* was printed in a slightly altered form in *The Husbandman's Jewel*, which was published at



one shilling by G. Conyers; to this work neither the name nor initials of any author are attached, but *The Compleat Husbandman*, also published by Conyers at one shilling, and with which this book was bound up, is stated on the title-page to be "By G. Markham, Gent." This edition of *The Compleat Husbandman* contains a catalogue of the books published by Conyers, and among these books *The Angler's sure Guide* appears: it could not therefore have been published before 1706.

The following extracts are not included in Mr Pearson's misleading reprint. After describing the method of making an artificial cod-bait, a list of "Proper Flies for every Month" is given, evidently compiled from *The Angler's Vade-Mecum* and referring to live flies:—

February.—Palmer Flies, little Red Brow, the silver Hackle, the gold Hackle, the great blew dun, the dark brown.

March.—The early bright brown, the little whirling dun, the Thorn tree Fly, the whitish dun, the little black Gnat, the blew dun, the little bright brown.

April.—The little dark brown, the small bright brown, the Violet Fly, the great whirling dun, the Horse-flesh Fly, the yellow dun.

May.—The green Drake, the dun Cow, the black May fly, the camlet fly, the Grey Drake, the yellow Palmer, the Turkey Fly, the little dun, the light brown, the white Gnat, the Cow Lady, the Peacock Fly, the cow turd Fly.

June.—From the 1st to the 24th. The Stone fly and green Drake, the Barn fly, the Owl fly, the purple Hackle, the Flesh Fly, the purple gold Hackle,

the little Flesh-fly, the Ant fly, the Peacock fly, the little Black Gnat, the brown Gnat, the green grasshopper, the brown Hackle, the dun Grasshopper.

July.—The orange fly, the Badger fly, the Wasp fly, the little white dun, the black Hackle, the black brown dun, the Shell fly.

August.—The Fern fly, the late ant fly, Harry-long-leg, the white Hackle.

September.—The late Badger, Camel brown Fly.

October.—The same flies that were used in March.

The same list of flies is given in the version of this book which appears in *The Husbandman's Jewel*.

A comparison of the following extract with Walton's *Compleat Angler* will show from whence the instructions for tying artificial flies were obtained:—

*Artificial Flies how to make them, and the Season they are to be used in.*

In April a Stone-fly is in Season, the body of it is made with black Wooll, made yellow under the Wings, and under the Tail, the Wings made of Mallards Feathers. May at the beginning, a ruddy Fly is in Season, make the body of red Wooll wrapt about with blew Silk, the Wings made of the Wing of a Drand a red Hackle.

The yellow or green Fly is made of yellow Wooll, his Wing made of red Hackle and the Wing of a Drake.

The dun Fly is made of black Wooll, and sometimes dun, in season in March, his Wings made of Partridge Feathers, black Drake's Feathers, and the Feathers under his Tail.

The black Fly in season in May, made of black Wooll, and wrapt about with Peacock's Tail: his Wings the Feather of the Wing of a brown Capon, with the blew Feathers in his Head.

In June the said yellow Fly is in season, made of black Wooll with a yellow List on either side, the Wings of a Buzzard, bound with broken Hemp.

Also the Moorish Fly in season in June, made of duskish Wooll, the Wings the black Feathers of a Mall Drake.

Also in the middle of June, the Taring Fly made of Bear's Wooll, the Wings made contrary one against the other of the whitish Feathers of a Mall Drake.

In July the Wasp Fly in season, made of black Wooll, wrapt about with yellow Silk; the Wings made of the feathers of a Buzzard or Drak.

The Shell Fly good in the middle of June, made with greenish Wooll, wrapt about with Pearls of a Peacock's Tail, the Wings made of a Buzzard's Feathers.

The dark Drake Fly, made of black Wooll, wrapt about with black Silk, in season in August; the Wings made of the Feathers of a Mall Drake with a black Head.

The May Fly, made of greenish Colour Cruel or Willow Colour, and darken it in most Places with wax Silk or ribb'd with a black Hair, or some of them ribb'd with a Silver Thread, and such Wings for the Colour, as you see the Fly to have at that Season.

The Oak Fly, the Body made of Orange paring and black Cruel; the Wings, the brown of a Mallard's Feathers.

Blome's instructions, for making carp hungry by purging them with Socatrine aloes, the method of taking fish in the hands, and the method of walking

on the water are all copied into this book from *The True Art of Angling*.

The book concludes with a "Pleasant Story for Anglers." "One day a person being fishing, it happened that he pull'd out a dead Man's Skull, and he imagining that it came there by chance, it was but a Deed of Charity to bury it, where upon he goes home and gets a Spade, and finding a convenient Place he fell to digging, and having dug deep, he espied a large old Bag, which pulling out, found it to be full of Gold, and thus was the poor Man enriched unexpectedly." The unexpected good fortune of this angler reminds one of the angler in George Turberville's ballad of "A Controuersie of a conquest in Loue 'twixt Fortune and Venus."

Whilst Fissher kest his line the houering fish to hooke,  
By hap a rich man's Daughter on the Fissher kest hir looke.  
Shee fryde with frantick loue, they marid eke at last :  
Thus Fissher was from lowe Estate in top of treasure plast.  
Stoode Fortune by and smylde : "how say you, Dame,"  
quoth shee

To Venus, "was this Conquest your's, or is it due to mee?"  
"Twas I (quoth Vulcan's wife) with help of Cupid's Bowe,  
That made this wanton wench to rage, and match herself so  
lowe."

"Not so, 'twas Fortune I, that brought the trull in place ;  
And Fortune was it that the Man stoode so in Mayden's  
grace ;

By Fortune fell their loue, 'twas Fortune strake the stroke ;  
Then detter is this Man to mee that did the Match prouoke."

I think that I have now sufficiently proved that Markham could not possibly have written the angling

portion of *The Young Sportsman's Instructor*, but since writing the above notes, I have discovered the source from which that work was stolen.

In 1705, the following book was published: *The Secrets of Angling; Imparting the best and choicest Experiments for taking all sorts of Fish, with Fly, Worm, Paste, and other Baits; also to know their Haunts, and how to Angle for them in all Waters and Weathers.* By C. G. a Brother of the Angle, London. Printed and Sold By A. Baldwin at the Oxford-arms in Warwick-Lane, 1705.

The angling portion of *The Young Sportsman's Instructor* is practically a verbatim copy of this book, with the following slight alterations.

*The Secrets of Angling* begins:—

#### ANGLING.

In my directions for Angling, I shall in the first place notice of our Angler's Apparel.

1. Let your Cloaths be of dark Colours, &c.

*The Young Angler's Instructor* begins:—

#### THE YOUNG ANGLER'S INSTRUCTOR.

He that would be a Compleat Angler ought to observe these things following:—

1. His Cloaths ought to be of a dark Colour, &c.

*The Secrets of Angling* does not contain the bracketed reference to *The Angler's Sure Guide* contained in *The Young Sportsman's Instructor*.

The order in which some of the concluding paragraphs are arranged is different in the two books. Amidst the angling matter contained in *The Secrets of Angling*, there are abruptly inserted, without any previous explanation to account for their presence, various instructions for japanning, and for painting in oils and water-colours. The presence of these instructions is probably explained by the fact that this treatise on angling was first published, in 1704, among a collection of tracts on other subjects, under the collective title of *A Family Jewel; or, The Woman's Councillor*. . . . L. A. Baldwin at the Oxford-arms in Warwick-Lane, 1704. These instructions on japanning and painting were then probably inserted for the use of those housewives, for whom, apparently, the work was originally intended.

The angling instructions contained in these various books have very little claim to originality. They appear to me, judging from the description of the method of fishing with boiled malt, to have been probably compiled by some bottom-fishing angler from the works of Walton and Chetham, and from *The True Art of Angling* by J. S.

Conyer's piratical theft of *The Secrets of Angling* affords an interesting example of the literary frauds, of which Addison complained in a paper in the *Tatler* on 1st December 1709:—

The progress of my intended account of what

happened when Justice visited mortals, is at present interrupted by the observation and sense of an injustice against which there is no remedy, even in a kingdom more happy in the care taken in the liberty and property of the subject, than any other nation upon earth. This iniquity is committed by a most impregnable set of mortals, men who are rogues within the law; . . . a set of wretches we Authors call Pirates, who print any book, poem, or sermon, as soon as it appears in the world, in a smaller volume; and sell it, as all other thieves do stolen goods, at a cheaper rate.

The angling portion of *The Young Sportsman's Instructor* forms more than half the book, the 140 pages of which are made up as follows:—

Angling, pages 1 to 79 inclusive; Fowling, pages 80 to 118 inclusive; Hunting, pages 119 to 128 inclusive; Hawking, pages 129 to 136 inclusive; the remaining pages 137 to 140 dealing with the "cures" of singing birds, conies, dogs, and hawks.

The portion on stag-hunting is evidently abridged from Markham's *Country Contentments*:—

*The Young Sportsman's  
Instructor.*

*Country Contentments*, 6th  
Edition, 1649.

And in this case you must cast in your Finders, and they having hunted about a Ring or two, cast in the rest of your Hounds, cheering them at full cry with your Horn and Voice, and having your sight of the game, take notice that you may know him from any other, so that if your Dogs chance to

Now for the manner of his hunting; you shall first cast off your Finders, neere his place of lodging, & after they have hunted him about a ring or two, you shall cast in the rest of your hounds, and being in full cry and maine chase, you shall give him comfort both with Horne and Voyce,

follow the wrong Game, you may call them back to their default, obliging them to cast about till they have undertaken the first Game.

then as soon as you can possibly, you shall get sight of the Deere, and take what especial notts or markes you can from him so that as much as possible, you may know him from any other Deere, then at every default, as soone as the hounds are in cry againe, you shall make into the hunted Deere and viewe him, and if you find it to be a fresh Deere, you shall rate the Dogs and bring them back to the default, and there make them cast about againe, until they have undertaken the first hunted Deere.

During the early part of the eighteenth century various poems were published treating more or less of the art of angling: from amongst these I have selected the following extracts from *Rural Sports*. A Poem inscribed to Mr Pope. By Mr Gay. *Agrestem tenui Musam meditabor Avena. Virg. . . .* London, 1713. This poem commences:—

You, who the Sweets of Rural Life have known,  
 Despise th' ungrateful Hurry of the Town ;  
 'Midst Windsor Groves your easie Hours employ,  
 And, undisturb'd your self and Muse enjoy.

Now did the Spring her Native Sweets diffuse,  
 And feed the chearful Plains with wholesome Dewes ;  
 A kindly Warmth th' approaching Sun bestows  
 And o'er the year a verdant Mantle throws ;  
 The jocund Fields their gaudiest Liv'ry wear,  
 And breathe fresh Odours through the wanton Air ;



The gladsome Birds begin their various Lays,  
And fill with Song the blooming Sprays ;  
No swelling Inundation hides the Grounds,  
But crystal Currents glide within their Bounds ;  
The sporting Fish their wonted Haunts forsake,  
And in the Rivers wide Excursions take ;  
They range with frequent Leaps the shallow Streams,  
And their bright Scales reflect the dazzling Beams.  
The Fisherman does now his Toils prepare,  
And arms himself with every wat'ry Snare,  
He meditates new Methods to betray,  
Threat'ning destruction to the finny Prey.  
When floating Clouds their spongy Fleeces drain,  
Troubling the streams with fast descending rain,  
And Waters, tumbling down the Mountain's side,  
Bear the loose Soil into the swelling Tide ;  
Then, soon as Vernal Gales begin to rise,  
And drive the liquid Burthen through the Skies,  
The Fisher strait his Taper Rod prepares,  
And to the Neighb'ring Stream in haste repairs ;  
Upon a rising Border of the Brook  
He sits him down, and ties the treach'rous Hook ;  
A twining Earth-worm he draws on with Care,  
With which he neatly hides the pointed Snare.  
Now Expectation cheers his eager Thought,  
His Bosom glows with Treasures yet uncaught,  
Before his Eyes a Banquet seems to stand,  
The kind Effects of his industrious Hand.  
Into the Stream the twisted Hair he throws,  
Which gently down the murm'ring Current flows ;  
When, if or Chance or Hunger's pow'ful Sway  
Directs a ranging Trout this fatal way,  
He greedily sucks in the tortur'd Bait,  
And shoots away with the fallacious Meat.  
The trembling Rod the joyful Angler eyes,  
And strait the Line assures him of the Prize ;  
With a quick Hand the nibbled Hook he draws,  
And strikes the barbed Steel within his Jaws ;  
The Fish now flounces with the startling Pain,  
And, plunging, strives to free himself, in vain :

Into the thinner Element he's cast,  
 And on the verdant Margin gasps his Last.  
 He must not ev'ry Worm promiscuous use,  
 Judgment will tell the proper Bait to choose ;  
 The Worm that draws a long immoderate size  
 The Trout abhors, and the rank Morsel flies ;  
 And if too small, the naked Fraud's in sight,  
 And Fear forbids, while Hunger does invite.  
 Their shining Tails when a deep yellow stains,  
 That Bait will well reward the Fisher's Pains :  
 Cleanse them from Filth to give a tempting Gloss,  
 Cherish the sully'd Animals with Moss ;  
 Where they rejoice, wreathing around in Play  
 And from their bodies wipe their native Clay.

To frame the little Animal, provide  
 All the gay Hues that wait on Female Pride,  
 Let Nature guide thee ; sometimes Golden Wire  
 The glitt'ring Bellies of the Fly require ;  
 The Peacock's Plumes thy Tackle must not fail,  
 Nor the dear Purchase of the Sables Tail.  
 Each gaudy Bird some slender Tribute brings,  
 And lends the growing Insect proper Wings :  
 Silks of all Colours must their Aid impart,  
 And ev'ry Fur promote the Fisher's Art.  
 So the gay Lady, with Expensive Care,  
 Borrows the Pride of Land, of Sea, of Air ;  
 Furs, Pearls, and Plumes, the Painted thing displays,  
 Dazzles our Eyes, and easy Hearts betrays.

Mark well the various Seasons of the Year,  
 How the succeeding Insect Race appear ;  
 In this revolving Moon one Colour reigns,  
 Which in the next the fickle Trout disdains.  
 Oft' have I seen a skilful Angler try  
 The various colours of the treacherous Fly ;  
 When he with fruitless Pain hath skim'd the Brook,  
 And the coy Fish rejects the skipping Hook,  
 He shakes the Boughs that on the Margin grow,  
 Which o'er the Stream a waving Forest throw ;

When, if an Insect falls (his certain Guide),  
He gently takes him from the whirling Tide ;  
Examines well his Form, with Curious Eyes,  
His gaudy Colours, Wings, his horns and Size  
Then round his Hook a proper Fur he winds,  
And on the Back a speckled Feather binds,  
So just the Properties in ev'ry Part  
That even Natures Hand revives in Art.  
His new-formed Creature on the Water moves,  
The roving Trout th' inviting Snare approves,  
Upon his Skill successful Sport attends,  
The Rod, with the succeeding Burthen, bends ;  
The Fishes sail along, and in Surprise  
Behold their Fellows drawn into the Skies ;  
While soon they rashly seize the deadly Bait,  
And Lux'ry draws them to their Fellows' Fate.

In 1720 a second edition of Gay's work was published, in a slightly altered form, bound up with some other poems, under the collective title of *Poems on Several Occasions*. In the interval between the two editions the author appears to have given up worm-fishing, and to have devoted himself exclusively to angling with the artificial fly, for the following verse appears for the first time in this edition :—

I never wander where the bord'ring reeds  
O'er look the muddy stream, whose tangling weeds  
Perplex the fisher ; I, nor chuse to bear  
The thievish nightly net, nor barbed spear ;  
Nor drain I ponds the golden carp to take,  
Nor trowle for pikes, dispeoplers of the lake.  
Around the steel no tortur'd worm shall twine,  
No blood of living insect stain my line ;  
Let me less cruel cast the feather'd hook,  
With pliant rod athwart the pebbled brook,  
Silent along the mazy margin stray,  
And with the fur-wrought fly delude the prey.

*A Discourse of Fish and Fish Ponds.* Done by a Person of Honour, 1713, was printed, it appears, from a manuscript in the Bodleian Library, at one time attributed to Sir Richard Steele. In the second edition, 1715, however, the name of the real author, the Hon. Roger North, appears on the title-page. This book is concerned with fish-culture and not with angling, the author's object being to provide fish for the table and not for sport.

In writing *Of the Breeding of Fish*, the author makes an interesting statement concerning the breeding of eels:—

As for Pike, Perch, Tench, Roach, &c., they are observ'd to breed in almost any Waters, and very numerously, only Eels never breed in perfect standing Waters, and without Springs; and in such are neither found, nor increase, but by putting in; but where Springs are, they are never wanting, tho' not put in: And which is most strange of all, no person ever saw in an Eel the least Token of Propagation, either by Melt or Spawn in them; so that whether they breed at all, and how they are produc'd, are questions equally mysterious.

North is very sanguine in regard to the profits attaching to fish culture:—

But we must go further; Ground shall be vastly improv'd by Fish, and shall be intrinsically worth, and yield more this way, than by any other employment you can give it: For suppose it Meadow of £2 per Acre (which is an high Value for the best Meadow far from London) I will justify, that four Acres in Pond shall return you every year 1000

Carps fed up from—to 14 or 15 inches, besides Pike, Pearch, and Tench and other Fry, useful on many accounts, if the Water suits them. The Carps are saleable and will bring perhaps 12d., but in all likelihood not less than 9d., yet let it be 6d. apiece, there is £25, which is £6, 5s. per Acre, a little Charge of Carriage perhaps to be deducted. This is Improvement enough.

A few years later was published *The Whole Art of Fishing*. Being a Collection and Improvement of all that has been written upon this Subject, with many new Experiments, 1714; but I have been unable to find in this book any of the new experiments mentioned.

In the preface the writer admits that it is a collection from earlier works:—

This treatise is a collection of all that has been writ upon the Subject of Fishing digested in a better method than any before extant, and cleansed from all superfluous and useless observations, for very few writers on this head have forbore some favourite Impertinence of their own which they generally stile Curious.

Next may be considered *The Compleat Sportsman*, by Giles Jacob, published in 1718. In this manual of sport, angling is regarded as of secondary importance to the other sports, and is only introduced on the ground that “the Sportsman cannot be compleat without a tollerable Knowledge of Angling.”

After such an introduction, the reader is not disappointed at finding very little original matter in the

book. It is, however, a very well-compiled treatise, and is not a mere verbatim copy of other books.

Walton in the *Compleat Angler* expresses his disapprobation of the trouting methods employed in that county which is now the home of the highest and most scientific form of the Art of Angling. Jacob introduces us to the poaching method of angling, known as "Cross Lining," which he says is alone practised in Hampshire :—

In Hampshire they have a Method of Trout-fishing, no where else practised, but the Largeness of the Rivers seems to make it necessary: Their Way of Fishing there in the Month of May, when the Fly-fishing is at its full height, is thus; two persons, each being furnished with a long Rod, go out together; when they come to the river they propose to fish, they separate one on one Side of the Water, and the other on the other side; then having a strong Hair-line, in Length twice the Breadth of the River, one of the Anglers is to fix one end of it to his Rod, and by fixing a Lead-Plummet to the other End, throw it over to his Companion, who likewise fastens that End to his Rod taking off the Plummet; to this long Line are fixed two short ones with Hooks, the Lines not exceeding two or three Yards in Length, placed about three Parts in four of the Breadth of the River distant from each other, and at equal Distance from each Rod: These two Short Lines thus advantageously fixed, you may at your Pleasure put over to either Side of the River, so as to command any Part of it for fishing, or to land your fish when hung, Bait your Hooks, &c. When you see a Fish rise, and you have not only put to him but hung him, carry him down the Stream to a proper Landing-place, keeping your Line a little upon the

Strain that the Fish may not have too great Liberty to intangle himself in the Weeds : but you are not to keep your Line too much strained when you strike a large Fish, for fear of its breaking. The Fish being carried down to a convenient Place for Landing on either Side of the River, the Angler that receives the Fish, is to retire regularly with his Rod extended from the River, and his Companion on the other Side, is to go to the Water gradually to help over the Fish. And when the Fish is brought near the Shore, the Angler on that Side sticks his Rod carefully in the Ground, and runs to the Water-side and lands his Fish ; then baits his Hook with a fresh Fly, and they proceed.

We have already seen that Venables describes a form of tackle very similar to that to which the name of "Paternoster" is now given ; in *The Compleat Sportsman* this name is assigned to another kind of tackle :—

The Bleak or fresh Water Sprat, may be taken either at Mid-Water or the Top, with a Line called a Paternoster Line (viz.), a Line having six or eight small Hooks tied to single Hair Links, and fixed within half a Foot of each other, and baited with Gentils, your Line having a Float of Quill.

## CHAPTER X

AT the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century appeared *The Compleat Fisherman*, being A large and particular account of all the several ways of Fishing now practised in Europe: With abundance of curious Secrets and Niceties in the Art of Fishing: as well in the Sea as in Lakes, Meers, Ponds, Rivers, or Brooks: whether by Darts, Spears, Harpoons, Nets, Hook and Line, or any other way whatsoever. More particularly calculated for the Sport of Angling. Collected from the best Authors and from the long experience of James Saunders Esqre of Newton Awbery upon the River Trent. London. Printed and Sold by W. Brown in Black Horse Alley, 1724.

This book is the first to mention the use of silk-worm gut. This very valuable angling material is thus described:—

The Swiss and the Milanese, and the inhabitants of the more mountainous parts of Italy are esteemed the greatest Artists at Trout Fishing, perhaps in the World; and it is not unlikely it may be occasioned by the many fine Trout Rivers which they have



among the Alps. These they tell make a fine and exceeding strong Hair or Line, resembling a single Hair which is drawn from the bowels of the Silk Worms, the glutinous substance of which is such, that like the Cats Gut which makes strings for the Viol and Violin, of an unaccountable strength, so this will be so strong, as nothing of so small a Size can equal it in Nature; for it is rather smaller than the single Hair ordinarily used in Fishing, and strong as the cat gut itself; so that with these lines they secure the strongest Fish in those Rivers, where they have some Trout also very large as well as other Fish. I have seen an imitation of these Worm Gut Lines in England, and indifferent strong too, but not like that I have mentioned in Italy; yet these will hold a Fish of a good size too; if he is not too violent, and does not too nimbly harness herself among Weeds and Roots of Trees, where she cannot be pulled out.

*The Compleat Fisherman* is an original and a very practical work; the instructions on fly-fishing, however, are very scanty.

The following method of poaching, described in this book, is fortunately now obsolete:—

In Devonshire I have observ'd how they fish with a Dog, a way I have never met with anywhere else, but it is in one particular Case, which is thus, they make Pallisadoes and cross Stakes at the Tail of a Mill, the cross Pieces are set pointing inwards like a Mouse Trap to one another, and the Points so close together, that when the Tide comes up, the Fish slide insensibly between the Points, but cannot find their way out again when the Tide ebbs again; so that they are left in the Dock of the Mill Tail, where the Sides being walled or wharft with Stone, and the Mill shut down at the higher End, the cross Rails standing

athwart the lower End, and pointing so near to one another as above, the Fish are left within, in about a Foot or Foot and a Half of Water only.

When the Tide is thus out, the Fish which are generally Salmon in the Season, and Salmon Peall when the Salmon Season is over, are all to be seen; then they place a shove Net at the end of a Pole, at the lower end of the Dock or Mill Tail, and turn in a Dog, who is bred to the Trade, at the upper End, and he drives all the Fish into the Net, and so dextrous are they at their business, that if a Fish gets into a little Hole or under a Stone, as if it were unwilling to be driven on to its Ruin, the unlucky Curs will wrock them out with their Feet.

Saunders relates a story of a countryman in Somerset, who found a quantity of small fish in a pool which had been left in a meadow by the subsidence of a recent flood: under the impression that they were gudgeon, he placed a bucketful of them into his master's fish pond. It was after some time discovered, when no fish could be obtained from the pond, that these supposed young gudgeon were small pike, who in the intervening time had consumed all the fish in the pond.

Saunders also describes an elaborate and ingenious way for catching a trout which lies in the middle of the stream. A block of water-soaked or weighted timber is sunk in the middle of the river: in this block there is previously fixed a dull brass or iron pulley. The trout soon takes up his position under the shelter of the piece of wood; then one day, a long piece of line having been previously threaded through

the pulley, a baited hook is attached to the line and drawn to the fish, who readily and unsuspectingly takes it, and is then duly played and landed.

*The Complete Fisherman* was speedily followed by *The Gentleman Angler*. Containing Short Plain and Easy Instructions, whereby the most ignorant Beginner may, in a little Time become a proficient Artist in Angling for Salmon, Salmon-Peal, Trout, &c. . . . By a Gentleman, who has made Angling his diversion for upwards of twenty-eight years. Printed for A. Bettesworth, 1726, with the appropriate motto:—

Si quid novisti rectius istis,  
Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum. Hor.  
(Ep. i., 6, 68).

The author of this work was probably George Smith, who compiled a dictionary of angling published, under the title of *The Angler's Magazine*, in 1754.

An interesting preface commences in these modest terms:—

I may, without vanity affirm, that the following Treatise upon Angling, is the most perfect and compleat of any that has hitherto appeared in print. Other Books are generally so crowded with so many superfluous and unnecessary Accounts of the value which Foreigners set upon some kind of Fish, and with reciting what was the opinion of Antients concerning them that they seem calculated to please men of speculation, rather than to instruct a young

beginner, or to improve him in the Art of Angling. To this may be added that these abound frequently with a description of the various Nets, by which Fish may be taken; how to lay Night lines; how to Snare Fish; with other clandestine methods, by which they may be destroyed: But this is downright Poaching, which has nothing to do with Angling. There is as much difference between an Angler and a Poacher, as between the Fair Trader and the Smugler; and the Legislature were sensible of this, when they made the Practice of one Penal, and laid no restraint upon the other.

Unless the passage quoted below is a libel upon the anglers of the author's generation, novices in the art must then have experienced rather a bad time:—

For most Anglers generally take a Pleasure in deluding young Beginners, and leading them astray, by sending them to such places, as are unfrequented by Fish, and by telling them that such Baits are proper, when they know the contrary.

The chief part of this book is copied from the *Compleat Angler* and other angling works; there are, however, a few original passages.

Walton's directions for making an artificial minnow are given, with the addition of the following mention of a tin minnow:—

Another sort of Artificial Minnow is made of Tin, and painted very naturally, which will be of great service when live minnows cannot be had, and may be bought at the Fish Tackle shops, but they are dear.

The passage quoted below appears to be descriptive of an early form of dry fly-fishing. The dryness of the fly would, of course, depend upon the vigour with which the shaking process was performed, and the efficacy of the method advocated would seem to be more probably due to the floating of the fly than to its shadow having been seen by the fish :—

Then shake your Fly twice or thrice over the Water, that the Shadow of it may be seen before it touches the water, if you suspect a Trout to be there ; the best places are in a deep stream, near a bush or stump, or the piles of a bridge ; let your fly drop easy upon the surface of the water, and if there be a Trout near, he will rise at it eagerly.

The chief places for barbel near London at this time appear to have been Kingston Bridge and Shepperton Pool, “at the latter of which places there is good accommodation for Anglers, a great quantity of Barbel, and good company all the Summer.”

The following extract is complimentary to the fighting qualities of neither the chub nor the Portuguese soldier :—

They are cowardly, inasmuch, that if you once turn them, they are presently dispirited, and you manage them as you please. For this reason some waggish, merry Anglers compare them to Portuguese Soldiers, who have very little inclination to fighting at any time, even tho' the defence of their Country requires them, and if their enemy make a vigorous attack, they immediately turn tail, and it is twenty to one if you can prevail with them, by any means to face about.

The Angler's Song to the tune of "A Begging we will Go," is given, followed by the Laws of Angling, which include the following rather extreme one:—

No Servant shall be question'd for killing a Trespasser, within his master's liberty, who will not yield, if not done out of former malice: yet if the Trespasser kill any such servant it is murder. 21 E. 15.<sup>1</sup>

The appendix to this book is perhaps its most interesting portion, as it appears to be the first treatise written upon rock and sea fishing. In the introduction the author states that "Rock-Fishing has a double Advantage, which Angling cannot pretend to; it is much pleasanter and more healthful." For the rock fisherman is able to protect himself from the heat of the sun by sitting under the canopy of a rock, and he has besides the "Advantage of the circumambient Air of both Land and Sea." Stronger tackle must be used in this branch of the sport; the line ought at least to have five or six hairs in every link.

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps unnecessary to state that such a law as this was never passed. No parliament was sitting in the twenty-first year of the reign of Elizabeth, so no Acts could then have been passed. In the fifth year of the reign of Elizabeth, there was passed, "Cap xxi. An Act for punishing of unlawful taking of fish, deer, and hawks." The penalty herein enacted for these offences, was imprisonment for three months, damages to the person injured, and the finding of sureties "for good bearing" for the space of seven years. This was undoubtedly the Act referred to in the *Gentleman Angler* (See *The Angler's Note Book*, 31st March 1880, p. 97).

A Float is necessary, and two Hooks; one to reach to the Bottom, and the other to keep in Mid-water, and the best Time to follow this Sport is, when the Tide is half spent, and to be continued till within two Hours of High-water; the Morning and Evening are the most preferable Parts of the Day, provided that the Tide shall then happen to favour your Design.

The Baits which are used generally in Rock-fishing are the Cockle, the Lob, and the Marsh Worms; but there is another Sort called the Hairy Worm, which is preferable to all the rest, and is so universally beloved by all the Fish, that you need use no other. Hairy Worms, if full grown, are near four Inches long; they are flat and broad, and resemble an Ear-wig, and are to be found on the Sea-shore, when the Salt-water has left it, especially if the Shore be partly Sand and partly Mud.

The author warns the angler against a little fish, called the miller's thumb, or the cobbler, which takes his hook and then fastens it in the cleft of a rock; if this fish is caught, he is rewarded for the performance of this trick by being set at liberty with a piece of stick thrust through his eyes.

For rock-fishing the angler requires a strong jointed rod, a clearing-ring, a landing-net, a gaff, silks, hooks, lines, wax, etc.

Only four kinds of fish are usually taken by rock-fishing; sea-bream, flounders, whiting-pollock, and rock-whiting:—

The Manner of Sea-fishing as used by Gentlemen for Recreation and Pastime, is when they are upon the Sea either in a Boat or Wherry, or else in a Ship.

When in a Boat, or Wherry, they seldom fish for, or catch, any other than Whiting and Haddock, the former of these is most frequently taken, the latter coming by meer Accident.

The whiting are caught on a Paternoster furnished with half a dozen hooks, baited with hairy-worms; no rod is necessary in this form of fishing. It is of no use to fish for mackerel "except when the Ship lies by, or is becalmed. A Piece of scarlet Cloth hung upon a Hook, is the first Bait that is used, and which never fails of answering the Intent it was designed for. From hence arose this common Saying, A Scarlet Coat is a Maycril-Bait for the Ladies. When you have taken a Maycril, cut a thin Piece off from the Tail, a little above the Fin, and place it upon your Hook."

To the perusal of those Thames fishermen who endeavour to restock the Thames with trout and salmon, and at the same time strictly preserve the pike, I would commend the following extract from a poem "Of Fish," forming part of a book of poems first published in Latin by Jacob Vanière, 1730, and afterwards translated into English by John Duncombe of C. C. C. Cantab. :—

Tho' the rich Pike, to entertain your Guest,  
Smokes on the board and decks a royal Feast;  
Yet must you not this cruel Savage place  
In the same Ponds that lodge the finny Race:  
In the same Tow'r you might as well unite,  
The fearful Pigeons and the rav'nous Kite;  
In the same yard the Fox with Chickens keep,  
Or place the hungry Wolf with harmless Sheep.



The writer of this poem seems to have anticipated the ingenious theory, enunciated by Sir Edward Grey in his charming book on fly-fishing. In describing the efforts of the carp to escape from the nets of the fishermen Duncombe, translating Vanière, writes :—

Now motionless she lies beneath the flood,  
Holds by a weed, or sinks into the mud.

With Sir Edward Grey's theory, that a trout, when hooked, plunges among the weeds and seizes them in its mouth, in order to resist capture, I cannot agree. The fact that a hooked trout instinctively rushes for the shelter of the weeds, with its mouth pulled open by the tension exerted by the angler's line, fully accounts for weeds being occasionally found in its mouth after its capture, especially when the incurved shape of a trout's teeth is taken into consideration.

## CHAPTER XI

IN *The Art of Angling, with the Natural History of River, Pond, and Sea-Fish*, illustrated with 133 Cutts, London, 1740, the name of the author, R. Brookes, does not appear on the title-page, but is appended to the Letter of Dedication.

In dealing with the natural history of the fish, the author acknowledges, in the preface, his indebtedness to Willoughby's *Historia Piscium*.

“As to the Drawings I have little to say, because they were all, except one or two, done by myself: I can only assure the Reader, that the Shape and Proportion of the Fish are carefully preserved, and that the Original Prints were done immediately from the Life.” After viewing the illustrations, it is somewhat difficult to believe this last assertion; the whale for instance is depicted, wearing a complacent smile, with one man standing near his nose, playing the bagpipes, and another man standing near his tail, hacking away at his back with an axe.

“In the Angling Part I had the Assistance of Mr

Chetwood, who is allow'd by all to have great Skill in that innocent Diversion." In reference to this passage Messrs Satchell and Westwood state in the *Bibliotheca Piscatoria*, "Thus disingenuously giving his thanks to Chetham, passages of whose *Vade-Mecum* are copied textually." This statement is absolutely incorrect: the Mr Chetwood referred to is evidently not Chetham, the author of *The Angler's Vade-Mecum*; and that work is not copied from, textually or otherwise.

This book must have been a very popular one, as it ran through more than fourteen editions; it is almost more a work on ichthyology than on angling, and its popularity was possibly due to the number of interesting stories which it contains concerning the habits of both river and sea fish. As a practical angling book, though it is not to be compared with Howlett's *Sure Guide*, it nevertheless contains a considerable amount of original information.

Brookes is, I think, the first author to mention the prawn as a bait for salmon. After describing the mode of using a raw cockle as a salmon bait, he refers as follows to the method of using a prawn:—

The same Day a Brother-Angler caught a Salmon with a Prawn, without so much as using a single Shot to his Line; instead of that he drew his Bait gently over the Hole on the Verge of the Shallow, and at the same time kept out of sight.

Judging from the following passage the floating fly

appears to have been more generally used at this time than the sunk fly :—

It is the usual Practice to Angle for a Trout with a Fly on the top of the Water, and yet the largest are taken by letting it sink five or six Inches under it.

The trout in those days does not appear to have been so highly educated as at the present time :—

You need not be very cautious in the choice of your Flies, for a trout is not difficult, nor very curious about the Season, for I have Angled successfully with an artificial May-Fly in August.

In dealing with the perch, Brookes is the first writer to describe the use of the disgorger :—

As the Perch generally swallows the Bait, and as it is difficult to get the Hook out of his Entrails without breaking the Line, it will be necessary to carry an Instrument in your Pocket which I call a Gorge. It may be made of Iron or Wood, about six Inches long and half an Inch thick, with a Hollow at the Extremity. This hollow End you are to thrust down the Throat of the Fish 'till you feel the Hook, at the same time keeping your Line straight lest the Hook should catch again; when you have disengaged it with this Instrument, you may draw them both out carefully together.

On the strength of a statement in his *Booke of Fishing*, Leonard Mascall is here credited with having been the first to introduce the carp into England :—

Some Authors of note have affirm'd that Carp have been often found in Ponds wherein they were

never known to be put: But in England we have not been so lucky as to find it true, for there were none of this kind of Fish in all the Island before they were brought into it by Leonard Mascall, about a hundred and sixty years ago, as he himself tells us in his Treatise of Fishing.

Green peas are recommended as a bait for carp:—

But I lately discover'd a green Pea to be a Bait inferior to none, if not the best of all; and that I may never be at a loss for one, I cause a sufficient quantity to be half boil'd, and cover'd with melted Butter.

Brookes describes the "rud" and the "red eye" as two different fish; they are of course now recognised as the same fish, the rudd, or red-eye (*Leuciscus erythrophthalmus*).

In referring to the prevailing ignorance of the method of generation of the eel, Brookes states that he was "assur'd by a Fisherman of Mortlack, that he had seen Spawn in the Belly of one sticking to the Outside of the Guts two or three times, and that it was like the Spawn of the Barbel, and about the Size of a common Marble; which, if true, it is very surprising that it should have escap'd the diligent Enquiries of all Writers, ancient and modern. However, he is now living, and ready to make affidavit of the Truth of the Assertion."

Eighty-six varieties of sea-fish, including whales, turtles, crabs, lobsters, cockles, etc., are illustrated and described, and the book concludes with an interesting

“ Account of the Navigation of the River Thames, and the Locks that are built thereon ” :—

After what has been said of the Rivers of England, perhaps the inquisitive Reader will not be displeas'd, to know in what Manner Barges of a large Burden are navigated into the very Heart of the Kingdom ; especially since it is an Invention so useful to the Publick : For by this Means Tradesmen and Farmers are enabled to send their Goods to an advantageous Market, and at the same time the most populous Cities are supplied with Necessaries of all Sorts at a moderate Price. To explain this we need only mention the River Thames, which is navigable upwards of 140 Miles above London-Bridge.

It is very obvious to all, that the principle Obstruction to the Navigation of most Rivers is the Want of Water, especially in the Summer-time, when the Springs are low. Now, in order to remedy this Inconvenience, the Use of Locks was happily invented, which are a kind of Wooden Machine placed quite across the River, and so contriv'd as totally to obstruct the Current of the Stream, and dam up the Water as long as it shall be thought convenient.

By this Artifice the River is compelled to rise to a proper Height, that is, till there is Depth enough for the Barge to pass over the Shallows ; which done, the confined Waters are set at liberty, and the loaded Vessel continues its Voyage till another Shoal requires the same Contrivance, and again retards its course. But though this Method is extremely convenient, it is attended with great Charge ; for they are oblig'd to pay, in one Voyage, upwards of Fourteen Pounds ; I mean, if they go through all the Locks in their Passage to or from London. This extraordinary Expense is chiefly owing to the Locks being the Property of private Persons, who raise a large annual Income therefrom ; which may be

readily estimated, if we consider that 300 Barges pass and repass at least six Times in a Year: And yet, which is still more surprising, the charge of the Locks is not above one Third of the Expence of a single Voyage.

But that the Reader may have a clearer Notion of this Matter, I shall subjoin a List of all the Locks on the River Thames, with their Distance from each other, and the Price the Barges are obliged to pay: And herein it must be noted, that tho' between Lechlade and Oxford there are few or no Locks, yet in Summer, when the Water is low, they pay what is here set down for Flashes only.

From the list given it appears that Sutton, for which a charge of £1, 15s. was made, was the most expensive lock on the river.

The above extracts were all taken from the first edition of Brookes' *Art of Angling*. The subsequent editions were considerably enlarged, and particulars were added of record catches and large fish.

In the fourth edition a perfumer, by name Warren, is said to have caught in Walton Deeps, on 23rd August 1771, 280 lbs. of barbel before noon, when he stopped, overcome with fatigue. On another occasion the same fisherman caught 83 chub, the smallest 2 lbs. and the largest 6 lbs. in weight, in one morning. Mr Warren used to ground bait over night with worms, and use a perfumed hook bait the next morning, a form of "cross-baiting" which is strongly condemned nowadays.

Two pike are said to have been taken at spawning time from a ditch near Wallingford, the male fish

weighing 51 lbs. and the female 57 lbs. These fish still hold the Thames record, and are likely to do so—a record which I am afraid most anglers will regard with incredulity. The next largest Thames pike recorded is the one mentioned in Daniel's *Rural Sports*; this fish must have weighed when first taken from the water about 41 lbs. It was caught by a Mr Bishop, of Godstow, "between Weir (Kings Weir?) and Whytham Brook." "It was 4 feet 2 inches long, 2 feet 10 in girth, and after being disgorged of a Barbel nearly six, and a Chub upwards of three pounds, weighed thirty-one pounds and a half." Dr Plot in the second edition of *The Natural History of Oxfordshire*, 1705, states the result of two days' netting to show the number of pike and coarse fish in the Thames in former times:—

Yet in the Year 1674, it gave so ample Testimony of its great Plenty, that in two Days appointed for the Fishing of Mr Mayor and the Bayliffs of the City, it afforded betwixt Swithin's-Wear, and Woolvercot-bridge (which I guess may be about three Miles Distant) 3000 Jacks, beside other Fish.

To return to Brookes' *Art of Angling*. As an illustration of the voracity of the Pike, this book records the disappointment experienced by a certain Mr Lee, who on drawing a pond, which he had some time previously stocked, found a solitary "large lean Pike, which had devoured all the store Fish, and had in his Stomach, a Water-Wag Tail and a young Throstle."



*The British Angler*, by John Williamson, Gent., published in 1740, affords one of the most disgraceful examples of plagiarism which can be found even in angling literature. In spite of this the author has the impudence to state in his preface :—

As I had resolved therefore to give the Public a new Treatise on this Subject, which I knew was very much wanted, and not likely, as I could hear, to be undertaken by any abler Hand, it was my Business to consider what Methods I should take to avoid the Imputation so generally thrown on others, and compose a Work that should have in fact what it promised, an Air of Novelty.

The works chiefly stolen from are those of Walton and Chetham. Whole chapters are taken verbatim, except for the alteration of a word here and there, from the latter author, and of course without the slightest acknowledgment. I append a passage from Chetham's *Vade-Mecum*, and another from the *British Angler* to illustrate the extent of the alteration made in the latter work :—

Next follow Ointments and Receipts, which I have read and been informed of, by several Anglers, and are practised for the better furtherance of this Sport ; and some have such confidence, that they affirm they'll not only allure, but even compel Fish to bite. Part of the following Receipts I have Experienced, and though I found them in some measure advantageous to my Recreation, yet far from so high a degree, as has been pretended to me : &c. (Chetham's *Vade-Mecum*).

As to Ointments and Unguents, many ingenious

Anglers esteem them so, for the effectual Furtherance of this Sport, that they affirm they will not only allure but even compel Fish to bite. For my own Part, I honestly confess, that though I have found them in some measure advantageous to my Recreation, yet far from so high a Degree, as has been pretended, &c. (*British Angler*).

With similar alterations the first six chapters of Chetham's book form the first six chapters of Williamson's. Portions of the *Compleat Angler* are stolen in a similar wholesale manner.

*The Art of Preserving Health*: A Poem. In four books. Published in 1744; 2nd edition, 1745. By John Armstrong, M.D., is generally included in lists of angling books, but the following extract from Book III., "On Exercise," is the only reference to angling which it contains:—

But if the breathless chase o'er hill and dale  
 Exceed your strength ; a sport of less fatigue,  
 Not less delightful, the prolific stream  
 Affords. The crystal rivulet, that o'er  
 A strong channel rolls its rapid maze,  
 Swarms with the silver fry. Such, thro' the bounds  
 Of pastoral Stafford, runs the brawling Trent ;  
 Such Eden, sprung from Cambrian mountains ; such  
 The Esk o'erhung with woods ; and such the stream  
 On whose Arcadian banks I first drew air,  
 Liddal ; till now, except in Doric lays  
 Tun'd to her murmurs by her love-sick swains,  
 Unknown in song : Tho' not a purer stream,  
 Thro' meads more flow'ry, or more romantic groves,  
 Rolls toward the Western main. Hail sacred flood !  
 May still thy hospitable swains be blest  
 In rural innocence ; thy mountains still  
 Teem with the fleecy race ; thy homeful woods

For ever flourish ; and thy vales look gay  
With painted meadows, and the golden grain !  
Oft, with thy blooming song when life was new,  
Sportive and petulant, and charm'd with toys,  
In thy transparent eddies have I laved :  
Oft tried with patient steps thy fairy banks,  
With the well-imitated fly to hook  
The eager trout, and with the slender line  
And yielding rod sollicite to the shore  
The struggling panting prey ; while vernal clouds  
And tepid gales obscur'd the ruffled pool,  
And from the deeps call'd forth the wanton swarms.

## CHAPTER XII

TO the title-page of *The Art of Angling improved in all its parts, especially Fly-Fishing*. By Richard Bowlker. Worcester, Printed by M. Oliver in High St., no date is affixed, but in the copy in the Bodleian Library, the date 1747 is written on the title-page, and this date is inserted, in brackets, in the library Catalogue.

With the exception of the two passages quoted below, the fly-fishing portion is the only part of the book of much interest.

After rejecting the notion that eels are bred by the action of the Sun's rays on the dew, which falls in May and June by the river's side, or that they breed "out of the Corruption of their own Age," the author gives the following observation to prove that eels are viviparous:—

Being acquainted with an elderly woman who had been wife to a miller near fifty years, and much employ'd in the dressing of Eels, I ask'd her if she had ever found any Spawn or Eggs in those Eels

she had open'd, and she said, she had never observ'd any, but that she sometimes found living Eels in them about the Bigness of a small Needle, and particularly that she once took out ten or twelve and put them on the Table and found them to be alive, which was confirm'd to me by the rest of the Family: the Time of Year when this happen'd was (as they inform'd me) about a fortnight or three weeks after Michaelmas, which makes me of Opinion that they go down to the Sea or Salt-Water to prepare themselves for the work of propagation, and producing their Young. To this I must add another Observation of the same Nature that was made by a Gentleman of Fortune not far from Ludlow and in the Commission of the Peace for the County of Salop. Who going to visit a Gentleman his Friend, was shown a very fine large Eel that was going to be dress'd, about whose Sides and Belly he observ'd a Parcell of little creeping Things, which at first made him suspect it had been kept too long, but upon nearer inspection they were found to be perfect little Eels or Elvers. Upon this it was immediately open'd in the sight of several other Gentlemen, and in the Belly of it they found a Lump about as big as a Nutmeg consisting of an infinite Number of those little Creatures closely wrapt up together, which being put into a Basin of Water, they soon separated themselves and swam about the Basin: This he has often told to several Gentlemen of Credit, in his Neighbourhood, from some of whom I first receiv'd this Account, but I have lately had the Satisfaction of having it from his own Mouth; and therefore I think this may serve to put the matter out of all doubt, and may be sufficient to prove that Eels are of the Viviparous kind.

These supposed little eels or elvers were of course

parasitic worms, which are now known to frequently exist in the serous cavities and in the intestines of eels.

The following story is to be found quoted in many angling books to show the voracity of the pike :—

My Father catcht a Pike in Barn Meer (a large standing Water in Cheshire) was an Ell long, and weigh'd thirty-five pounds, which he brought to Lord Cholmondley ; His Lordship ordered it to be turn'd into a Canal in the Garden, wherein were abundance of several Sorts of Fish ; about 12 months after his Lordship draw'd the Canal and found that this overgrown Pike had devour'd all the Fish, except one large Carp that weighed between nine and ten Pounds, and that was bitten in several places ; the Pike was then put into the Canal again together with abundance of Fish with him to feed upon, all which he devoured in less than a Year's time, and was observ'd by the Gardiner and Workmen there to take the Ducks and other Water-Fowl under Water ; whereupon they shot Magpies and Crows and throw'd them into the Canal, which the Pike took before their Eyes ; of this they acquainted their Lord, who thereupon order'd the Slaughterman to fling Calf's-bellies, Chickens-guts, and such like Garbage to him to prey upon, but being soon after neglected he dyed, as suppos'd from want of Food.

The art of fly-fishing is very briefly dealt with in this book, but the natural history of the flies and the methods of imitating them are more fully described than in any preceding work, and several new flies are also mentioned for the first time.

Two lists of flies are given :—

*Of the several Sorts of Flies, and their Seasons.*

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. The Red Fly.                          | 15. Grey Drake.           |
| 2. Blue Dun Fly.                         | 16. Orf Fly.              |
| 3. Brown Fly.                            | 17. Sky-coloured Blue.    |
| 4. Cowdung Fly.                          | 18. Cadis Fly.            |
| 5. Stone Fly.                            | 19. Fern Fly.             |
| 6. Granam Fly.                           | 20. Red Spinner.          |
| 7. Spider or Gravel Fly.                 | 21. Blue Gnat.            |
| 8. Black Gnat.                           | 22. Large Red Ant.        |
| 9. Black Caterpillar or<br>Hawthorn Fly. | 23. Large Black Ant.      |
| 10. Iron-blue Fly.                       | 24. Welshman's Button.    |
| 11. Sally Fly.                           | 25. Little Red Ant.       |
| 12. Canon or Down-hill<br>Fly.           | 26. Little Black Ant.     |
| 13. Shorn Fly.                           | 27. Little Whirling Blue. |
| 14. Green Drake.                         | 28. Little Pale Blue.     |
|  | 29. Willow Fly.           |

These are all very tempting and certain Flyes which the Angler may depend upon for Sport and which I shall presently describe in their Seasons. There are many other Flies taken Notice of in Treatises of Angling which may possibly be of use in some Rivers, the principal of which I shall just mention for the Curiosity of my Brother Anglers, but I never think it worth while to make any of them Artificially.

- |                      |                               |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. The Dun Fly.      | 11. Prime Dun Fly.            |
| 2. Ruddy Fly.        | 12. Black May Palmer<br>Worm. |
| 3. Black Fly.        | 13. Calmet Fly.               |
| 4. Sandy-yellow Fly. | 14. Oak Fly.                  |
| 5. Moorish Fly.      | 15. Owl Fly.                  |
| 6. Twine Fly.        | 16. Brown Gnat.               |
| 7. Wasp Fly.         | 17. Green Flesh Fly.          |
| 8. Shell Fly.        | 18. Harry Long Legs.          |
| 9. Dark Drake Fly.   | 19. Badger Fly.               |
| 10. Dark Brown Fly.  |                               |

It is now the general opinion that trout are in the best condition during and immediately after the May-fly season. Bowlker considered that they were best before they had gorged themselves with that fly, as it made their bellies thin and their flesh flabby.

Bowlker fully describes in turn each of the flies included in his list of most useful flies. I append below his description of the blue dun, the granam, and the red spinner:—

*The Blue Dun Fly* comes down in the beginning of March, and will kill Fish in the forenoon till the middle of April: He is made of a Blue Duck's Feather or Starling's wing with a blue Cock's hackle, the Dubbing yellow Mohair mixed with the blue Furr of a Fox: As he swims down the Water, his Wings stand upright on his Back: His tail is forked, and of the colour of his Wing: He comes down about ten o'clock and continues till twelve in great quantities: He is always thick on the Water in Cloudy, Gloomy Days.

*The Granam Fly, or Green Tail* comes down about a Week in April, if the Weather be mild; they appear upon the Water in great quantities in Bright Mornings; but in cold stormy Days there are few of them to be seen: Then is the time to use the Brown Fly. This Granam Fly is a tender Fly and not able to endure the Cold. The time of its continuance on the Water is not above a Week or ten Days. This fly is made of a Feather out of the Wings of a Pheasant, which is full of fine Shades as the Wing of the Fly is, which lye flat on his Back as he swims down the water: His Body is made of the black part of Hare's Furr, with a Peacock's harl over it, and the grizzled Hackle of a Cock wrap'd twice round under the butt of the Wings.



Some frequently make this Fly with a Green Tail, which I could never find to be of any Service. The Green Tail Fly is the female, which as soon as it lights on the Water looses its Tail. I take this to be the Egg of the Fly, for I have caught two of them which have been tyed together which I put into a Box for 24 Hours, and upon opening the Box I found they were parted, and that one of 'em had a small lump of Green at its Tail about the biggness of a Pin's head: This I kept 12 Hours longer, when the Green part came from it like an Egg, which induces me to think that this is the Female Fly, and I presume that most other Flyes breed after the same Manner.

*The Red Spinner* comes down the beginning of July, and continues till the middle of the same Month: He is to be fish'd with only in the Evenings of very hot Days. His Wings are made of a Grey Drake's Feather lightly ting'd with a yellow Gloss: His Body is made of Gold Twist, with a red hackle over it.

It is evident that Bowlker was not merely an angler, but also a keen and observant naturalist. He relates the following interesting observations on the life history of the May-fly:—

It has been an opinion generally receiv'd among my Brother Anglers that the May Fly proceeds from the Cod-bait but I find by experience that this is a very great mistake. For the Cod-bait produces a very different Fly, call'd the Cadis or Cod-bait Fly, which I shall presently have occasion to describe: And I have lately had an opportunity of convincing some Gentlemen very curious in the Art, who were of that opinion till they had the satisfaction of seeing the Cadis Flyes produced from Cod-baits, which I

sent for that purpose about the time of their change. The May Fly while in Embrio, is inclos'd in a longer and much smaller Husk, which is sharp and pointed at one end like a Cock's Spur.

Since I entered upon this Work, the following ingenious account of this Fly has been communicated to me by a Gentleman who is a very accurate observer upon nature's productions, which as it may be a matter of Curiosity and Entertainment to some of my Readers I shall here give them as briefly and as near his own Words as I can. I happen'd to Walk by the River side, at that Season of the Year, when the May Flyes (he means the Grey sort) which are a species of the Libella, come up out of the Water, where they lie in their husks for a considerable time at the Bottom or Sides of the River, near the likeness of the Nymph of the small common Libella: but when it splits open its Case, and then with great Agility up springs the new little Animal with a slender Body, four blackish Vein'd transparent Wings, with four black Spots upon the Upper Wings, and the under Wings much smaller than the upper ones, with three long Hairs in its Tail. The Husks which are left behind float innumerably upon the Water. It seemed to be a Species of Ephemeron, and I imagined it was the same Insect describ'd by Goodhart and Swammerdam, but a few Days convinc'd me to the contrary; for I soon found them to be of longer duration than theirs. The first business of this creature (after he is disengaged from the Water) is flying about to find a proper place to fix on (as Trees, Bushes, &c.), to wait for another surprising change which is effected in two or three Days. The first hint I receiv'd of this wonderful Operation was, seeing their Exuvix hanging on a Hedge; I then collected a great many and put them in Boxes, and by strictly observing them I could tell when they were ready to put off their Cloaths, tho' put so lately

on. I had the pleasure to shew my Friends one that I held on my Finger during the time it perform'd this great work. It was surprising to see how easily the back part of the Fly split open and produced the new Birth, which I could not perceive to partake of anything from its Parent, but leaves Head, Body, Wings, Legs, and even its three hair'd Tail behind on the Case. After it has reposed itself a while it Flyes with great briskness to seek its Mate. In the new Fly a remarkable difference is seen in their Sexes, which I could not so easily perceive in their first State, the Male and Female being then much of a size, but now the Male was much the smallest, and the Hairs in his Tail much the longest. I was very careful to see if I could find them engendering, but all that I could discover was that the Males separated and kept under the cover of the Trees, remote from the River. Hither the Females resorted and mixed with them in their flight (great Numbers together) with a very brisk motion of darting or striking at one another when they met with great Vigour, just as House Flyes do in a Sunny Room: This they continued to do for many Hours, and this seem'd to be their way of Coition, which must be quick and soon perform'd as they are of so short duration. When the Females were impregnated, they left the Company of the Males and sought the River, and kept constantly playing up and down on the Water; it was very plainly seen every time they darted down they Ejected a Cluster of Eggs, which seemed a pale bluish Speck, like a small drop of Milk, as they descended on the Water; then by the help of their Tail they spring up again, and descend again; thus continuing till they have exhausted their stock of Eggs, and spent their Strength, being so weak that they can rise no more but fall a prey to the Fish, but by far the greatest numbers perish on the Waters, which are cover'd

with them. This is the end of the Females, but the Males never resort to the River, as I could perceive, but after they have done their Office, drop down, languish and die under the Trees, and Bushes. I observ'd that the Females were most numerous, which was very necessary, considering the many enemies they have, during the short time of their appearance; for Birds and Fish are very fond of them, and no doubt under the Water they are a food for small Aquatick Insects. What is further remarkable in this surprising Creature is, that in a life of a few Days, it eats nothing, seems to have no apparatus for that purpose, but brings up with it out of the Water sufficient support to enable it to shed its Skin, and perform the principle end of life with great Vivacity. The particular time when I observ'd them very numerous and sportive, was on the 26th of May, at 6 o'Clock in the Evening. It was a sight very surprising and entertaining too, the Rivers teeming with innumerable pretty nimble flying Insects, and almost every thing near cover'd with them: When I looked up into the Air it was full of them, as high as I could discern, and being so thick and always in motion, they made almost such an Appearance as when one looks up and sees the Snow coming down; and yet this wonderful Appearance, in three or four Days after the last of May, totally disappear'd.

The Goodhart referred to above is probably Gaedaert, who appended to his *Historical Observations* a "particular narration" on the May-fly by a writer with the appropriate name of D. de Mey. Swammerdam was the author of *Ephemeris Vita*; or the natural history and anatomy of the Ephemeron, a fly that lives but five hours. This book was pub-

lished in "Low-Dutch," by Jo. Swammerdam, M.D., of Amsterdam, in 1675, and was translated into English by a friend of Dr Tyson in 1681.

This monograph on the May-fly consists of 44 quarto pages, and 8 plates, illustrating the fly and the larva, are inserted at the end of the work. With the exception of the description of the method of generation of the flies and the duration of their existence, the account given is interesting, exhaustive, and for the most part accurate.

Swammerdam confesses that he does not know how long it is before the larva hatches out of the egg, but suggests that by keeping some of the eggs "in a vessel with water and clay, some knowledge thereof might be obtained"; Mr Halford, who has conducted this experiment, found that the eggs hatched out in a little less than ten weeks. The larvæ belong to the class known as digging larvæ, and as soon as they are hatched they bury themselves in the bed of the river; it is not known for certain how long they remain in the larval condition, but it is certainly two, and possibly three years. Swammerdam states that they remain three years in this stage of their existence, that a larva one-year-old is  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a Holland inch in length, a two-year-old is  $1\frac{2}{3}$  inch long, the wing cases having then appeared, a three-year-old larva is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  Holland inches in length, and the wing cases are more plainly seen.

It is interesting to compare Mr Halford's account of the metamorphosis of the nymph (a larva is called

a nymph when the rudiments of the wings have appeared) into the sub-imago, with that given by Bowlker. When this change is ready to take place, the nymph "swims upwards through the water, and, if it has calculated its movements accurately, arrives at the surface just before the metamorphosis. Its entire body is inflated, and the external integument distended, until at length it splits along the back of the thorax. First the thorax, then the head, is pushed out through this slit in the outer skin. Then the legs are disengaged, and next, just before the abdomen and setæ are quite free, the wings, one at a time, are withdrawn from their covers and quickly unfolded. The winged insect supports itself on the cast nymphal skin or on the water until its wings are dry, and then flies ashore to seek the friendly shelter of grass, rushes, sedges, or even trees" (*Dry Fly Entomology*, Halford, 1897).

In the sub-imago stage, the fly is enveloped in a thin membrane or skin, which has to be cast off before it becomes a perfect or fully developed fly—the imago. The metamorphosis from the sub-imago to the imago is effected by casting off the skin by a process very similar to that by which the larva casts off its shuck, when changing to the sub-imago.

The fly is now known to live longer than its formerly allotted span of five hours. Mr Halford has kept them alive for five or six days.

In 1774, a second edition of Bowlker's *Art of Angling* appeared, edited by Charles Bowlker, the

son of Richard Bowlker, under the title of *The Art of Angling, and Compleat Fly-Fisher*.

According to the *Bibliotheca Piscatoria*, Charles Bowlker died at Ludlow on 31st December 1779; "he was considered the most finished fly-fisher of his day."

The second edition of this work is certainly not as interesting as the first; it contains no new original matter, but a collection of "Miscellaneous Secrets," collected from other works, together with the "Laws of Angling," is inserted at the end of the book. Richard's statement in proof of the theory of the viviparous generation of eels, his observations to show that the May-fly does not come from the cod-bait, and his account of the Barn Meer pike are all omitted.

Other editions of this book appeared in 1780, 1786, 1788, 1792, 1820, etc.

To the earlier editions of *The Complete Angler*, by Mr T. Fairfax, no date is affixed; the *Bibliotheca Piscatoria* assigns to the first edition a date about 1760. The copy, however, from which the following extracts were taken, cannot have been issued before 1771, for it contains an advertisement of a poem, *The Debauchee*, which was published in that year.

This book is almost entirely a compilation from far earlier works, so that the exact date of its publication is not of much importance.

The following "Choice Receipt," "never before made publick," tends to show that fishermen and carp

are differently affected by the indulgence in too much alcohol over-night :—

Over-night mix bean-flower with a little honey, wet it with rectify'd spirits of wine, and a little oil of turpentine, make it up into little pellets, and such fish as nibble it, when thrown in, will be stupified, so that in the morning coming to themselves a little, they will bite very eagerly, as being after their drunken fit, exceeding hungry.

Among *A Collection of Scarce, Curious, and Valuable Pieces*, collected by W. Ruddiman, from "the fugitive Productions of the most eminent Wits of the present Age," and published by him in 1773, there is included "The Art of Angling in Eight Dialogues," written in verse.

Ruddiman apologetically attributes the appearance of the book in verse, instead of in prose, solely to the vanity of the author, whose expression seemed "to savour so of vanity, that I thereupon left him to enjoy his self-sufficiency."

The preface concludes with the statement that no expense has been spared in the preparation of the work, and that a set of notes has been added by sundry learned and ingenious men, retained in the constant pay of the bookseller. Among these learned paid retainers Moses Browne again appears.

Neither the verses nor the notes are of sufficient interest or merit to deserve further notice.

Appended, somewhat suggestively, to this poem on *The Art of Angling* is "An Introduction to the Art of



Lying . . . being A Work universally useful and entertaining to all Persons, in all Degrees and Stations of Life, of what Denomination soever."

Ever since Pliny described the esox "as a river fish, which attained the weight of a thousand pounds," *Esox lucius* has been the fish most favoured in angling romance. The following extract from *The Field* is a good example of a modern pike story.

A tame duck was seen to disappear from the surface of Lough Sheelan; forthwith a barrel, armed with a spoon-bait and two Phantom spinners, was set adrift on the lake. "The fish took the spoon, battled with the barrel for an hour and twenty minutes, and was then landed." The pike weighed 53 lbs. 11 oz., and measured 4 feet  $5\frac{3}{4}$  inches in length, and  $29\frac{1}{2}$  inches in maximum girth (*The Field*, 7th September 1901). The substitution of a barrel, with which the gigantic pike battles for an hour and twenty minutes, in place of the large circular cork, usually attached to trimmers, affords to this story a charming sense of proportion.

In 1801, according to Mr Haslewood (*Censura Literaria*), the following "good pike story" appeared in a newspaper:—

A party angling at Sunbury, one of them sat across the head of the Boat, as a punishment inflicted on him for wearing his Spurs. Another having caught a Gudgeon, stuck it on one of the Spurs, which he not perceiving, in about a few minutes a large Jack bit at

the Gudgeon, and the Spur being crane-necked, entangled in the gills of the Jack, which, in attempting to extricate itself, actually pulled the unfortunate person out of the Boat. He was with difficulty dragged on Shore, and the Fish taken, which was of a prodigious Size.

It is, perhaps, hardly to be wondered at, that the author of this treatise on *The Art of Lying* should have chosen a pike story to help illustrate one of the forms of lying :—

My next general rule is the Recitative : A rule of singular use to an unfertile invention ; it requires no great skill to become master of it, and extends only to the marvellous. It is of great use to coffee-house politicians, and news mongers in general, and chiefly depends upon enumeration : it is indeed a sort of branch to the ambiguous. . . . I have known it practised with success by a friend of mine frequently, who has laughed, and been heartily laughed at, for the fruitfulness of his imagination. If you tell a story which happened in one county, he immediately repeats the same, with a trifling variation, that happened in another. If you carry it to the possible, he extends it to the probable ; if you sink it to the improbable, he lowers it to the impossible ; in short it is the art of refining epitomised. Example : One said he saw a pike in a small pond in Kent, weighing 40 pounds, and that one of 30 pounds was taken out of its belly. My friend immediately replied, That was nothing ; he had seen in Wiltshire one of 50 pounds weight, and a pike of 40 pounds taken out of its belly ; and not only that, says he, but another entire pike was taken out of the belly of it, which weighed 27 pounds and a half. This was between the probable and possible. The gentleman, finding himself outdone, replied, It was strange, but yet he

had heard something beyond that; he had a friend of his in Northamptonshire, who stopped at a little public house, and called for a bottle of ale; it was set on the table, and, being ripe, forced out the cork, which went through the ceiling and roof of the house, and hit a small bird which was that instant flying along; the bird dropped perpendicularly down into the bottle, the cork followed plump into the neck again, stopped the bottle and drowned the bird. My friend very gravely replied, that was nothing; for he had heard his father say, that, by such an accident in Wiltshire, he caught a covey of partridges, consisting of eight brace and a half of birds, and at one blow, with this addition only, that it was a two quart bottle they fell into, &c.

*The Art of Lying* is certainly not among the lost anglers' arts. We still meet with frequent examples of the "recitative" lie. I have generally noticed that the probability of these lies varies in an inverse ratio to the distance of the scene of their alleged occurrence from the place of their narration.

I am told that Tarpon-fishing lends itself with peculiar facility to the exercise of this Art. I am, however, unacquainted with any Tarpon anglers, and am therefore unable personally to vouch for their skill with the Long Bow. The "tallest" stories which I have heard have come from Norway.

*The Angler's Museum; or, the Whole Art of Float and Fly Fishing.* By Thomas Shirley, is another unoriginal work. It appears to have been chiefly compiled from Bowlker's *Art of Angling*. The frontispiece is a portrait of the famous fisher-

man, John Kirby, and the date, 1784, appears on this frontispiece, but to the title-page no date is affixed.

The following advice, which is given in this book to young anglers, was probably the result of personal experiment, and was doubtless only too readily followed by old as well as young anglers:—

If at any time you happen to be overheated with walking, or other exercise, avoid small liquors, especially water, as you would poison; but rather take a glass of rum or brandy, the instantaneous effects whereof, in cooling the body, and quenching drought are amazing.

*A Concise Treatise on the Art of Angling. . . .* By Thomas Best, Gent. Late of his Majesty's Drawing Room in the Tower, London, appeared in 1787. Thirteen editions of this work were published; to the tenth and eleventh editions the greater part of Nobbes' *Compleat Troller* was added.

This book, though it contains nothing strikingly original, is a thoroughly practical treatise on the art of angling; in the preface the author honestly admits that he has added "compilations from the best authors who have written on that subject," and that the list of flies in the second part he was indebted "to the ingenious Mr Cotton for, the best fly-fisher that ever was, nor do I believe that there will ever be another *nec simile aut secundum*. His flies, with some little deviation, I have been equally successful with as well in southern as northern rivers;

and therefore they may be truly deemed, the standard for artificial Fly-Fishing.”

I have always considered that live baiting for pike was a pot-hunting and unsportsmanlike method of fishing. I was therefore pleased to find that Best apparently shared this view:—

I shall now communicate to the reader, a method which I have taken more pikes and Jacks with, than any other way. The hook which you must use, is to be the first hook that I have mentioned, with this exception only, that the lead of a conical figure must be taken away, then before you fix the swivel on the bottom of the line, put on a cork-float that will swim a gudgeon, then put on your swivel, and fix your hook and gimp to it: put a swan shot on your gimp, to make your float cock a little, and of such a weight, that when the hook is baited with the gudgeon it may do so properly. Your gudgeons must be kept alive in a tin kettle: take one, and stick the hook either through his upper lip, or back fin, and throw him into the likely haunts before mentioned, swimming at mid-water. When the pike takes it, let him run a little, as at the snap, and then strike him. In this method of pike fishing, you may take three kinds of fish, viz. pikes, perch and chubs. It is so murdering a way that the generous angler should never use it, except he wants a few fish to present his friends with.

The second part of the book has a separate title-page, *The Compleat Fly-Fisher; or, Every Man His Own Fly Maker. . . .*

In the introductory chapter to this second part the author writes:—

Because the same flies differ very much both in

colour and size in different counties: therefore I would advise him to pursue a plan, that he will find very agreeable and pleasant, and very much increase his pastime; which is to make a selection of the natural flies he means to imitate, for artificial fly fishing, in the different counties he angles in, and put them into a glass case for preservation; by which means, he will always be able to suit the fly for the water he fishes in; and likewise let him take the exact time, that each fly kills best in, as the same will be taken much sooner, or later, on one river, than another; nay, even the fly which was taken on its peculiar water one year in April, will perhaps not be on the next, till the middle of May: according to the backwardness or forwardness of the season.

I believe that this is the first angling treatise to refer to the use of the multiplying winch: "Your fly line should be about thirty yards long, and wound on a small brass multiplying winch which is to be placed on the butt of your rod." From the way in which the winch is referred to, without any description, it is probable that it had then been in use for some time and was not a new and unknown form of tackle: in this connection the following note from Mr Marston's book, *Walton and the Earlier Fishing Writers*, is of interest. In the note referred to, Mr Marston states that he is able "to correct an American angling writer, Mr A. Nelson Cheney, who, in one of his pleasant angling notes, in *Forest and Stream*, January 1893, claims that the multiplier reel was invented in America about the year 1820. In

this 1807 edition of Daniel's *Rural Sports*, not the first edition of the work, there is a fine engraving of a brass multiplying reel. I have no doubt multiplying reels were in use much earlier than this. In 1770 Onesimus Ustonson advertised that he sold 'the best sort of multiplying brass winches, both stop and plain.'"

In the second chapter of this part there is: "A List of the Materials necessary for an Angler to have, and the best Method to make the Palmer and May fly," with a very full description of both.

In the third chapter the necessary dressing for the different flies is described, and in many cases a note, in italics, is added, stating the relative killing powers of the different flies, and also at what time of the day they are best taken. For instance the blue dun, in March, is said to be "a great killer, and is taken from eight to eleven and from one to three." The black May-fly is "A good killer, but not to be compared with the Green Drake, or Stone Fly." The grey drake is "A very killing fly, especially towards an evening, when the fish are glutted with the green drake."

Nowadays a floating dry fly is found to be best adapted to slow-running or still waters, and the wet fly to rapid, broken streams. Best seems to recommend a contrary practice:—

When you angle in slow running rivers, or still places with an artificial fly, cast it across the water,

and let it sink a little in the water, and then draw it gently over to you again, letting the current carry it slowly down; this is the best way for slow waters, but for quick ones, your fly must always swim on the top, under the continual inspection of your eyes, which ought for this kind of angling to be as sharp as the basilisk's.

Best concludes his book with some interesting notes on the Thames:—

But let me return to the Thames, of which, and the rivers, that fall into it, I shall treat somewhat particularly, as they are more the seat for the diversion of angling than any others. The higher an angler goes up the Thames, if within about forty miles, the more sport, and the greater variety of fish he will meet with; but as few Londoners go so far from home, I shall mention the best places for Thames angling from London Bridge to Chelsea.

If the air is cold and raw, the wind high, the water rough, or if the weather is wet, it is totally useless to angle in the Thames.

The best places for pitching a boat for angling in the Thames, are about one hundred and fifty yards from York Stairs; the Savoy, Somerset-House, Dorset Stairs, Black-Friars Stairs; the Dung-Warf near Water-Lane, Trig Stairs and Essex Stairs. On Surrey side, Falcon Stairs; Barge Houses; Cuper's vulgo Cupids Stairs; the Windmill and Lambeth.

At and about Windsor is a vast variety of all sorts of fish; but if a man be found angling in another's water, (without leave) he is fined very high by the court of that town, if he only catches a single gudgeon, &c.

Uxbridge-river, excellent for its large and fat trouts; but as the water is rented, not only leave must be obtained to angle in it; but you must pay



so much a pound for what you kill. Denham, near Uxbridge, is a very famous place.

This is the last angling work of any importance published in the eighteenth century, and with it we pass from the realm of the ancient angling authors.

FINIS.



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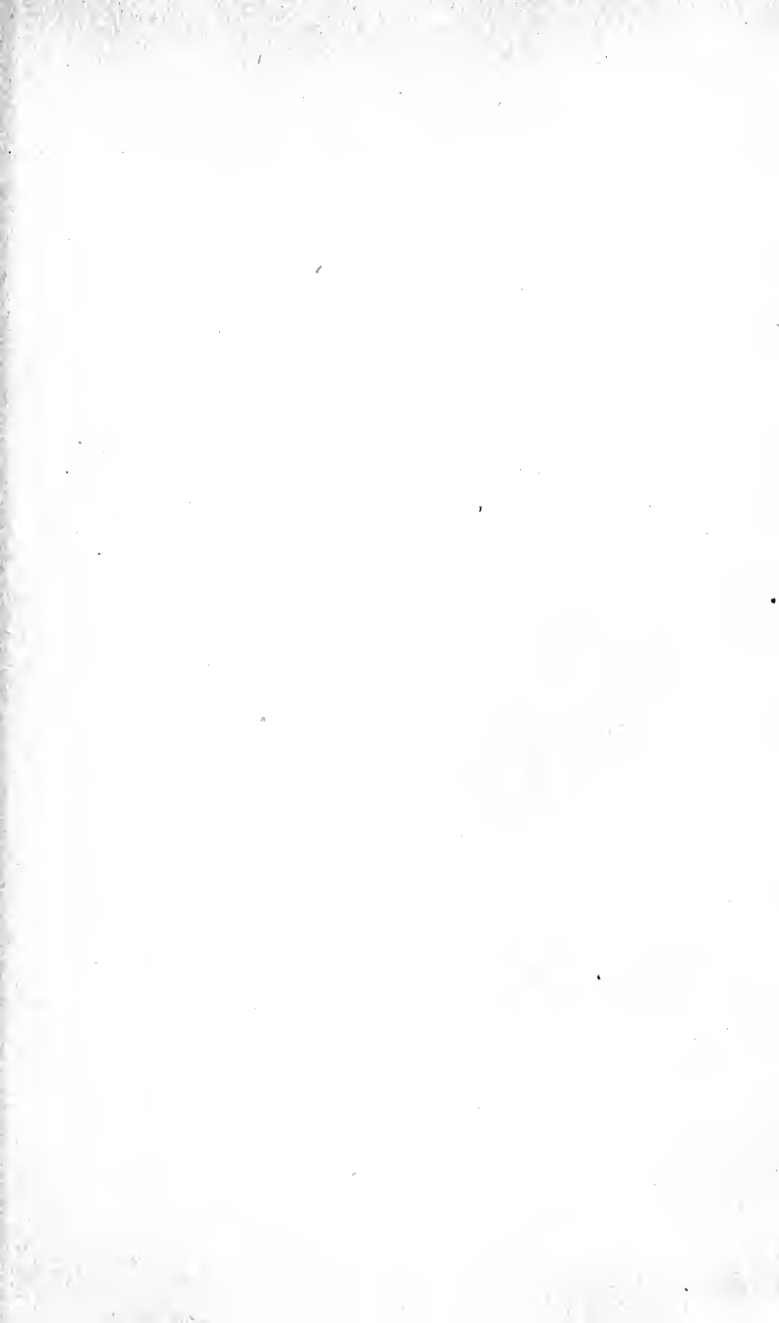
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