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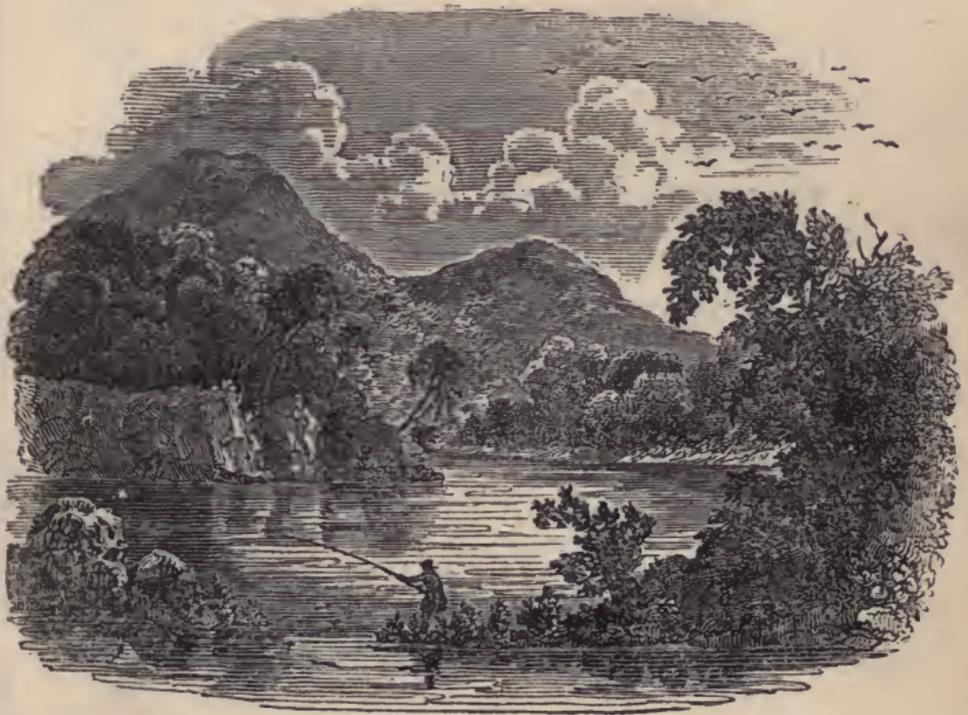
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THE
ART OF ANGLING,
AS PRACTISED IN
SCOTLAND.

By THOMAS TOD STODDART, Esq.
AUTHOR OF "THE DEATH WAKE," AND OTHER POEMS.

SECOND EDITION.



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INTRODUCTION.

THE very limited number, if not total want, of dissertations upon the subject of Angling in Scotland, and the necessity for having something like an index to our lochs and streams, have induced us to throw together the following chapters. In character and produce, our waters differ very essentially from those of England; we have clear and rapid rivers—torrents black with mosses, or pellucid as diamond—lakes large, and gleaming—tarns deep, still, and terrible, and of these, some are stored with prime, subtle trout, and others are frequented by the active salmon, “the monarch of the flood.”

On the other hand, the English waters are generally flat and muddy, affording few fish, except those which delight in dead, calm places, such as pike, carp, roach, bream, and perch. The trout they may happen to contain are also very unlike those in Scotland, becoming large and lazy, dainty in their tastes, and capricious as to their feeding hours. Accordingly, a very different and more ingeniously varied method of capturing them, is employed by the southern angler from that practised by us. The fancy is exercised to compound tackles and artifices, which appear altogether superfluous to the eyes of Scotsmen. Insects also are constructed, which, however closely they resemble nature, are seldom if ever preferred by our countrymen to their own simple undazzling materials.

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These facts point out the necessity for a short manual upon the northern systems of angling, and it is to be hoped this small treatise will be found completely to answer the purpose.

We have attempted in its pages to confine our remarks as much as possible to the *practice* of the gentle art; accordingly, what may be termed its *poetry* is somewhat cautiously excluded, except in as far as, by the introduction of a few angling songs, it may assist in relieving the more dry and methodical portions of the treatise.

As some information is in demand from various quarters respecting the raising of fish in artificial ponds, we have incorporated a chapter upon this subject, restricting our observations entirely to Scotland. We have also subjoined a list of the angling districts, throwing into it such directions as will most readily assist the intending sportsman. An abstract of the existing statutes by which our salmon fisheries are regulated, will likewise be found appended to the volume. From the more special part of the treatise, we have excluded as much as possible all technical analysis of the specific nature of fishes, venturing only here and there to scatter our handful of ideas, as we have reaped them from the track of personal experience and investigation.

THE
SCOTTISH ANGLER.

CHAPTER I.

RIVERS.

TAKING them all in all, there are few streams equal to those of our own land. They have a glad, free music in their sound, accordant with the freshest feelings of our nature, and a bright, living purity, which gives a measure of its complexion to the thoughts of such as

“Wander among blossoms and meek flowers
That strew their margins.”

Many, very many are the rivers of óld Scotland; and of these, none is without its attractions, whether scenic, historical, or otherwise.

Tay, for instance, can boast of its Scone, the former abode of royalty—of Perth, too, and Dunkeld, and the Breadalbane’s Tower; Tweed is skirted by the abbeys of Melrose and Dryburgh, by Abbotsford and Ashiesteil; Clyde hath its celebrated falls; Nith is sanctified to the memory of Burns, and Forth to that of Wallace, the champion of our liberties. But why speak of more and lesser streams, that have all and each their hold upon the heart—endeared to us whether by some old melody, or grateful recollection?

We would talk at present, not as philosophers but anglers, as those who cultivate the solitary art, and value by its finny treasures

“ The tuneful brook, that to the birchen tree,
Chimes as it wanders with a merry strain—
The thoughtful river sweeping solemnly
Toward the surges of the distant main.”

In this chapter upon Scottish rivers, we shall endeavour briefly to give our idea of what constitutes a good angling river, which may be done best by means of contrast.

In rocky waters, where the bottom is without soil and channel, having at most but a thin layer of the latter, good trout never abound; and the reason is obvious: there is no proper food necessary to their multiplication and growth. The banks, which in such streams are generally undetachable, provide neither worm nor slug. Frogs, horse-leeches, minnows, water-insects, and many species of fly, are extremely rare. Floods, although they enlarge and colour the water, do not create aliment, but are the means merely of altering its position; hence, if it doth not exist in any one spot, there can be no transference thereof to any other. In such waters, no doubt, there are often to be met with certain temporary adaptations for nourishing fish, as in the case of much wood overshadowing them, and thereby, during warm and summer months, raining down great store of tree-flies; also, if fern or sweet thyme crowd the banks, small beetles and grasshoppers are bred; but these form altogether a provisional subsistence, withdrawn by the rigid hand of winter. The fact is proved by many examples: for instance, let us pitch upon a known stream, after this sort. We take the Coe or Cona of Ossian, which runs through Glencoe into Loch Leven, an arm of the

sea in Argyllshire. A small loch or lake is its proper source, called thereabouts, in the Gaelic tongue, Treachten. After issuing from this, it proceeds with considerable rapidity over shelving masses of rock, itself pellucid as diamond, and formed in many places into the most enticing pools, which one would naturally imagine were the resort of large and well-fed fish ; on the contrary, however, a few tiny individuals are all that inhabit them. We could mention many streams of like character, the contents of which are precisely similar. It is, however, worthy of remark, that salmon, grilises, white and sea trout, ascend such waters in great numbers, preferring them even to better provided but more sluggish courses ; which shows that their sole object is to spawn with advantage, not to alter their mode of living.

A second reason why trout of considerable size are not met with in rocky rivers, is, that among them there are seldom any direct places of shelter. Weeds, nicely-disposed stones, and shallow banks, are wanting, from which they might watch their prey, elude human observation, and be protected both during the frosts of winter and the floods of autumn and spring. A rocky channel is thus proved prejudicial to the growth and increase of trout, and we shall now observe what effect a slow muddy bottom produces where food and cover are found in great plenty. Of this nature are most English rivers, excepting those in the northern counties and most mountainous districts. Fish (we speak of river trout) spawn seldom in such waters ; nay, they grow so fat and lazy as to be unable to remove for this purpose ; besides, the shallows are few among which they may suitably lie during the unclean season. These matters, however, are of small consequence, for it is marvellous to observe how the roe of

even one fish, if properly cultivated and shed, will replenish an emptied stream; nor would a seemingly meagre spawning fail of this object, were it not for other causes and impediments. One of these is discovered in the unnatural voracity of large fish, which prompts them to devour their own young, as well as eat each other's roe—a passion which in streams of this sort is easily gratified, whereas in bottoms composed of loose stones, &c., the young fry find refuge so admirably adapted to their size, that it would be idle folly in a huge trout to attempt seizing them, “with all its appliances and means to boot.” And it may be noted, that even in a sluggish water provided with such peculiar shelter, the fish thrive more abundantly than in one where the cover is under banks and among weeds, both of which can be worked into by a strong active fellow. Nor let any one be too credulous of the fact until witnessed, what amazing power the chin and snout of a milter possess. We have seen, hollowed by a single fish, such prodigious cavities as would lead one to imagine that a plough had actually been driven under water, and these, too, in the course of a single night. What havoc, then, must be made in a loose embankment by like monsters in search of their prey during the summer months! An additional reason may here be stated, why slow-running rivers, like those in England, are prejudicial to the multiplication of trout; and it is this, that such places are greatly adapted to the growth of their natural enemies. Of these, the otter and the pike are the most formidable—perch and eels moderately so. We shall discourse in due order concerning them: meanwhile, let us revert to our original intention, which was to describe our idea of a good angling river.

There are only three kinds of streams, properly

speaking, unless we include as a fourth the moor burn, of which hereafter. Two of the three we have just now discussed, showing in what and wherefore they fail. It remains only to show those grounds upon which we give precedence to the third class of streams, and our best method of illustration is to be drawn from example. The Tweed, comparing it with the other Scottish rivers, is by no means rapid. The Dee, the Spey, the Lochie, and many parts of the Tay and Clyde, proceed with greater swiftness, and on the whole are infinitely more broken and interrupted. Of all rivers, this quality belongs solely to it, namely, that it is from head to foot beautifully proportioned and justly meted out. There is an evenness and impartiality about it, which distinguish no other stream; its pools and shallows are harmoniously arranged—

“It murmurs and pauses, and murmurs again.”

Here we perceive no rocky shelves, no impertinent cataracts, saying to ascending fish, “Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther; and here shall thy proud fins be stayed.” Nothing of the kind. Nor is there, on the other hand, any inert tendency; no long, dead, sleeping levels, in which pike may secure themselves. The whole is planned according to an angler’s taste; every inch of water accessible to the wader, without danger or interruption. Its banks, also, are in keeping with its other advantages—not naked and barren, neither spongy and overgrown with rushes, nor yet crowded with close and impervious wood, but mostly dry and inviting, fringed in many parts with oak, ash, elm, and beech, and in others hung over with the pleasant alder, among the roots of which is often harboured a goodly and well-grown trout, impatient for some dropping fly or incautious worm. Most to our favour, however, is

its choice formation of bottom or channel, fertile in food, provided with shelter, and admirably fitted to the purpose of spawning. A medley it is of gravel and sand, interspersed with largeish stones, just capable of being removed by the hand. Now and then, it is true, these latter assume more considerable dimensions; nay, occasionally, a point of rock may be discovered, yet so judiciously arranged as not at all to cause prejudice to any one stream. Clay you seldom meet with; it is a barren unprofitable substance, impervious to every species of water animalculæ; we mean not by it, the muddy refuse which is often found even in Tweed, proceeding from vegetable decomposition, and not in the least unfavourable to the support of fish, but that hard yellowish till of which the agriculturist complains, as drawing off no moisture, and harbouring no nourishment.

Another leading feature of the Tweed is, that its whole developement is gradual, its extension almost imperceptible. It proceeds not, like the Tay or Lochie, from the womb of a large reservoir, supplied but scantily during its course, but commences in more modest and humble style, emergent from slender and silvery fountains, without show or vaunt, or any symbol of its progressive greatness. Yet anon it maketh considerable gains from surrounding hills, assuming a more dilated and goodly aspect; rivulet after rivulet adds to its breadth, as it widens up gently and unconsciously with the valley through which it flows: nor is each petty feeder without its use—a nursery for the young fry, it annually sends forth shoal on shoal, to disport among roomier waters in the leading stream. As it descends, these resources become larger, often contending for the precedence, and yet in nowise worthy of such distinction. The Tweed itself preserves the superiority

in depth and directness, as well as length of course and travel.

We thus, by illustration, have described our idea of a good fishing river; and now, as to the moor burn, out of which many Scottish streams are produced, and angling in whose waters is not an unpleasant recreation. The moor burn breeds a darkish variety of trout, not assuredly the most beautiful to gaze upon, and yet here and there of enticing hue. It looks well rising at a fly, having a fine yellow appearance, the gleam of which causes its bulk to seem greater. Heathls and mosses are not destitute of aliment for fish, although the kind they provide is unusual in other soils. They nourish the moss worm, a small species of insect or reptile inhabiting the least barren parts: also on the surface various flies abound during summer, uncommon among the more fertile regions of the valley. Yet doth the same rule apply to these waters as that which governs other streams respecting rocky bottoms and dead levels, which, as aforesaid, do not greatly swarm with life. So far in respect to the quality of rivers.

We shall afterwards give a list of the principal streams in Scotland, along with their natures and suitability for angling; concluding at present this rambling chapter with a few rhyming stanzas.

TO THE TWEED.

Twined with my boyhood, wreathed on the dream
Of early endearments, beautiful stream!
The lisp of thy waters is music to me,
Hours buried, are buried in thee!

Sleepless and sinless, the mirth of thy springs!
The light, and the limpid, the fanciful things,
That mingle with thine the gleam of their play,
And are lifted in quiet away!

River ! that togeth under the trees,
 And lurest the leaf from the wandering breeze,
 It glides over thee, like the gift of the young,
 When he rock'd at the bough where it hung.

The voice of the city, the whisper of men,
 I hear them, and hate them, and weary again
 For the lull of the streams—the breath of the brae,
 Brought down in a morning of May.

Go ! hush'd o'er thy channels, the shadow'd, the dim,
 Give wail for the Stricken and worship to him,
 That woke the old feats of the outlaw'd and free,
 The legends, that skirted on thee.

Broken the shell ; but its lingering tone
 Lives for the stream of his fathers—his own ;
 And the pale wizard hand, that hath glean'd out of eld,
 Is again on thy bosom beheld.

He hears not, but pilgrims that muse at his urn,
 At the wailing of waters all tearfully turn,
 And mingle their mourning, their worship in thine,
 And gather the dews from his shrine.

Tweed ! winding and wild ! where the heart is unbound,
 They know not, they dream not, who linger around,
 How the sadden'd will smile, and the wasted re-win
 From thee—the bliss wither'd within.

And I, when to breathe is a burden, and joy
 Forgets me, and life is no longer the boy,
 On the labouring staff, and the tremorous knee,
 Will wander, bright river, to thee !

Thoughts will come back that were with me before ;
 Loves of my childhood left in the core,
 That were hush'd, but not buried, the treasured, the true,
 In memory awaken anew.

And the hymn of the furze, when the due-pearls are shed,
 And the old sacred tones of thy musical bed,
 Will close, as the last mortal moments depart,
 The golden gates of the heart !

CHAPTER II.

LOCHS.

LOCHS !—we love the word LOCHS, as applied to those hill-girdled expanses which decorate our native land. Lake is too tame a designation—a shallow epithet. It has nothing to do with mountains and precipices, heaths and forests. Beautiful it may be, very beautiful! Winandermere is very beautiful; Derwent water is very beautiful; Buttermere, Ullswater, and Coniston, are very beautiful; nay, in truth, they are of a higher nature than beautiful; for these all lie among hills—but not Scottish hills; not the unplanted places—dwellings of the storm and the eagle.

What is of all things on earth the most changeable appears so the least—we mean water, taken in a wide sense, as the sea, or a loch. There is no mountain in the land which we can certify as presenting the same aspect it did five centuries ago. Forests then grew where the bare turf lies, and what is now wooded may have been naked and desert. So with valleys: the ploughshare hath altered Nature, and mansions occupy the lair of the brute and the resort of the robber; but waters, seas, lochs, and many rivers, are still the same. Our forefathers saw them, calm or agitated, as we behold them. The olden names are as appropriate as ever. Looking on them, we see histories verified, legends enhanced; we descry the fording of armies, the flight of queens, the adventures of forsaken princes, hunted like wolves in their own shackled realm—a price on their anointed heads—

“The sleuths of fate unbound
To track their solitary flight
O'er the disastrous ground!”

Loch Lomond! Loch Awe! Loch Laggan! Loch Ericht! Loch Rannoch! Loch Tay! Loch Earn! Loch Lubnaig! Loch Achray! Loch Ketturin!—why need we name more?—and yet hundreds there are, wild and magnificent as these, which we love as well, wherein all day long we have angled, with an angler's hope and patience, with a poet's thoughts expanding within us, fearless of the world's contempt, and speaking of Nature as we speak not to men, but guilelessly, having no distrust, and eloquently, dreading no rebuke. St Mary's Loch, of all, is our best beloved—Yarrow's nurse—a sheet of water, not sublime, nor yet singularly beautiful, for it wants a fringe of wood and a few islets, and those swans, described by Wordsworth so poetically, but strangers ever, unless in the depth of a severe winter, to its bright and quiet surface; yet, truly, there is a winning something about it—a “pastoral grace,” that lures the angler's heart. Nor does it want substance for pastime; well adapted to the nurture of trout, it is altogether a favourite resort. Yet the fish caught therein, if we except one variety, are in general soft and flabby, not agreeable to the taste, and very far from equalling those found in the Highland lochs or in Loch Leven. The fact is, its very fitness is the cause of its being overstocked. There are in the neighbourhood too many breeding streams, and the outlet by which the young fry would naturally descend, being difficult to discover, they are compelled in great shoals to remain in the loch, until directed in their escape by some heavy flood, which is felt throughout the whole mass of waters. Salmon also, and sea trout, which find their way up in winter, are, owing to the same circumstance, necessitated to spend the summer months in this prison. We have taken them with a trout fly in June, seemingly

quite clean and silvery, but large-headed, and worn down to half their proper thickness ; nay, at that time we have beheld twenty or thirty of those huge fish leaping about in different parts of the loch, unable, we allege, to make good their exit. Such, also, is the case in Loch Tay, and we suspect in every loch approachable from the sea, as Loch Awe and others, although in these two the body of effluent water is much larger than that which leaves St Mary's.

Connected with lochs, we may here mention what varieties of trout are generally to be found in them, compared with rivers. We have detected more than a dozen sorts after one day's angling, all perfectly distinct, and individually marked. In St Mary's Loch this fact is particularly observable, but we shall devote more appropriately to this matter a succeeding chapter, although induced at present to show some reason why and how this variety is produced.

Streams, by their continual motion, cause in many parts a sameness at the bottom or channel, upon which account the different feeding grounds are alike as to what they yield : hence, the trout are naturally similar and of one appearance ; still, as often is the case, especially in slow waters, if there be a variety of feeding grounds, you find also a proportionate variety of trout. It seldom happens, however, that above three or four sorts are to be discovered in the same river, owing, as we have just mentioned, to the general sameness of the channel. Lochs, on the other hand, which are stationary and unimpaired below, contain, according to their extent and the soil which they cover, so many beds or feeding grounds of a separate nature, producing each its variety of fish. The streams and burns also which they receive are often widely different, some rocky, some passing through rich and fertile valleys,

others over black and barren moors, to which (their native abodes) fish, when swept into a huge reservoir, are unable to return, being bewildered as to the entrance back, or more possibly induced to remain in a wider though foreign sphere.

Recurring to the subject of this chapter, we shall extend our observations on lochs by a few remarks upon their suitability for angling. Now, we think river sport far more agreeable, and requiring greater ingenuity; besides, it is a healthier exercise. You are kept in more rapid motion—a great preventive to the wader against colds and rheumatisms, which standing middle-deep in a still and freezing water is likely to occasion. Streams are both warmer and shallower; they harbour less vermin, and are not nearly so dangerous as to footing. No doubt, lochs may be boated or fished from the banks; a poor fisher in general he is who adopts the latter method; nay, a craven angler, and effeminate; nevertheless, we make no reference to unfordable places. Foolhardiness and cowardice are equally to be despised. A pretender to the gentle art ought, however, not to hesitate upon a shallow, but boldly to plunge forward, should good sport be the probable result. Yet, we do confess, this is often a disagreeable duty, owing sometimes to the boggy and irregularity of the soil beneath, sometimes to the coldness of the water, and, as we have once or twice experienced, to its poisonous nature. This latter quality may be observed in a small loch near Kinghorn in Fife, inhabited by pike only. It is covered with weeds and water plants, which so taint and violate its contents, as to render wading therein absolutely in its effects frightful and dangerous. The part of the body immersed becomes covered with scarlet eruptions. No doubt this may be the work of a minute insect, capa-

ble of penetrating a closely-knit stocking; at all events it is unpleasant, and not to be courted. Upon the whole, we are advocates of the wading system, in streams especially, and in all weathers. We shall give our reasons more fully in an after chapter; at present, a few words upon boating may not be amiss, as connected with loch fishing.

One very great objection to this mode of angling is the dependent state in which the angler is placed. Unable at the same moment himself to manage both oars and tackle, he must needs either have a companion, who soon tires of the toilsome occupation, or else a hired boatman, who pretends superior sagacity, and provokes one by obstinate self-will, and everlasting jabber. Besides, trout seldom, except at feeding hours, rise in very deep water; on the contrary, they keep to the margin, where all the ground food is generated, and are commonly accessible within a dozen or two yards of it. From hence, also, they are drawn out without loss of time, nor are thus so liable to escape after being hooked.

In trolling, however, for large fish, as is practised in Loch Awe and other places, a boat, we allow, is necessary; nor do its other inconveniences detract from the pleasure of such delicious sport: nevertheless, in ordinary angling, we love the pedestrian style; none of those are we who practise the art cavalierly, or on horseback, as some vaunt.

And now to speak of an abomination in loch fishing lately introduced. Let every true angler abjure the *lath*; it is a poacher's instrument; killing, no doubt, alarmingly fatal; so is lime in a narrow brook, or vitriol, or the pock-net. Pretty means these for an honest angler to use!—ingenious and crafty contrivances wherewith to kill time and make merriment! This

engine of death and torture, appropriately called the Otter by James Hogg of Altrive, on account of the similarity of its movements to those of that animal, consists of a thinnish board of wood, thirty inches long by ten broad, shaped in the form of a boat, and loaded below with a narrow stripe of sheet lead. This, when placed lengthwise in water, presents an upright position, sinking to within a short distance of its top. Near the extremities of this board are several holes, to which is attached a cross band or string of cord, as to a paper kite. In fact, the whole affair acts upon the same principle. To this cross band the line is fastened, generally made of oiled silk, and very strong: along it, at regular intervals, are hung a score or two of fly-hooks of all sizes, also baited minnow tackles, the whole occupying about thirty yards. More line is, however, necessary, but wound upon a pirn, and held off the ground by a remarkably stout rod. Two individuals are required to bring this engine into action; one of whom holds the rod, and the other at the distance of the line occupied by the tackle, sets the board adrift. The former person, who stands also at the margin to windward, then moves forward. The lath sails out, carrying with it the whole train of flies, until almost at right angles with the fisher. Still he proceeds, kept pace with by this singular apparatus, which it requires some degree of skill to manage. When one fish is hooked, there is no necessity for drawing it ashore immediately. The beauty is to drag in a dozen at a time, although, from durance vile and lengthy, many are taken in a dying and exhausted state; others escape with injured mouths to become thin, sickly, and shy, and of these not a few expire in this condition. Such is angling by means of the lath, a system in practice on the English lakes, and gradually creeping northwards to the extinction of that

nicer and more gentlemanly craft, where skill and talent take the precedence of brutality and ignorance. The harm is incalculable, far beyond even its profits; for the fish thereby injured and deteriorated greatly exceed the number taken.

And now, speaking of lochs and the mode of angling therein, from which we have made a tedious divertisement, it is notable that they breed less cunning fish than rivers do, on which account the fly used may be larger and more gaudy. Worms, unless at night, are generally an unsuccessful bait; the gut to which the hook is attached being readily discernible in standing waters, unless itself in motion. Minnows are a good evening morsel, especially to large trout on the look-out. From a boat, small par or trout themselves do rare execution, when used on a sunny day with a long line and lead. In this manner the biggest fish are taken, some weighing as much as thirty pounds. But of these monsters we shall treat hereafter.

LOCH —.

A mountain shadow lieth on
 Its mirror dark and massy;
 The red late sunray streams across
 O'er solemn wood and quiet moss,
 O'er sward and hillock grassy.
 It tinges with a crimson light
 The water sleeping under;
 That calm, clear water seldom wakes—
 Calm when the forest pine-tree quakes—
 Calm 'mid the very thunder.
 A ruin on its islet stands,
 The walls with ivy pendant;
 Its grey stones crumbling underneath
 Peer thro' the arbitrary wreath
 Of that untrain'd ascendant.

But glancing from the record rude
 Of the remoter ages,
 Behold the image of a stag,
 Timorous of the water-flag,
 Its eager thirst assuages !

The stately antlers branching free,
 Above its forehead tragic—
 The form of animated grace,
 One kindred to the quiet place,
 A portion of its magic !

And there the wild-duck, like a skiff,
 Shoots from the reeds horrescent ;
 Its yellow paddles in their wake
 Leave on the solitary lake
 The traces of a crescent.

The peerly water-heron too,
 Where the faint sunray trembles,
 Drooping its ever graceful head
 Above the floating lily-bed,
 A poet-bird resembles.

And yonder on the distant marge,
 Behold an angler eager,
 With taper wand and arm of skill,
 Under the shadow of the hill,
 A solitary figure !

But falling from the quiet air
 The mist and shades together,
 Glideth away the sad sweet show,
 The mountain and the lake below,
 The forest and the heather !

And night, with dewy forehead bent,
 Holdeth her vigil solemn,
 Till the red architect of morn,
 Upon a cloud-car slowly borne,
 Erects his amber column.

CHAPTER III.

TACKLE.

As anglers, we pay considerable attention to our tackle, and it is proper we should; for ill-contrived tackle either frightens the fish by its clumsiness, or loses them by its want of strength. The quality of the hook used is of primary importance: good hooks ought neither to break nor bend easily. It is no test of a proper description of hook to be able to haul in half-pounders and moderate sized fish; the moment of trial is when you are playing a large trout or salmon, which exerts its full vigour, and does justice to the metal. The least tendency to brittleness or want of nerve will be detected to your cost and disappointment. Many a fine fish have we lost in the very act of landing him, by the snapping of a thin ill-tempered wire. O'Shaugnessy's Limericks, which have been much eulogised, are not always exactly the thing, excepting those used for salmon, and of a larger description, which are really excellent. We can recommend with confidence such as are sold by Martin Kelly, Lower Sackville Street, Dublin. They present the best specimen of the Irish hook, as now manufactured.

As least exceptionable, however, the hook we prefer is the Kendal circular bend. It is of a much lighter make than the Limerick, and its shape in the smaller sizes more suitable for hooking trout. We advise purchasers always to try the strength of the wire before laying in a store of hooks, which they may do by twisting it with the fingers. When purchased, let them be

kept dry, for the least moisture cannot fail to create rust. Hooks for dressing flies ought to be thinner at the shank than such as are intended for bait-fishing. The Kendal hooks used in Scotland generally number upwards from 00, the smallest midge, to No. 20, the largest salmon size. The Limerick are denoted by letters, commencing with A.

There are various methods employed in order to temper and prepare hooks. After the wire is barbed and sharpened, it is commonly steeled through means of fire and charcoal—then the hook thus prepared is placed upon a smoothing iron, heated 580 degrees of Fahrenheit, until it acquires a blue colour; and last of all, it is immersed, while hot, in tallow, in order to prevent rust.

Now, as to lines and gut; and, first, the pirn-line: This, for trouting, should be spun from twelve to fifteen hairs' thickness, of the best fresh horse hair, properly cleaned and soaked. The salmon line ought to be much stronger, and contain from eighteen to four-and-twenty hairs. Thirty yards of the former will suffice; the latter should be at least twice that length. Some prefer a few threads of silk interwoven, and to this we have no objection, although by them the wet is retained longer, and the line said to become sooner useless. The great merit of a good line is its lightness. Many anglers, however, and the Ettrick Shepherd among the rest, give the preference to one that is heavy; upon what principle we are unable to discover, except for the purpose of beating down the wind. Second, the casting-line: This may be formed either of gut or horse hair; if of the latter, the very choicest material ought to be used, taking care to soak it previously for an hour or two in cold water. Five lengths are sufficient, the uppermost composed of eight hairs, and so on, gradually

diminishing the thickness till you arrive at three or four. These ought to be regularly spun and carefully fastened between the lengths by a single knot. A strong series of gut should be similarly attached to the lowermost length. The upper end ought to be looped, so as to conjoin easily with the pirn-line, the extremity of which should be provided with a small noose of the same description. Loops of all kinds, however, ought to be avoided below this point, as they both disturb the water and perplex the tackle. As for the gut casting-line, three threads are a sufficient maximum, although four may be used in the upper part to render the tapering more harmonious. This latter sort we ourselves prefer, yet many anglers abjure it on account of its heaviness. Hair casting-lines often prove faithless, especially when half wetted, and not equally spun. Perhaps a mixture of the two materials might be recommended, as best combining the requisite qualities, strength and lightness. While on casting-lines, we may remark that the common practice of securing the various knots and joinings with silk thread is a bad one, since it gives them the appearance of insects when drawn through the water, and induces the fish to rise without advantage to the angler.

We shall now treat briefly of gut. This article, originally imported from the East, and now brought in considerable quantities from Spain and Italy, is, as far as we have been able to learn, fabricated from the male silk-worm in a state of decomposition. The operation is principally conducted by children, and consists in removing the external slough of the worm with the fingers, elongating at the same time the gluey substance which composes its entrails. To do this properly requires some care and attention. Should the worm be kept too long, a hard crust forms itself over it, in de-

stroying which, the application of the nail is necessary ; hence the gut becomes flattened, and loses much of its value. The sinews of herons and other birds are also manufactured in Spain into a sort of gut, and are much used, although unwittingly, by our salmon fishers.

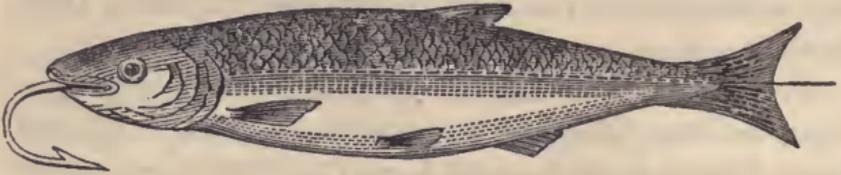
Worm-gut varies in length from nearly two feet and downwards. We have seen, however, an article very closely resembling it from the Archipelago, which measures at least a yard and a half. This is not to be confounded with sea-weed, although a vegetable fibre, and drawn out of a plant. It is much stronger and better suited for angling. The inhabitants of the Greek islands use it for catching mullet, and will often toss a fish some pounds weight over their heads by a thread or two. We ourselves have found it excellent for the larger sorts of tackle. Animal gut is, however, more generally used, and better adapted for trouting. It ought to be small, round, and transparent, without any flaw or roughness. When worn or disordered, the application of a piece of India rubber will at once renovate it. In joining threads together for the purpose of making casts, the single knot properly drawn is quite sufficient. One should avoid clipping the useless extremities too closely in this operation, as in that case the knot is somewhat liable to give way. Gut to keep well should be moistened with fine oil, and stored in oiled paper. Gut fly-casts with three flies should measure at least nine feet, from where they join the casting-line to the lowermost fly. The hooks ought to be a yard distant or more from each other ; the two bobs or droppers depending three or four inches from the main line. These droppers should be the smaller flies, if different sizes are used, in order that the line may fall properly without frightening the fish. Angling for sea trout, in places where the other kinds abound, we

employ only one large hook as our trail-fly, regulating the droppers accordingly. Many anglers foolishly place the heavier hooks foremost, to the disturbance of those following, and the causing of many mischances.

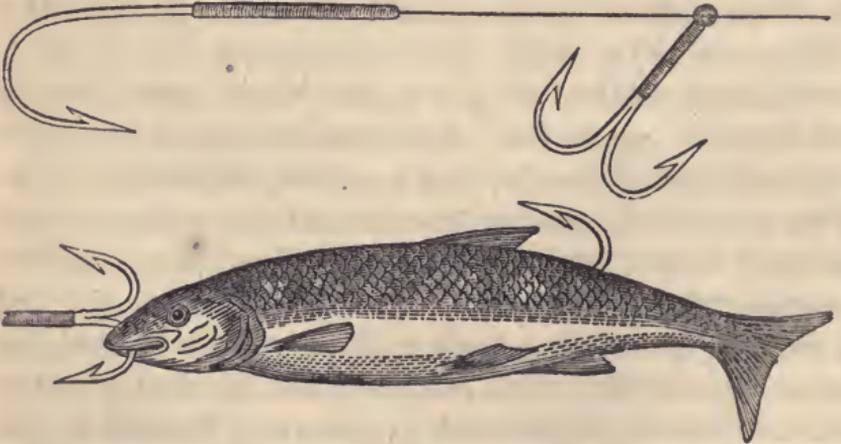
We shall devote another chapter to flies, and what concerns them, using the remainder of this in descriptions of other tackles—and first of all, the worm-tackle. For this, sizeable hooks, short in the shank and dressed upon fine round gut, are generally preferred—Nos. 9, 10, and 11. Some bait-fishers, however, use the smaller sorts; but these, we think, are apt to miss the trout, especially when covered with a largeish worm. The bait-tackle ought to be loaded about ten or twelve inches above the hook with a pellet or two of lead, in order that rapid streams may not carry it away too quickly, or on the surface, since trout in general seize worm near the bottom, and take no pains to catch at a swift bait. Salmon-roe fishing may be practised with the single hook, although more successfully when a double or even treble-brazed one is used, which better secures the ova and loose paste. This, however, should be small and short in the shank, so as to deceive the fish.

Minnow-tackles are of various kinds, according to the fancy of the angler. The most simple, and in some places the most deadly, is a common single bait hook. This we insert through the back of the minnow, and drawing it out, run below the gill, allowing the barb to protrude from the mouth; we then tie up the tail along the gut, either with a piece of silk thread, or more expeditiously with the gut itself, hitched over the part. This is angled with in the same manner as the worm, allowing plenty of time for the fish to gorge. A tackle similar to it may be used in standing pools or lochs. Here, however, the shank of the hook (a long

one) is loaded, and the bait allowed to descend rapidly towards the bottom.

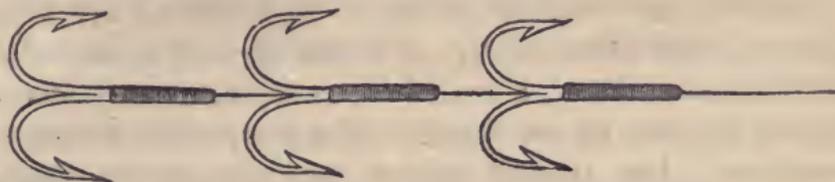


Large cautious fish are sometimes taken by this method of angling. In order to give its proper arrangement to the minnow, the angler will find a needle or pointed wire necessary. This is notched at one end, so as to apply readily to a small loop on the gut, to which the plunge-apparatus is attached. Of all minnow-tackles, that with swivels is the commonest and most agreeable to employ. There are many ways of constructing it. Two of these we shall mention as preferable to all others. One is simply a large hook, No. 11 or 12, fastened to good round gut with two smaller ones, No. 7, tied back to back above, and looped in the dressing, so as to slide along, and shorten or lengthen the tackle to the dimensions of the bait.



In using it, enter the lowermost hook through the mouth, and bring it out near the tail of the minnow; insert one of the hooks on the slider through its lips,

noticing that the fish be slightly curved, so as to spin properly. The other tackle is composed of six hooks, No. 7, dressed in pairs, and is angled with only when the trout are in a taking mood.



Two or more swivels are required for both of these contrivances—the lowermost fastened about two feet or so above the bait. Leadén pellets may also be used, but many think them unnecessary. Some anglers attach behind the whole apparatus an extra hook, No. 12 or 13, dressed upon a hog's bristle, which, should the trout miss the minnow, is apt to catch him, when retiring, by the middle or other part of the body. This is a superfluity, and, like many superfluities, does more harm than good, alarming the fish without securing them.

Tackle for trolling with par or small trout ought to be constructed on the same principles as the minnow-tackle; only the hooks should be larger, and dressed upon gimp, instead of gut. Snap-hooks also are in use for this kind of angling. Small silk cord oiled will be found the best trolling-line. The reel should carry from eighty to a hundred yards at least, in such places as Loch Awe, where the water is deep and the fish move strong.

We come now to treat of rods. A trouting rod ought to be from twelve to fifteen feet in length, and a salmon one from sixteen to twenty. We prefer the medium. Its first virtues ought to be lightness and elasticity. It requires, also, to be nicely and accurately tapered, from a circumference of three, four, or five

inches, to one the thickness of a crow quill. In the hand its very proportions should be felt. A movement of the wrist ought to determine it, detecting every tendency to top-heaviness—every want of perfect equality. The common materials of a rod in Scotland are ash, hickory, and lancewood. Of the first of these, the butt-piece is made; the other two are used indiscriminately for the upper parts. We have seen fir butts employed; but, though lighter, they will not bear hollowing as ash does, and, moreover, are easily broken. Still, for a long salmon tie rod we greatly recommend them, if made within a third of the whole length. A good rod ought to bend easily, and revert at once to its original straightness; its ferrules should be strongly fixed on, and carefully fitted together. A single knot in the wood condemns it; let all the lengths, therefore, be diligently seen to. Notice also the colouring matter, for some rod-makers use vitriol, which devours the wood, and takes from its pliability. Vegetable substances make the best dyes for rods, which are generally finished off with a coat of varnish. The rings should be large, and extend gradually, in number from fourteen to eighteen. Of Scottish rods, we prefer such as were made by the late Mr Phin of Edinburgh, whose relict still carries on the manufacture; also those of Mackenzie and Ancill of Perth. We have likewise seen good serviceable rods made by Mr Thomas Grieve of Peebles. London and Dublin furnish by far the finest make of all sorts of fishing gear. The most celebrated shops are, in London, those of Chevalier, Templebar; Bond, Cannon Street; Ustonson and Willingham: in Dublin, Martin Kelly, and Murray. The manner of disengaging the ferrules of rods when tight and swollen in the wood with rain or moisture, is not generally known. The application of a lighted

candle to the brass around the swollen part, will so contract it, by drawing out the wet, as to make the farther unscrewing easy. This method will save many an idle fretting, and prevent those hasty acts, whereby good rods are often destroyed after the first services.

Next, with regard to reels : They ought to be made of brass, and, in our opinion, always simple. Some anglers prefer the complex kind, by which the line is wound up with much greater rapidity ; but to it our objection lies chiefly in its tendency to become disordered. As to the fastening of reels on the rod, every man will exercise his taste in that matter. After all, we ourselves are in no wise particular, either as to rods or reels. The art lies more in the man than his instrument. All the stores of tackle in the wide world, gossamer gut as strong as whip-cord, flies the image of life, and a rod that might throw them twenty fathoms' distance, unless fitly managed, are no more likely to ensnare trout, than an oak tree and a cable.

And now, as to the rest of an angler's equipment. Let him have a creel or basket of the usual shape, rather large than small. We hate to be seen with such provoking baskets as hardly hold a dozen half-pounders. Allow room at least for two stone weight of fish and upwards.

Lastly, let the angler carry a pocketbook for his tackle, a round tin box for his casts, and a small flask of spirits for his refreshment ; a gaff also, if he be a salmon fisher, and a box for bait ; and as to the pocketbook, let it be of a good breadth, so as not to compress the gut-lines too narrowly. Parchment is the best material, although leather is often in use ; twelve divisions or so are sufficient, with four pockets, in which gut, silk, rosin, scissors, flynippers, hooks, swivels, hare's ear, and feathers, may be placed. The more

open spaces should be filled with hooks already dressed, artificial flies of various descriptions, together with bait and minnow tackles. As to the tin box, it should be about five or six inches in diameter, and two in depth. This is useful for carrying about such casts of flies, or other tackle, as have been aforetime assorted and made up, preventing that trouble which a well-crammed pocketbook creates, where confusion is apt to be bred, and loss of time occasioned. Of the flask, no Scotsman will deny the utility.

So much for the different sorts of angling apparatus; and let us advise all tyros in the gentle art to be on their guard against cheap and useless materials. To such as practise the kindly pastime of angling, we recommend diligently the manufacture of their own flies, which, unless the angler be fully up to, he had better handle his rod no longer; for we consider the dressing of artificial flies to be a requisite accomplishment in every brother of the craft.

CHAPTER IV.

FLIES.

A GREAT deal has been offered upon this matter by various writers, which we deem absurd and unnecessary. Trout are no doubt nice and capricious feeders; but any pretensions in anglers to classify and distinguish their favourite flies, according to the month, are almost totally without reason. The colours of water and sky are the only indicators which can lead us to select the most killing hook, and even these are often deceptive. We have fished in one stream where dark, and, in the next, red flies, took the lead. There is no trusting to the fancy in certain places. On Tweed, we have seen it veer about, like the wind, in one moment, without a note of preparation. Most rivers, however, are more steady; and when the water is of a moderate size, may be relied on with at most two sorts of flies all the year round. For ourselves, our maximum in every Scottish stream is reduced to only four descriptions of artificial flies, with one or other of which we engage to catch trout over all the kingdom. Knowledge and practice have convinced us of the needlessness of storing up endless and perplexing varieties, which some do, to look knowing and scientific.

Foremost is the fly commonly called the Professor's, after Professor Wilson of Edinburgh. The wings are formed of a mottled, brown feather, taken from the mallard or wild-drake; the body is of yellow floss silk, rather longish, and wound about close to the head with a fine red or black hackle; tails are often used, but we

think them unnecessary. Instead of a yellow silk-body, we sometimes adopt one of pale green, especially in loch fishing. Our next fly is of a sombre cast. The wings are formed of the woodcock, snipe, or lark feather, it is no matter which; the body is of hare's ear, darker or lighter, as it pleases the fancy. Our third fly is dubbed with mouse or water-rat hair, and hath wings of the starling or the fieldfare. Our last is a plain hackle, black or red, without wings, and called commonly the Palmer. These flies are almost our only sorts for trouting with, and we have them of all sizes, down to the minutest midge.

And now, as to the manner of dressing them, we shall be fitly brief, inasmuch as careful instructions on this point are to be met with in most works upon angling. These, however, are over-complex and refined to be readily understood and followed, and therefore we shall unfold in a few sentences our more simple method. Practice alone can bestow neatness and expedition in this kind of manufacture, which, we opine, is needful for all zealous anglers. Our materials for the making up of flies are as follow:—Hooks, and small round gut; a pair of brass nippers for twisting hackles; a point for dividing the wings; a pair of fine scissors; orange, yellow, and green silk thread of all sizes; good cobblers' wax enclosed in a piece of soft leather; a hare's ear; some brown wild-drake, teal, and pheasant feathers; the fur of a mouse, squirrel, and water-rat; a few wings of lark, snipe, landrail, and starling; and lastly, red and black hackles, taken from the neck and head of an old cock at Christmas; these should be fully formed and free from softness. Plovers' herls, and those of the peacock, are used by some; yet we deem them superfluous, as also tinsel, except for large flies.

Commencing your operations, the first step is to lay

out the intended wings and body before you ; wax your silk, and applying one end of it to the gut and hook together, wrap them both round four or five times, commencing a little below the end of the shank, and proceeding downwards ; you then fasten, by drawing the disengaged end of the thread through under the last turn of the wrapping. Work the silk upwards to where you commenced, then take your wings, which are still unseparated, and lay them along your hook, so that their extremity or tips shall reach its curve ; twirl the thread twice round the upper part, which lies along the shank top ; then, taking it under, press firm, and clip off the unnecessary portion of the feather ; divide with your point or penknife, so as to form the two wings ; take up the silk betwixt them, and wrapping again round at the head, bring it back crosswise ; then lift your hackle, and lay the root of it down along your hook ; whip the thread over, as far as your first fastening ; seize the top of the hackle with your nippers, and whirl it round in the same manner ; fasten and lengthen the body to your liking with fresh floss silk ; fasten once more, and your fly is made. This last fastening ought in our opinion to be the same as that used in arming bait-hooks, for which we quote Hawkins's directions :—

“ When you are within about four turns of the bend of the hook, take the shank between the fore-finger and thumb of the left hand, and place the silk close by it, holding them both tight, and leaving the end to hang down ; then draw the other part of the silk into a large loop, and with your right hand turning backwards, continue the whipping for four turns, and draw the end of the silk (which has all this while hung down under the root of your left thumb) close, and twitch it off.”

When the body of your fly is required to be of hare's ear or mouse skin, pull out a small quantity of the fur,

and lay it along the silk, after the wings are formed ; twist together, and then wrap as if the thread were bare, and fasten as above. In making flies, keep all tight, guard against heavy wings and much dubbing ; the fibres of your hackle ought to be short and lie near the head of the fly ; they are intended to resemble legs, which in the real insect are always so placed. Such is our method of fly-dressing, commendable both for its simplicity and expedition. It differs, we find, somewhat from that generally practised, being in a manner self-taught, and not encumbered with any unnecessary display.

And here let us notice what we have seen broached concerning artificial flies, namely, that they are seized by trout for no likeness that they possess to any living insect, but merely because of their motion and seeming self-existence. We can barely see what is meant by this distinction. The illustration, however, follows. Anglers may observe, say these theorists, that when fish rise well, they will not refuse your most maimed and torn imitation ; nay, a bare hook, with hardly a vestige of feather upon it, will entice them as readily as your most carefully dressed fly. This we admit, for we are of opinion that colour and size alone cause the allurements needful to raise trout, and that shape is of small matter. Still we have no doubt that the artificial fly is taken as a known and particular insect ; sometimes in a drowning and sometimes in an active condition ; since, be it observed, in many rivers the caprice of trout is truly remarkable on this point, and they will reject at times, and on clear water, where every insect is visible, those very flies which shortly before were seized with avidity ; and this rejection is owing, as may be seen, to a new succession of ephemeræ, occasioned by an atmospherical change, at which period the imitation

alone, as far as concerns colour and size, is the proper persuasive wherewith to ensnare fish. Yet, with regard to the artificial salmon fly, we pretend not to guess for what it is taken, as, from the manner of using it, its motions are altogether unlike those of any insect existing, and very unlike those of the dragon fly, which it is made to resemble. We therefore agree with the theorists as to it, that it is taken by hungry fish foolishly and ignorantly, and on account merely of its seeming existence.

While on salmon flies, we may notice some of the most effective kinds for Scottish rivers. These may be reduced to three or four; and first, the professor's on a large scale, with its mallard wings, yellow silk body, and red or black hackles, only let the hackles be brought down somewhat farther on the hook than is done on the trouting fly. Second, wings of a mottled turkey or pheasant tail feather, with brown or lemon-coloured mohair body, thread of gold tinsel, and light brown or cinnamon-coloured hackle; the upper part, to resemble the head, may be varied with a little dark mohair or a black hackle. Third, a dark fly, winged with deep brown turkey feathers, and white tips; the body of black or purple mohair, black hackle and silver tinsel, with a scarlet or crimson tuft at the tail, and yellowish head. Somewhat similar to this is what is called the Maule fly, after Mr Maule of Edinburgh, a keen and successful salmon fisher. The wings of this very effective insect should be formed of mottled turkey feather, its body of camlet wool surmounted with silver twist, and a black-edged brown hackle; a tip formed of light orange or lemon-coloured wool under a small portion of drake's feather, ought likewise to be added. We have always found this a very killing fly, use it where we might.

Next to these may be classed the gaudy Irish fly, of which Sir Humphry Davy has given a full description. There are no special rules for the composition of this fanciful lure. A general one seems to enforce the introduction of the golden pheasant's feather under the wings. It is erroneously supposed, both on Tweed-side and in the north, that the Irish and other gaudy flies are all a hum; accordingly, such as use them are not a little ridiculed by the prejudiced clodhoppers of those districts, who insist upon their own sagacity and experience. Now, we inform all who wish to angle successfully, that there is no dependence to be placed upon stubborn prejudice; and we further advise them to be shy of being advised by a downright ignoramus. Truly, as for ourselves, we can say without boast, that, in the matter of Irish flies, we have upset before their eyes the doctrines of such as pertinaciously held them to be useless on our Scottish waters. Nay, we feel assured that salmon will rise at *them*, when unwilling to stir a fin towards a duller and less glaring morsel—and *that* too, strange to say, not when the stream is large, thick, and rapid, but rather when it is greatly reduced and clear. Sea trout, especially, are fond of something gaudy. A blue or green silk body and gold tinsel, with wings of the Guinea-fowl or teal feather, is very killing among them—at times, however, they prefer a plain black hackle. It may be remarked as generally the case with regard to our northern waters, that such as run eastward are by many degrees more deep and dark-coloured than those running towards the west, and that their salmon are more shy and capricious, although ensconced in deeper and better sheltered pools. Take as an instance two rivers in Ross-shire, the Conan falling into Cromarty Firth, and the Carron into Loch Carron, opposite Skye. Of this

there is no doubt, that the former, which we allow is by much the larger stream, contains at all seasons ten times as many fish as the latter; nay, a single mile of its water is worth the whole length of Carron; not that it produces in proportion a higher rental, for, from its nature, it cannot be netted with such advantage; but this we affirm, that it is more plentifully stocked with fish, and offers a succession of pools seemingly far better adapted for angling in, and yet there is no dependence upon *it*, as upon Carron, where with the rod one is more certain to kill salmon grilse and sea trout in any weather and state of the river. And it may be noted as singular, that the flies used on Carron are particularly uninviting to a Conan fish, being too bright for its dark massy waters, although not so for the clear limpid streams of western Ross-shire. We might have contrasted in the same manner the Shin and Ewe waters—but we proceed rather to close our remarks upon salmon flies. Among other combinations, yellow wings and hackles, although forming a glaring fly, we have seen used on Clyde with great success. Peacock feathers sometimes make excellent wings and tufts for our Scottish stream fishing. Salmon flies are of different sizes, according to the seasons, and are not always regulated in this respect, as some aver, by the mood of the water. A large hook ought to be used when the fish first begin to ascend, and especially near the sea. This, however, is no strict rule, but a mere general principle, which circumstances should be allowed to govern. Smaller hooks are most successful high up, and during close time. After the salmon have spawned, they become less shy, and, on their return to the salt water, will leap almost at any sort of insect.

And now, let us notice how the changes of water and sky influence fish in their choice of flies: and first,

as to the water. When a stream is small and clear, a hare's ear body, especially during spring, kills well ; also the dun or mouse-body fly, and small black hackles, at a later season. If large and brown, the red professor suits best : next to it a plain palmer, both of which are efficient all the year over. When in ordinary trim, we angle with any sort, being more nice concerning the size than the colour of our flies ; and this we remark, that in much-used rivers the trout reject large insects, and rise freest at midges and the smaller ephemeræ. This is particularly visible on the Clyde about Lanark, where a very minute fly is requisite ; and yet on this river, during summer, large fish are caught with the green-drake and May-flies, in opposition to the general liking. In Highland streams trout are by no means so sagacious a fish as in those of the south. You may catch them with bread and cheese at the end of a cable, they are so wrapt in greed and ignorance. Treat them invariably to large hooks, for their gullets are wondrously capacious, and they make no objections to honest rations. Give them red and black flies in abundance, the most tough, indigestible morsels you can well invent ; they have no false appetites about them, and scorn your tit-bits and nail-lengths. As to the influence of the sky in determining the food of fish, let it be noted that artificial flies are taken best on dull windy days, when natural ones are rare ; also in the mornings and evenings, during bright hot weather. A powerful sun, however, is unfavourable for fly-fishing, as it breeds huge swarms of insects for trout to feed on, and also relaxes their inclination to stir freely. Close weather, portending thunder or rain, white clouds, and a storm, all hinder fish from rising well. During such times they remain near the bottom, or in their usual hiding-places. Warm summer nights bring

good sport if the fly angled with be large and black. A crow's feather wrapt round a bait-hook may be used successfully, especially in deep still waters and lochs, near the side, where the hugest fish prowl in search of food. White flies in imitation of moths are next thing to useless, though many anglers advise them. Recommend us always to pitch-black flies for night fishing. Many is the fish we have hooked, not a yard's distance from the shore, with this expedient. What they are taken for, nobody knows; beetles or mice, it is of little consequence. Loch flies in general should be large, and in spring of a dark colour, progressively becoming lighter the nearer you approach autumn. Green bodies and grasshoppers we have found excellent in many places, especially in Highland lochs. A killing fly may be constructed from a hen's feather and a twitch of wool taken out of an old carpet, when no other materials are at hand. We remember having successful recourse to this expedient, while on an angling excursion in Inverness-shire. Some anglers greatly use the natural fly at certain seasons, and no doubt it is a killing bait, but somewhat troublesome to collect. The May-flies are those best adapted for this kind of angling. They ought to be gathered previously from under stones by the water-side, and kept in a small flannel bag. When used, transfix two on your hook at the same time, and angle as you would with worm, only nearer the surface, and with a short line. Two varieties of the wild oats, *avena fatua* and *avena sterilis*, which closely resemble a natural fly, are employed in the northern districts of Scotland by trout and salmon fishers.

To conclude our chapter upon flies, we must again express an absolute contempt for all pedantry upon this matter. We like systematic anglers, but not

such as talk learnedly of the art, who classify and extend their artificial entomology into so many varieties of the Phryganidae, Ephemeridae, Philopotomidae, and Leptoceridae, as some do ; calm, sober souls, who fetch out their whole dressing apparatus to the riverside, beat up the reeds and alders, and then squat down leisurely the best part of the morning to make their humble imitations ; while we, keener and less fastidious, are diverting a huge salmon down the stream, hooked at the first throw with a common trout hackle.

Let your supply of flies be small and fresh, and the means of replenishing it always at hand ; thus you will save useless expense, and remedy interminable confusion.

SONG.

Bring the rod, the line, the reel !
 Bring, oh bring the osier creel !
 Bring me flies of fifty kinds,
 Bring me showers, and clouds, and winds.
 All things right and tight,
 All things well and proper,
 Trailer red and bright,
 Dark and wily dropper—
 Casts of midges bring,
 Made of plover hackle,
 With a gauzy wing,
 And a cobweb tackle.

Lead me where the river flows,
 Show me where the alder grows,
 Reeds and rushes, moss and mead,
 To them lead me, quickly lead,
 Where the roving trout
 Watches round an eddy,
 With his eager snout
 Pointed up and ready,
 Till a careless fly
 On the surface wheeling,
 Tempts him rising sly
 From his safe concealing.

There, as with a pleasant friend,
I the happy hours will spend,
Urging on the subtle hook,
O'er the dark and chancy nook,
 With a hand expert
 Every motion swaying,
And on the alert
 When the trout are playing ;
Bring me rod and reel,
 Flies of every feather,
Bring the osier creel,
 Send me glorious weather !

To purchasers of tackle and flies in Edinburgh, we recommend the shops of Mrs Phin, North Bridge, and of Ellis, Prince's Street, whose stocks of Kendal hooks are generally well chosen, and their other sort of fishing gear excellent.

CHAPTER V.

FLY FISHING.

FLY FISHING is by far the most exquisite department of the gentle art. There is, generally speaking, a greater degree of skill necessary to complete the adept, more nice calculation, and a superior style of arrangement. The advantages of the fly over the ground fisher are, however, not a few: he avoids the trouble of collecting and preparing his bait, the filth and cruelty of attaching it to his hook, and those numerous uncertainties accompanying water and weather, which fall oftener to the other's lot. We shall not, however, attempt any disparagement to the merits of the honest bait fisher, since, to our knowledge, he is often a nobly gifted and scientific craftsman, a good and worthy man, zealous in behalf of the art, and in nowise to be underrated. We ourselves, in our younger days, were bait fishers, no great hands we allow, but still tolerably successful; and if we live on till our arm and eye fail, we shall be bait fishers once more, tottering in second infancy to the river-side, content with a few humble minnows, as fortune directs, or a chance salmon, which pities our age, and is willing, to his own cost, to sound our leading-strings.

We are now come to treat of the method of fly fishing in use with excellent anglers. Your rod and tackle being ready, the wind in your favour down the river, draw out with your left hand a few yards of line from your reel, dip the top of your rod in the water, and with a rapid jerk, you will lengthen as you wish, that

part you intend for throwing. A thirteen-foot wand will cast from six to seven fathoms of line. With a large double-handed rod, you may manage a much greater length. Always, if you can, angle from a distance. Trout see you, when you least imagine, and skulk off without your notice. Noise they care little about; you may talk and stamp like a madman, without frightening them; but give them a glimpse of your person, and they won't stay to take another. Some ichthyologists attribute to them an acute sense of hearing. This we are disposed to question; for how happens it, that the most obstreperous rattling of stones when wading, causes no alarm, although conveyed to them through the medium of water, a good conductor of sounds? We remember angling one still night by St Mary's Loch, when our movements were heard distinctly by some shepherds from the distance of a mile, and yet the fish rose eagerly at our very feet, following our fly to the shallowest parts of the margin; a fact which, if it does not prove the obtuseness of hearing, at any rate renders it a matter of little consequence to the angler. We shall enter more at large upon this subject in a future chapter—and to proceed,—

It requires some art to throw a long line. The beginner should commence with a short one, and without flies; lengthening it gradually as he improves. The best method of casting, is to bring the rod slowly over the right or left shoulder, and, with a turn of the wrist, make the line circle behind you; then, after a pause, fetch it forward again in the same manner, and your flies will descend softly upon the water. All jerks are apt to whip off your hooks or crack your gut. A fly fisher may use two, three, or four flies on his casts, according to pleasure. When angling with small hooks, we adopt the medium number. Large ones ought to

be fished with in pairs, and well separated. In throwing the cast, the lowermost, or trail fly, should be made to alight foremost ; its fall ought to be almost imperceptible ; it should come down on the water like a gossamer, followed by the droppers. The moment a fly touches the surface, it is ten times more apt to raise a fish, than during the act of drawing it along. At no time are we stanch advocates for the system of leading our hooks, either against or across the stream ; our method is rather to shake them over it for a moment, and then repeat the throw. A trout will discover your fly at the distance of several yards, if feeding, and will dart at it like lightning. Always, if you can, fish with the wind, and do not concern yourself, as some do, from what quarter it comes. In spring, no doubt, a south-west breeze is preferable to all others ; yet we have seen even easterly winds not the worst, on many waters, especially during summer months, when the natural fly is apt to become over-plenty.

Trout will sometimes take in the most unlikely weathers, so that the angler should not despair at any time. Hunger causes them to feed at least once in the twenty-four hours, and generally much oftener. If the wind blows down the river, commence at the pool head, and fish every inch of good water ; you may pass over the very rough and very shallow parts, also those which are absolutely dead, calm, and clear, unless you see fish rising in them, when, should your tackle be light, there is no harm in taking a throw or two. Dead water, however, when rippled or discoloured, may be angled in with great success. When you raise a good trout, strike slowly, or hardly at all, only continue the motion of your hand without slacking it ; the fish, if large, will hook itself. Small trout and par may be whipped in with rapidity : 'tis folly to play or use cere-

mony with such trifles. Should the fish miss your fly altogether, give him another chance, and a third if that will not do; a touch of your barb, however, will sharpen his wits, so as to prevent him from again rising. He prefers flies without stings. When you hook a trout, if you can, turn his head with the stream, and take him rapidly down. Thus you will exhaust him in the shortest time, whereas, by hauling against the current, you allow him to swim freely in his natural direction, and also exert three times more strength upon your tackle than is really needful. A good-sized fish, handled in this foolish manner, can never be taken; it is impossible to tire him out, and the strongest line will give way to his resistance. We have observed, that some trout, when they find themselves hooked, push towards the bottom, and attempt to cut or perplex the tackle among stones or weeds. To prevent this, keep a tight high line, and allow none of it, if possible, to the fish. When your victim is exhausted, draw him gently ashore, upon the nearest channel, or most level part of the margin. He will come in sideways, and generally lie motionless for a few seconds, during which time you will be able to run forward and seize him. Beware of catching hold of your line, until he is properly banked. Many a famous trout have we seen lost by this inadvertence on the part of anglers, who think so to save time and labour. One should remember, how the spring of the rod is thus removed, and how there remains no proper curb to the strength of the fish, which easily breaks a single gut, or tears itself from a sharp hook, and wishes the astonished angler better sport farther on.

In playing a large fish, especially if it be a salmon, always keep opposite the head, and never allow your line to slacken for an instant; if you do, be not sur-

prised if it should come back to your hand again, evidently without any thing. A salmon fly should be angled with, in short jerks, among the most rapid parts of the stream: the fish lie mostly near the head or bottom of a pool, and seldom about the middle. In running them, use your legs as well as your line, but always keep the latter on the *qui vive*, letting it out somewhat charily, with the assistance of the hand, and taking every opportunity to wind it up again. The fish, when hooked, generally ascends or strikes across the current; after a fair heat, he will often spring furiously out of water, striving to disengage the barb from his mouth, or shiver the line with his tail. At such times, considerable skill is required to prevent him from accomplishing his purpose. When he becomes calm, he will take matters more philosophically, and not seldom refuse any further resistance by attaching himself firmly to the bottom. Rouse him immediately, as you best can; for he meditates the snapping of your line by a sudden effort, when you are off guard. Either wade in and kick him, or, if the pool be too deep, throw stones cautiously near the spot where he lies. He will soon start again in beautiful style, as if for the sea; when he becomes exhausted, drag him to the edge, gaff, and secure him. In order to rouse a sulky fish, many employ a small ring of iron or lead, which is made to slide along the line upon its snout. This apparatus, however, is apt to disengage the tackle from its mouth, and may be dispensed with. A salmon, hooked by the back-fin, will play ten times more vigorously than one hooked by the mouth. You may as well bridle a horse by the middle, and attempt to turn him, as manage a large fish so fastened. We have known anglers occupy a whole day in securing a moderate sized grilse.

There is, we believe, a very singular instance on

record among the inhabitants of the lower part of the Tummel, with respect to the capture of a huge salmon with the rod. The time occupied was so great, that we shall not forfeit our title to veracity by mentioning it, but leave the curious reader to inquire for himself. We remember also another instance of this kind, which we had from good authority in the south of Scotland, how a salmon, hooked by the side-fin below Elibank wood on the Tweed, took the angler down to Yair bridge, a distance of several miles, and at length made its escape with his tackle, after several hours' play. Even when hooked by the mouth, the salmon is no contemptible animal to deal with. We ourselves were compelled to work one for some hours in St Mary's Loch, on a common trouting fly, and at length secured him, before he was nearly exhausted, by enclosing him in a small bay, and then preventing his escape from behind.

So much for the strength of this fish, and yet, strange to say, with such small means may its prodigious power be kept under by eminent anglers, that a single horse-hair has been known to master a full-grown salmon. The feat of capturing one with such slender tackle was, we believe, some time ago performed by the Reverend Mr Paterson, lately clergyman at Gala-shiels, now in Glasgow.

In angling with the fly, whether for trout or salmon, it will be remarked, how, at certain times, they will rise in great numbers towards your hook, without your being able to secure a single fish. This is owing sometimes to their state of repletion, and sometimes to the colour of the water or the quality of the atmosphere. On these occasions, it is truly tantalising to behold the most desirable fish mocking your fly with repeated plunges, seemingly aware of your presence, and defying

your nicest ingenuity. There is, however, no proper help for it, although we have observed that a change in the size or colour of the hook will sometimes work wonders; also, when trout, a small, white, flesh maggot, toughened in bran, and attached to your fly, is no bad remedy. The fine perception which trout possess in their smell often causes them to quit your artificial insect when just on the point of seizing it. This faculty of theirs is so powerful as to enable them to discern the approach of a worm some yards off, although prevented from seizing it by the interposition of a stone or other obstacle. If you throw a handful of salmon roe into a calm clear pool, which seems for the time almost evacuated, except by a few stragglers, and watch it cautiously, you will be surprised at the number of fish smelling their way from all quarters to the baited spot; many of these will swim up from the distance of two or three hundred yards, directed merely by the flavour carried down to them; the smallness of which may be imagined more easily than calculated.

In general, however, trout trust more to their sight, in seizing flies, than to their sense of smell. They dart at them with a velocity too great to be easily checked by any sudden discovery. Like men, they find the deceit when there is no remedy, and gain the most valuable lesson at the precious cost of life. We have even caught trout in very turbid water, angling with the artificial fly in the manner of worm, so foolishly are they sometimes taken with appearances. Maggots on a smallish fly are found to be very successful during the summer months on many waters. Large trout, however, are careless about seizing them, and will not be seduced by so trifling a tit-bit from any distance. Still, when on the feed, a well-sized fish will rarely refuse the delicately offered lure. Besides the flesh

maggot, the caddis worm, or, as it is termed in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, the wooden man, from its singularly constructed lodgement or bark case, will be found a successful appendage to the fly, during warm evenings in June and July.

Double-rod fishing has got into practice on some rivers ; it is poachers' work, and ought to be prevented by law. This method of raking the water requires no art, and affords little amusement. A line stretched between a couple of rods, and hung with flies, is taken down the stream by two individuals on its opposite sides, so that every inch of water is gone over, and every feeding trout raised. As by the lath, immense numbers of fish are wounded, as well as taken, getting detached from the hook after a long-continued struggle, and then pining away for months at the bottom, unable either to feed or spawn. We hope soon to see an effectual check put upon this manner of depopulation.

Fly fishing in Scotland was wont to commence about the end of March, or early in April, although of late years our spring weather has been so unusually mild as to add even part of February to the angler's calendar. Nay, we have seen, during Christmas, trout rise freely, especially near the mouths of streams. In some rivers, great quantities of kelts, or spawned salmon, are taken in the month of March, on their descent to the sea. We have known of forty or fifty of these useless fish being captured with a single rod in one day, certainly a most unnecessary slaughter. April, May, and June, are undoubtedly the best months in the season for angling with the fly, not that in them you will catch the greatest number of trout, but such as you do catch are generally of a larger size than those taken at a later period. July and August are mostly too hot and dry ;

the waters are then clear and covered with food ; the fish lazy, and the angler tormented by multitudes of gad-flies and other insects. Par, however, and small trout, may be captured in great quantities, especially in the mornings and evenings ; nor are the brandling and other worms rejected by the larger sort of fish ; white maggots also are esteemed at this time. In the Highland districts of Scotland, however, the angling is now at its prime, especially among such streams as are frequented by the sea trout. Slight floods of course are necessary to insure good sport. If rainy, September and October vie with the spring months for the heart of the angler. Salmon are now ascending our Lowland rivers, and seize eagerly at the fly ; common trout become more active, and move about in quest of roe, with which they may be destroyed in huge numbers.

SONG—THE TAKING OF THE SALMON.

A birr ! a whirr ! a salmon's on,
 A goodly fish ! a thumper !
 Bring up, bring up the ready gaff,
 And if we land him, we shall quaff
 Another glorious bumper !
 Hark ! 'tis the music of the reel,
 The strong, the quick, the steady ;
 The line darts from the active wheel—
 Have all things right and ready.

A birr ! a whirr ! the salmon's out,
 Far on the rushing river ;
 Onward he holds with sudden leap,
 Or plunges through the whirlpool deep,
 A desperate endeavour !
 Hark to the music of the reel !
 The fitful and the grating :
 It pants along the breathless wheel,
 Now hurried—now abating.

A birr ! a whirr ! the salmon's off !—

No, no, we still have got him ;
 The wily fish is sullen grown,
 And, like a bright imbedded stone,
 Lies gleaming at the bottom.
 Hark to the music of the reel !
 'Tis hush'd, it hath forsaken ;
 With care we'll guard the magic wheel,
 Until its notes awaken.

A birr ! a whirr ! the salmon's up,
 Give line, give line and measure ;
 But now he turns ! keep down ahead,
 And lead him as a child is led,
 And land him at your leisure.
 Hark to the music of the reel !
 'Tis welcome, it is glorious ;
 It wanders through the winding wheel,
 Returning and victorious.

A birr ! a whirr ! the salmon's in,
 Upon the bank extended ;
 The princely fish is gasping slow,
 His brilliant colours come and go,
 All beautifully blended.
 Hark to the music of the reel,
 It murmurs and it closes ;
 Silence is on the conquering wheel,
 Its wearied line reposes.

No birr ! no whirr ! the salmon's ours,
 The noble fish, the thumper :
 Strike through his gill the ready gaff,
 And bending homewards, we shall quaff
 Another glorious bumper !
 Hark to the music of the reel,
 We listen with devotion ;
 There's something in that circling wheel
 That wakes the heart's emotion !

CHAPTER VI.

BAIT FISHING.

WE borrow some of our notes on this method of angling from tried craftsmen of our acquaintance, whose experience leaves our own in some measure behind. Looking to the success of their practice, we are inclined to believe that much skill is required in order to become a first-rate bait fisher, and yet it is true that the veriest bungler may hit upon good sport with worm and minnow, while, with the fly, he is unable to capture a single trout. The reason of this is plain. A beginner in fly fishing is apt rather to frighten than allure with his clumsy throwing; he knows nothing of the likeliest places—nothing of insects or their movements; while, in worm angling, the bait is only to be appended, dropped, carried forward by the stream, and, when seized by a fish, drawn up; and this is generally done by the beginner in swollen and muddy water, where no concealment is necessary; whereas fly fishing can alone be pursued where all is either tolerably clear, or absolutely transparent. Practised bait fishers, however, we allow, are not so capricious, and handle their rods across the most dwindled and crystal streams, with as much success as over those which are thoroughly heightened and discoloured.

The first object of the ground angler is to obtain and prepare his worms. These reptiles are to be found in greatest quantities on a rich moist soil. Clay, sand, and peat-moss, afford them in very small numbers. They will generate quickly under all sorts of manure

and decayed substances, vegetable as well as animal. Four or five different varieties are known in this country; among which we find the large lob or dew worm, an excellent bait for salmon and sea trout. These may be picked up in any garden, by a ready hand, during the summer twilights, when they crawl out upon the surface in search of food. They are a beautiful and subtle worm, and require to be seized with some address. Secondly, we have the common earth worm, a smaller and more inactive sort. Thirdly, the brandling, a beautifully streaked variety, found only in very rich and warm soils, among hot beds, near common sewers, and at the side of tan pits; the red worm also breeds along with it, and both are highly esteemed by anglers. We, however, reckon the brandling a soft bait, and disagreeable to handle, being filled with a yellow liquid, which issues out on the slightest pressure. This reptile generates with wonderful rapidity; a dozen or two of them, in the course of a few days, when placed among warm manure, sufficient in quantity, will produce many myriads, as we have witnessed. The red worm is certainly superior as a bait, although somewhat small and clear. After these may be mentioned a greenish reptile, the favourite food of many trout, yet not often angled with. It resembles the slug in its movements, and seldom grows to a large size.

Worms may be dug up with a spade, or grape (a three-pronged instrument), such as is used for raising potatoes. We, however, prefer another method of taking them. Insert a thickish stick or dibble into the soil, eight or ten inches deep. Move it backwards and forwards with tolerable quickness, so as to agitate the earth round about. After a minute or so, every worm within the circle of agitation, which may extend several feet, will appear at the surface. The reason of

this is, that some mole is imagined to be near at hand by these reptiles, who, accordingly, attempt their escape by shooting upwards, and then travelling over the top instead of working their way out of reach, through a stubborn mass of earth, which their natural enemy might penetrate much faster. This method of capturing worms has the advantage of bringing them into your hands in a purified condition, free from filth and injury, both of which your delving instrument is apt to occasion.

In taking your worms, have a flannel bag near you, filled with fresh clean moss, into which drop them when seized. They should be kept two or three days in a cool place, before used, in order to be thoroughly purged and toughened. Take care that the moss become neither too dry nor too wet; a spoonful of cream or sweet milk is a good remedy for the former defect—a better, is to change it every other day, for some newly plucked. In preparing worms, a common flowerpot is a good recipient. Some anglers redden theirs with a mixture of pounded brick, oatmeal, and water: the effect of this composition is nevertheless entirely fanciful.

In a former chapter, we treated of the size of the hook used in bait fishing, and noticed that the best craftsmen prefer a large one. As sold in Scotland, our bait hooks are all too long in the shank, a defect which the file or fingers will easily remedy. The manner of attaching the bait is of some importance. Many anglers have a notion, that, by merely concealing the hook, they achieve all that is requisite. Nothing can be more erroneous. A stiff unbending curve is any thing but the natural shape of a worm, which, especially in water, is given to twist itself and perform numerous evolutions—all of them attractive to the eye of

a trout, and without which he will scarcely be induced either to smell or nibble. It is necessary, therefore, so to append the bait as to preserve to it those expressive motions and generic attitudes which are most taking to the cunning perceptions of fish. In doing so, select such worms as are liveliest and free from knots. If of a large kind, one will be quite sufficient to bait with, although two of moderate size are preferable. Holding the worm betwixt the fore-finger and thumb of your left hand, insert the hook, which is retained in the right, at about one-fourth of its whole length's distance from the head of the reptile, and bring it out near the tail. The second worm should be appended in the same manner, the first being previously drawn up over the shank of the hook, and brought down again upon it, so as to form one bait. Some anglers insert the worm from the tail upwards, but this mode of applying it is erroneous, at least it possesses no direct advantages; on the contrary, the reptile is thereby apt to get disengaged, or at any rate to overtwist and separate itself. The manner of baiting described, leaves the barb of the hook bare, a matter to be attended to more in some waters and states of water than others; for among shy trout and clear streams, even the minutest portion of the hook, when visible, will frequently occasion distrust; it is therefore necessary at times to conceal carefully your wire, and allow no measure of it to project; still, in general, this is a useless piece of caution, and prevents the proper striking of the fish. In angling with the worm, it is of little consequence whether you do so moving up or down the stream, provided, when adopting the latter plan, you employ a short line; for with a long one it is impossible to hook the trout aptly, unless you stand below them.

Some anglers permit their worm to be carried for-

ward by the current; others move it across with a heavy sinker appended, so as to keep it near the bottom. And as to the manner in which trout take the bait, it may be noticed, that at the first dart they engross the whole hook within their mouths; wherefore, many, knowing this, strike at the moment: the fish then let the bait go, and commence upon the worm more leisurely, killing it with repeated bites before it is finally swallowed.

For quick striking, a very short line is necessary, not above the length of the rod; this ought always to be kept at its full stretch, and moved in a half circle with the angler. It requires some degree of perception to know the exact instant when the fish first seizes your bait; it does so with such softness, and with no likeness of a tug, as one is apt to imagine; nay, it merely closes its jaws upon the hook, as a gaping oyster would do upon one's finger. Then is your opportunity for striking; if you neglect it, you allow the trout its more leisurely process of nibbling, and its chances of escape. In striking with the short line, do it sharply, and never against the current, but rather with it, in a diagonal direction, and not too high. The reason of this advice is obvious, for all fish feed with their heads pointing up the stream, kindly giving you the choice of pulling the hook into or out of their mouths; the latter of which purposes you accomplish, to a dead certainty, by striking against the current. This whip-jack manner of bait-fishing is very deadly with an experienced hand. The long-line anglers make nothing of their method comparatively; and yet, among clear waters, and where fish are few, or bite shyly, patience and a long line will carry the day. Remarkably fine gut ought to be used by all ground anglers, whatever be the practice. Trout are a suspicious distrustful set,

and three in general slink off for one that nibbles, terrified, no doubt, by those singular accompaniments of your worm, a line and hook. During July and August, when our waters are more than ordinarily clear, a small red worm, slenderly attached to a fine hook, No. 7, is known to be very deadly for two or three hours after sunrise.

To all bait fishers, Scotland affords excellent sport ; her rivers run so strongly, and are maintained by so many sources in the shape of mountain burns. These romantic streamlets abound in trout ; every stone shelters its inhabitant, and the meanest pool is peopled with numbers. Burn fish, however, are generally of a small size ; they seldom exceed a pound in weight, except in the spawning season, when larger ones ascend from broader streams, or lochs at a distance. Still the taking of them is a pleasant pastime, especially when they bite eagerly at your worm, as they do during rain and in discoloured water. At such times you have only to drop your bait without art, and the fish will manage its own ruin.

In ground fishing for salmon, use lob-worms, fresh from the earth, and not toughened or prepared in any way. These will be found greatly preferable to such as have undergone the purging process, especially when the fish are newly run ; and also near the mouths of rivers, sea trout and whitlings will seize them greedily. Angle for salmon with a long line and a large hook, No. 12, giving the fish a few moments to gorge, before you strike.

Worms are taken greedily at night, and early in the morning ; also, when the sun is very powerful, at mid-day. After rain, when the waters begin to swell, one is likeliest to meet with great success ; for at such times, every individual fish is on the look-out for food.

During, however, the subsiding of a flood, fly and minnows are infinitely more killing.

Akin to this sort of angling is roe fishing, concerning which we remark, that in autumn it is the most fatal method of capturing trout, and is growing much into practice in the south of Scotland. The roe is procured generally from the grilse or salmon, and used either in a raw state, made into paste, or salted entire. We give the following receipt for salting roe:—Procure some pounds of the freshest—notice that it be red and firm—take off the membrane and broken parts—wash the spawn in lukewarm milk and water, carefully separating the individual particles—beat together three parts of fine salt and one of saltpetre, and rub the whole carefully with the mixture, in the proportion of an ounce and a quarter to the pound of roe. Spread it, thus prepared, over a flannel cloth, until quite dry and tough; then stow it in pots, and run the top over with lard, to exclude the air. This preparation will keep good for a long time. One great object is to preserve and heighten the natural colour of the spawn, a somewhat difficult matter we confess, and yet seemingly known better in England than here, where it is more angled with, and procured in greater quantities.

In angling, cover the point of your hook with a piece of roe cut with a knife, as large as a horse bean, taking care, while attaching it, not to crush the ova; and employ a short line, striking quickly. Always fix upon one stream, and keep to it; you are not diminishing the number of fish near you, catch them as rapidly as you may. Some anglers previously bait the ground by throwing in a handful or two of spawn. This attracts and keeps the fish to the spot. Turbid and swollen waters are the best for roe fishing, and your likeliest month is October.

At Peebles, in the neighbourhood of Hawick, and many others of our southern districts, parties of twenty are not unfrequently engaged on the same part of the river at a time, angling with the salmon roe ; the individual who is foremost, after having finished the stream, taking his place again behind the others ; for it is one of the singularities of roe fishing, that the longer a certain confined space of water is gone over, and the more numerous those employed, the better to each angler the sport becomes. Trout, it may be observed, when taking roe, feed in the manner of carp, and suck in the bait without biting it. This is not their method with the worm or minnow, which they always attempt to kill before swallowing ; accordingly, in roe fishing, as the bait is seized, the strain upon the line is scarcely felt, unless by an experienced hand, and when the weather is calm. A gentle run, rather than a violent tug, is generally perceptible, and it may be held as a rule to strike with the current when the line stops.

In the north of Scotland, roe fishing, if at all, is very unfrequently practised ; and what is singular, we have remarked that fish, of the salmon kind especially, refuse many baits they are known to snatch at greedily on the Tweed. Among these are the par-minnow and par-tail, along with the roe. Sea trout and herlings we allow will at times be tempted to seize them, but the larger fish, unless kelts, always regard them with indifference, and prefer flies instead. It is to us a matter of surprise, that the salmon-curiers in the north are so totally ignorant of the high prices obtained in England and the lower districts of Scotland for the roe of the fish ; since it is a notable fact, that this commodity, so valuable to the southern angler, is by many fishing-holders regarded as useless, and absolutely thrown away, along with the entrails of the salmon before boiling.

Were it properly preserved, we have no doubt considerable profits might be made by the sale of it.

We now come to treat of minnow fishing, by far the pleasantest method of capturing trout, next to angling with the fly. Provide your minnows by means of a small drag-net or hook. Select those of a moderate size, and which shine whitest. Such as have been taken from a different water, have, it is worthy of remark, always been found more killing than those peculiar to the one fished in. They may be salted, but are best perfectly fresh. The tail of a small trout or par is no bad substitute, if minnows cannot be had. In fact, it is believed by some worthy anglers that the par-tail has a virtue of its own, and is not taken merely on account of its similarity to the minnow; be this as it may, we have often found it a deadly and effective bait, although somewhat ill to manage. Our only reason for preferring the fresh to the salted minnow is, that by its silvery appearance and more rational form, it better attracts the fish; at the same time, it is well known that a trout loves a salt bait, and will repeat its attack upon a minnow of that description, while it refuses to do so upon one newly taken. [For manner of baiting with minnows, and description of tackles, see pages 21 and 22.] Fish in rapid streams, also in deep discoloured pools, and during a smart curl. Manage the minnow as you would your fly, throwing it down, and across, as far as you are able; bring it towards you about six inches or more below the surface, spinning rapidly by the aid of several swivels. When a fish rises, give him time before you strike; let him turn and gorge the bait, then strike sharply, and he is yours: all fly fishers are apt to strike too soon, and miss the fish.

Trout seize a minnow by the middle or near the

head, and you generally hook them on the upper hooks. In rivers, where numbers of minnows are found, you must angle with the very smallest, not above an inch in length, and use a proportionate tackle. The trout in such waters love delicate tit-bits, and are absurdly nice in their feeding. Artificial minnows are sometimes employed by anglers, but generally fail, except in muddy waters and lochs. Mother-of-pearl makes the best imitation—there is a virtue in it which few fish can resist. The natives of the South Sea Islands fabricate their hooks of this substance, and use it as a bait at the same time.

We have heard it observed by practised minnow-fishers, how a trout will sometimes dash at their maimed and unnatural bait, while in the very act of dragging it through a swarm of its own species. This singular circumstance can be accounted for through the instinct belonging to all predatory animals; which instinct induces them to hold in pursuit that which is wounded and incapable of escaping, in preference to what is vigorous and in good health; wherefore we doubt not but that the spinning minnow is taken for an injured and stray fish, which a clever dart, although thrown away upon its banded and more active brethren, will readily secure.

Trolling with par for large trout is a glorious pastime, especially on a Highland loch, circled with mountain scenery—the craft of nature by incantation wrought, when the morning stars sang together. It needs intellect to enjoy it well, and a poet's heart to know its luxury. Take with you some choice and idle spirit, a rower he must be, that can manage your airy shallop as the winds do a weathercock—can chant a ballad of yore, of ladye and chieftain, and pranksome elf and kelpie wild—can speak to the echoes and to yourself,

cheering you with wit and wisdom, and admiring your science and skill, and the gorgeous fish you are playing, twenty fathoms off, with a strong and steady hand; your heart “high fluttering the while, like woman’s when she loves.”

Tackle for trolling should be dressed upon tried gimp. Bait as you do with a minnow: use a strong rod, heavy lead, and a long line of oiled cord, wound upon an easy reel. Choose a sunny day, with a stiffish breeze, and troll near, but not among the weediest parts of the loch. Plant yourself at the boat stern, and get rowed gently at the rate of three miles an hour, letting out from twenty to thirty yards of line betwixt you and your bait. Trout from six to nine pounds weight cause the best sport when hooked: a larger one seldom leaps or makes any violent exertion to escape; he swims sullenly, and at ease, regarding the angler with a sort of sovereign contempt. You must row after him, and turn him if you can before he gets among weeds; never slack your line for an instant, and look well about you. Land as soon as you are able, and play him from the shore. Your companion will assist you at the death.

So much for the different kinds of bait fishing practised in Scotland. We esteem it folly to talk of the less popular baits used by the *virtuosi*—of frogs, grubs, and leeches, water-rats, and mice; all which animals trout will devour. It might be asked, may fish not be taken with any thing? They have been known to swallow money, rings, and many other marvels; nevertheless, they seem to have no pleasure in snapping at the bait of the unskilful angler, and refuse to die under his hands.

THE ANGLER'S SONG.

A jolly craft have we, huzza !
The brethren of the streams !
In joy we pass the welcome day,
And close it under dreams.
We wander by the river side,
And by the gentle rill ;
They roll along the valley wide—
They gambol on the hill.

It is a manly one and free,
This pleasant sport of ours ;
Above us is the shady tree,
And under us the flowers :
And in our hands the pliant rod
Is waving to and fro ;
The salmon lies upon the sod,
Glittering like the snow !

We love the angler's quiet lot,
His meditative art ;
The fancies in his hour of thought,
That blossom from his heart.
All other things we'll cast behind,
Let busy toil alone,
And, flinging care unto the wind,
Will angle, angle on.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE PIKE.

THE pike inhabits many of our waters, and affords to the angler no small sport. In some parts of Scotland, it grows to an immense size, having been repeatedly killed upwards of sixty pounds weight, in Lochs Venachar and Lomond, as also in the south-west of Scotland, and, we believe, at Lochmaben. Where trout abound, this fish thrives in style; acquiring a peculiar delicacy of flavour, foreign to the dry coarse jacks met with in English rivers. It also shows a strength and vigour, when hooked, very different from its usual indifference and want of activity. We have seen it leap about, like a fresh-run salmon, in order to get quit of the hook, and in some instances it has made away with our faithless gimp, while in the very act of bringing it to land.

It has been insisted on among naturalists that the pike is not native to Great Britain, but introduced into the country about three centuries ago. Whether this be true or not, is of little consequence, although we are very apt, judging from appearances, to question it. There are many places, in Rosshire for instance, where this fish is found, to which no one would ever dream of fetching it, and where its existence is fearfully prejudicial to the increase of that more valuable fish, the salmon. We have no doubt, that on the Conan, and Black Water, one of its branches, at least half of the salmon fry are annually massacred to satiate the appetite of this destroyer; on Tay, too, it does infinite mis-

chief, as well as on Earn and other rivers, where it breeds.

In rod angling for pike, we adopt three methods—employing the gorge tackle, the swivel tackle, and the fly. Our gorge-hook is double brazed, and armed upon brass wire. A par or small trout inverted, is the usual bait. We insert the wire of our tackle through the fish, bringing the upper end of it out at the tail, and allowing the two barbs of the hook to protrude from its mouth. In angling, we both throw and drop the bait, as the nature of the water demands, moving it slowly towards the surface. When a pike seizes it, there is at first no perceptible tug; one feels as if he heard the shutting of a pair of jaws on the bait; and if you can manage to see your fish, you will observe him holding your trout by the middle, as if crushing the life out of it. Keep a tight line, but do not pull or strike. Too much resistance places your intended victim on his guard; a little, however, sharpens his appetite. For this purpose also, some employ an irritator or small hook hanging apart from the bait, which, on coming into external contact with his head or body, has the virtue of inciting him to swallow readily, out of pure wrath and impatience. This is a refinement scarcely worth practising. In common, after a few seconds, the pike will begin to move towards his den, still grasping your bait betwixt his teeth, and intending to bolt it immediately. Let out line with your hand from the reel; and now, he is fixed, and darts off like a tiger, shaking his chain, and with open mouth tossing himself out of the water at thirty yards' distance—the worst is over, and he turns revengefully towards the shore; wind up—ha! he is out again, and again he makes for the shallows; but the monster is exhausted and moves heavily; lead him with caution to

the edge, lay down your rod, and lift him upon the bank. In order to disengage your hook from the entrails of this formidable fish, the gills should be forced open, and a knife introduced for the purpose, taking care previously to thrust it through the spine-bone of your victim, and so prevent the possibility of your catching a Tartar. Unfasten your hook from the wire, before drawing the latter through the mouth of the pike, as otherwise it is again apt to catch among the teeth, from which it may be somewhat difficult to extricate it, without incurring a few scratches.

Should a fish, after having bitten, abandon your gorge-hook, try him with a running bait upon swivels, and let this be a fresh trout of a smaller size than your other, and fixed upon a gimp tackle, with the tail downwards, as in minnow fishing. See that it spins judiciously, and when the pike rises, let him turn with the bait before you strike. River pike, it may be remarked, seldom play so well as those in lochs. They push generally below the banks instead of striking across, and look out for old stumps upon which to entangle and break your line. One ought, therefore, to make quick sport with such rascals—running them down upon level banks in a twinkling, and before they are able to get under weigh.

The third method of angling for pike is with the fly—a kind of fishing not much in use, but still on some waters very deadly. The pike-fly should be large and gaudy, fabricated of divers feathers and tinsels to resemble the king-fisher, or a huge dragon-fly. Use it in a strong warm wind, upon water from six to two feet deep, and near weeds. You will kill with it fish of various sizes, from ten inches in length and upwards; very heavy ones, however, refuse to take it, on account probably of the exertion necessary in order to

come to the surface. We have always noticed that the biggest pike are caught during close sultry weather, with a ground bait, and at those times when trout refuse food altogether ; also at night, with set lines, in the summer months, when they leave the weeds and bulrushes in quest of food.

Although the pike is often nice and suspicious, in places where trout abound, still, when provoked, he becomes very bold and unwary, treating your presence as no constraint upon his temper and appetite. He will follow the bait to your very feet, and, should it escape him, retire a yard or two, waiting eagerly for its reappearance. When angry, he erects his fins in a remarkable manner, as the lion doth his mane, or the porcupine his quills ; moreover, the pike appears careless of pain, if, indeed, fishes in general feel it to any great degree. We have actually landed one of these fish, cooped him alive in our creel, and when by some negligence of ours he made his escape into the water, have succeeded a second time in securing him. On another occasion, we remember having part of our tackle, consisting of a large double gorge-hook, dressed upon brase wire, carried off by a pike : and yet upon renewing it, the aggressor returned to the charge, and was taken. The former hook we discovered, gorged by him in such a manner as must, we thought, not only have suffocated any other animal, but done so by the medium of the most exquisite internal agony.

Judging from these facts, and others we shall presently relate, it seems to us, that, according to the arrangements of Nature, fishes are possessed of no very acute sense of pain, and are generally defective in that structure of emotions, upon which suffering and pleasure are separately dependent. Those who hold angling to be a cruel sport, are, we maintain, without

argument, until they discover to us the clue by which to trace those capabilities in fish enabling them to endure the great extremes of heat and cold to which water is liable. Should it be answered, they are cold-blooded—that is the best reason why they are not easily affected by any other sort of pain, such, for instance, as is inflicted by the hook. It will be asked, however, why do fish struggle so vehemently, and make such vigorous efforts to escape? Merely from a love of freedom and impatience of control, which desire after liberty is common to all breathing creatures, from the fly upwards.

And as to trout, we may mention, that the same insensibility to pain has been practically proved to us to be theirs, in common with the pike. We have caught them with large hooks, and even minnow-tackles, encased in their mouths and stomachs; nor did they seem to suffer any great inconvenience, seeing that their appetites were not impaired, nor their condition rendered less healthy. On one occasion, we remember losing a small fly hook upon some willows which overhung the water, and on the evening of the same day, angling near the spot, we caught a trout with our identical fly sticking in his jaw. We remember also, when lashing the Yarrow behind a companion, he having lost his cast of hooks upon a fish, we were so fortunate as to entrap it, and recover his flies, not ten minutes after. The trout had the tackle fastened to his body, dragging after him at least five yards of gut. Instances of this sort are of no uncommon occurrence, and all industrious anglers must have occasionally met with them.

In our attempts to prove that fish experience little actual pain, we have said enough: it is a matter upon which men ought to be content with their ignorance,

and not throw up against anglers the charge of cruelty without reason or argument, as many have done.

To revert to the pike, we may mention, what we have gathered from various quarters, that it is found sometimes in the Baltic and the Mediterranean—a singular circumstance, which may be confirmed to the curious upon inquiry. Great injury has of late years been done by the transference of the pike to many of our best trouting lochs, where a single individual has been known to consume nearly its own weight of fish daily. This was the case on Loch Turit, near Crieff, where the trout, formerly abundant, were, till lately, greatly reduced by the hostile and merciless depredations of their natural enemies. These in their turn, from the circumstance of their being diligently netted out, have become scarce, and the others are gradually regaining the ascendancy.

The best associates of the pike are perch and such spine-protected and thick-scaled fish as can defy its attacks. In fact, we generally notice that these sorts are found together naturally; although it may be worthy of mention that we know at least of one county in Scotland where the pike is particularly numerous, and where hardly a single perch exists. This is Ross-shire, northward of which both these fish become unfrequent, as well as the minnow. The pike at table is reckoned by some a coarse dry fish, and so in general they are; yet to our knowledge, in certain lochs, for instance, that of the Lowes, in Selkirkshire, they almost rival the turbot, and should be cooked somewhat in a similar manner. They are none the worse for being kept a few days, especially if of any size. A good eating pike ought to weigh at least from five to twelve pounds—the smaller ones being, without exception, bad.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TROUT.

ALTHOUGH we have stated in a former chapter that the external appearance of trout is derived, in a great measure, from the nature of their feeding places, and that one soil will cause one manner of fish, and another a different one, yet we mean not to say but that every variety may be generated from the same spawn: for it is surprising to notice the changes which food, water, and ground, will each of them effect. Some kinds of food redden, while others whiten, the flesh; some make it soft, flabby, and ill-tasted; others impart a curd and firmness to it; and a third sort causes it to become rich, oily, and fine-flavoured. Also, in certain waters, and over certain soils, trout externally become white or yellow, grey, black, or purple; they grow fat, lean, or large, just as they are provided for.

We believe, however, that, truly speaking, there are only five or six distinct species of fresh-water trout in our Scottish lochs and streams, which, although they may alter in appearance, do not, as far as can be avoided, cross or intermingle their breeds. And here we may observe, that many naturalists judge of the species and variety by the number of spines or rays in the different fins of the fish; the pectoral fin of the trout containing generally from twelve spines and upwards, the anal ten or eleven, &c.; which method, we are of opinion, is greatly liable to error, inasmuch as we have observed a considerable difference with regard to the number of rays in trout, obviously of the same

variety and even the same spawning. The species of fresh-water trout in Scotland may be reduced to the great lake trout or *salmo ferox*, the gillaroo or gizzard trout, the great river or bull-trout, and the common trout, which last species admits of an infinite variety from the causes above stated. We omit mentioning at present the sea trout, whitling, and herling, the guiniad or pol-lac, the vendace, and the char, as also the greyling, which is not properly a Scottish fish.

Before disserting upon these kinds of trout, it is worthy of remark, that within the last sixty years our waters have undergone considerable changes as regards their inhabitants; that, in fact, some streams and lochs contain at this moment sorts and sizes of fish very unlike those which peopled them half a century ago.

For example, let us take St Mary's Loch, and the small one connected with it, called the Loch of the Lowes. There are many living in the Forest (a name given to that part of Selkirkshire which formerly constituted the far-famed forest of Etrick) who remember when this considerable sheet of water scarcely contained a single trout, whereas, in the present day, it is completely filled with them. Pike, however, abounded at that time, in proof of which fact, there are a few deep holes adjoining St Mary's at Meggat-foot, which retain the name of the Ged-lake—the word Ged being the Scotch for pike. A further confirmation of this singular circumstance will be found in Sir John Sinclair's Statistical Account of the parish of Etrick, written by the present Dr Russell of Yarrow. It is affirmed, moreover, that in the Loch of the Lowes, trout, which are now scarce, were then found in great numbers, and that a mutual and voluntary change of quarters between them and the pike gradually brought about matters as they now exist.

We consider this to be a strong and remarkable proof of revolutions among fish ; yet we cannot refrain from alluding to what has happened under our own eye with regard to this very point, and assigning some sort of cause for such extraordinary changes.

About six years ago, when we first angled in Yarrow and the lochs above mentioned, we were accustomed to kill very large and strong trout ; they are now greatly diminished, both in size and in quantity. In Tweed, since 1827 and 1828, the fish have become more numerous. Near Edinburgh, on the Water of Leith, they have also increased greatly in every respect. On the Almond, again, in some parts, they have fallen off, as also on the Esk near Roslin.

We need not introduce further instances of this kind, but state our belief that they are universal, and can be traced partly to the cultivation of the country and the draining of mosses, partly to variations in the climate, which of late years have been somewhat extraordinary ; and in the case of a deterioration in the numbers and size of trout, it may be accounted for by the more prevalent systems of poaching, and the wider introduction of water machinery and chemical poisons employed in various manufactories.

And here we shall allude briefly, as connected with the changes which some waters undergo, to several curious illustrations of the breeding of trout, which took place in an artificial reservoir belonging to the Edinburgh Water Company, and built to compensate the leading off of the Crawley springs on the Pentland Hills, a short way above Glencorse. A small burn running from Habbie's Howe, the supposed scene of the Gentle Shepherd, supplies this pond. Two or three years after its formation, some enormously lengthy trout were captured with minnow and worm in different parts

of it. We happened to see several of these ; one measured nearly two feet and a half, but was not much thicker than a man's arm, and could not weigh above three pounds ; the rest were similarly proportioned. They were white, like a spring kelt, large headed, and scaly. During the following winter, when ascending the burn to spawn, the whole parent breed seem to have been exterminated by some fellows with leisters, for in the years succeeding, down to the present day, not a single fish of this description has been captured. In 1826, the pond contained a considerable number of common-sized, well-fed trout ; in 1828, these had all disappeared, and a very small and numerous breed succeeded. Although then poor hands at angling, we generally managed to take from four to six dozen, and that summer there were often twenty individuals fishing on the pond at the same time. The breed of that year seems to have been the proper stock-breed, which is now confirmed and well grown. But the most singular circumstance connected with this pond is, that along with the breed of common fresh-water trout, there remains another precisely uniform with the sea trout, or the whitling, which were wont, some years ago, to ascend Glencorse burn, above where the pond now stands, and spawn there. The Esk, which receives this small stream, has since been so dammed below, as to hinder these fish from running up to any distance from the sea.

We have thus a series of facts clearly demonstrated : 1, That the sea is not necessary to the existence of the whitling. 2, That the want of salt water, although it deteriorates the breed, does not remove its faculty of reproduction ; and, 3, That the par is not the male of the whitling, neither a cross between it and the common trout, since it is not found in the place alluded to.

We now come to speak upon the different species of fresh-water trout, and primarily upon the great lake trout, or *salmo ferox* of the naturalist. This fish is erroneously supposed by some to be confined, in Scotland, entirely to Loch Awe. But it exists in very many Highland lochs. It is found in Lochs Laggan, Quoich, Monar, Garry, and Shin. It has been caught, over and over again, in Rannoch, Tummel, and Lydoch; nor is it unfrequent in places of less note—mere mountain tarns and nameless gorges, where it is wont to rove at leisure, the terror of small and unprotected fish.

To a Mr Morrison, from Glasgow, is attributed the merit of having first discovered the *salmo ferox* in Loch Awe, about half a century ago. We doubt very much the strength of his claims to this discovery; and from the inquiries made by us at Dalmally, Cladish, Inveraw, and other parts of the surrounding country, we are led to believe that this species of trout has been well known there from time immemorial; nay, it is impossible but that individuals of the kind must have been taken centuries ago, during the spawning season, in the Urchay, Awe, and other rivers, by the ancient method of destroying fish with the leister, unless we suppose, what is not probable, that it is entirely a recent species of trout.

This fish acquires prodigious dimensions. One was caught in Loch Rannoch, by the late Baron Norton, weighing thirty pounds. In Loch Awe, they have frequently been taken by Mr Maule of Edinburgh, and others, betwixt twenty and twenty-eight pounds; while on the Continent, in Norway and Switzerland, it is not uncommon to meet with them weighing nearly four stone. In America, trout have been captured of a still more incredible size. The *salmo ferox*, like the pike,

is a strong, fierce fish, and when attaining the weight of two pounds, begins to despise your flies, and becomes a sort of cannibal, preying upon its own species with much rapacity. Its proportions, when large, are somewhat singular, the depth of the fish being astonishingly great when compared with the length. A thirty pound lake trout seldom measures a single yard, while a salmon of equal weight is considerably larger. The greatest number of these fish known to be captured by the rod in one day was thirteen. These were taken on Loch Awe, as early as March, or the beginning of April, some years ago, by a party of English gentlemen, among whom was a Mr Lavrock, from Keswick, and weighed altogether above ninety pounds. Since that time, they have gradually become shy; it is now a matter of difficulty to procure a single specimen. Early in spring, however, before small trout leave their winter retreats, these monsters will dash after your spinning bait with great avidity, should the weather be fine and clear. The external appearance of the great lake trout, when newly taken, undergoes, like that of the dolphin, a rapid process of change. The beautiful orange tint, which, when alive, is spread over the lower parts of the fish, is converted by degrees into a dingy colour; the spotted surface loses much of its brilliancy, the gloss is diminished, and the whole body becomes altered.

The gillaroo, or gizzard trout of Ireland, has of late years been discovered to be an inhabitant of many of our northern lakes, especially those bordering on the coasts of Sutherland and Ross-shire. This species of trout attains to a considerable size, although still very inferior in average weight to the *salmo ferox* of Loch Awe. The leading singularity of the gillaroo is the possession of strong digestive powers, and a thick coated

stomach, in which are generally found numbers of small shell-fish. This circumstance, however, does not prevent it from rising at the fly, of which also it seems peculiarly fond.

We come now to treat of the great river trout, properly called the bull-trout, which species is imagined by many anglers to be nothing more than an overgrown individual of the common sort. This we are greatly inclined to believe; for it is noticeable, that although killed during the spawning season in rapid streams, it properly inhabits deep still places, such as nourish fish easily and quickly. Besides, there is no detecting of any thing like what is called the bull-trout under several pounds weight; unless, then, it be the overgrown common river trout, what has become of its own species in a smaller state? For, be it observed, it has no necessary connection with salt water, like the salmon, but, as in Clyde, is often found above lofty liuns and insurmountable waterfalls.

We lately saw a fish sent to a gentleman in Edinburgh from one in Peebles, weighing eighteen pounds, and reckoned to be a fine specimen of the bull-trout. It was evident, however, that it had lately left the sea, also that it was singularly small in the head, and marked precisely like the salmon on either gill; in fact, that it totally belied the usual characteristics of a large bull-trout, covered over with an extraordinary number of spots, and was neither more nor less than a fine specimen of the *salmo trutta*. Another of the same sort we since saw taken from the Carron in Ross-shire, weighing above twenty pounds. It was decidedly a very different fish from the common salmon, being broader in the shape, coarser in the texture, more wormy about the gills, and furnished with a boar-snout singularly turned up. This, of course, had come di-

rectly from the salt water, and was, without a particle of doubt, an overgrown sea trout, erroneously termed bull-trout. As classed with this rendered doubtful species, we may mention, that, at Newton Bridge on the Clyde, an individual was taken with the minnow, some years ago, weighing fifteen and a half pounds. There was also exhibited in Edinburgh, the other summer, a trout between seven and eight pounds weight, captured with the fly at Coltbridge, on the somewhat diminutive and well-known Water of Leith. The neighbour of this fish is still in the pool, and generally lies within twenty yards of the arch. He makes himself welcome to any angler who is able to catch him. We ourselves have often attempted in vain, although we have noted more than once his monstrous snout belling up not a foot's distance from our seemingly irresistible flies. A fish equally large and cautious, we knew some years ago under Tyne Bridge at East Linton. It has possibly been killed ere this, by means of a net or leister, as the water where it generally lay was not remarkably deep.

We are aware, that, although it is stated by us that the bull-trout has no necessary connection with salt water, there are many, both of Tay and Tweed anglers, who think otherwise; yet, judging from their specimens of this fish, we are led to conclude that they confound it with the *salmo eriox* and the hucho of Lower Germany; to the latter of which fish it is very unlike, both in its habits and appearance.

It seems to us a matter of strange fatuity, why naturalists will insist upon the stupid misnomers of ignorant fishermen, and persist in confounding what is really and truly a fresh-water fish, with one that belongs to the salmon species. We assure them that the real bull-trout—the bull-trout of Tarras—has no connection

with salt water—that it is absolutely a river fish, acquiring its size entirely from its feeding. Why then fix the venerable name of bull-trout upon another variety of fish which possesses not even one of its characteristics?

Now, as to the common trout, to which we opine the above sort properly belongs. This species, as before stated, admits of many varieties, according to the food and haunts of the fish. The best are those which resist the touch, are yellow or cream-coloured on the sides, have the back curved and the head small. Such as are grey, flabby, and large in the upper part, are generally poor fish at table, and give little play to the angler. Loch trout are superior to those caught in rivers; the latter seldom acquire the fine salmon colour which often characterises the former; they want their rich curdiness and flavour, are leaner and less beautiful. A slow stream also affords better fed fish than one that is clear and rapid.

And here we would venture to assert, concerning most fishes, and trout in particular (seeing that we now intend to discourse a little upon their various physical perceptions), that they possess no sense of hearing whatsoever. This theory may appear a bold one, but it proceeds upon good and incontrovertible grounds. The organ of hearing, it is well known, is primarily intended by nature to receive those impressions produced by another organ, that of speech, or the faculty of making sounds through the mouth, which, be it noticed, is competent to almost all animals except fishes. Of what use, then, to them is the sense of hearing, if it cannot be exercised in reciprocal communications, such as even birds and dogs hold? But we further maintain, that fishes have no ears of any kind, and that such indications are not to be discovered upon them

as are necessary for the conveyance of sounds ; nay, it is known to all anglers, that no precautions or mufflings are required by the wader, who splashes on among rocks and stones in the midst of one of the most accurate conductors of noises, namely, water, without alarming the fish in any degree, provided he is not observed with the eye.

And, as to the sight of trout, it is not over perfect ; they are a remarkably near-sighted fish, and cannot behold any object distinctly, however large, unless within the range of eight or ten yards. The human eye placed in the same situation as theirs, and through the medium of clear water, could easily discern the clumsy imitations of flies used by anglers, at which they leap so freely and greedily. One perception, however, trout have to a nicety, and that is smell ; through this they discern their food at a singular distance, and will track it, like the sleuth, for many yards. Their sense of taste, also, is excellent, for they immediately endeavour to spit out what is false and artificial, when seized inadvertently.

So much for the perceptions of trout ; and here we may observe, how, of all fishes, they are the most subject to disease and deformity. We have caught them humpbacked and covered with sores, blind of one eye, wanting a gill or a fin, and crooked up in all shapes. On the Tay we once took an individual with a short round upper head, like that of a bull-dog, and the lower lip projecting beyond it. We understand that a variety of this kind is to be found in Loch Dow, in Inverness-shire. On the Water of Leith, we saw a friend capture three successively, out of one stream, during spring, all of which wanted the tail ; this defect was most probably occasioned in winter, the water from which they were taken happening to be extremely

shallow, and the frosts shortly before somewhat severe.

Although generally a delicate fish, trout at times will evince a great tenacity of life, when exposed to pernicious influences, and become accustomed to places where, even to the naturalist, it would seem impossible they could exist: for instance, in the immediate neighbourhood of tanneries and bleach-fields, where large quantities of lime and other sickening ingredients are daily let loose upon them, as at Colt Bridge, near Edinburgh, and farther up the stream, below Slateford aqueduct. Also, they will thrive and abound within tide-mark, and where the water is brackish, as on the Almond, at Cramond, where we have caught them again and again, in places daily flooded over by the sea, and above which they could not ascend, owing to the intervention of a high dam.

SONG.

Angling on a summer night,
 When the moon ray met the fairy,
 Tripping down a bank of light,
 To the sweet Loch of St Mary;
 Music floated, sad and holy,
 Every wild flower lent its tone,
 And the sullen trout swam slowly,
 Like the shadow of a stone.
 From the bank on Meggat stream,
 Where a quiet fountain gushes,
 And the undulating gleam
 Glances through a tuft of rushes,
 There I threw the silv'ry palmer,
 With a meditating arm—
 For the crystal pool lay calmer
 Than a sea beneath a charm.
 Was it but a fancied fin,
 O'er the glassy water gliding,
 As I dropt the feather in,
 Like an insect, half confiding,

Gently moved and lightly shaken,
Near'd a little, wiling out,
Till the fatal hook was taken
By a huge and gleaming trout ?

Quick as thought the line unwound,
Flew along the streamlet narrow,
With the sharp and rapid sound
Of a solitary arrow ;
But a gentle effort leading,
On the bank the captive lay,
Tired, and quivering, and bleeding,
In his starry, rich array.

Proudly gazed I to the lake,
And the moonshafts, slant and slender,
On its bosom lay awake,
Like an armoury of splendour ;
Proudly gazed I to the mountain—
Voices floated far and wide,
From the breeze, the flower, the fountain,
Blessing me on every side !

CHAPTER IX.

THE SALMON, CHAR, AND VENDACE.

A FEW brief and general remarks upon the salmon and its varieties may now be ventured. The salmon and sea trout, on leaving our rivers, do not, as is supposed by some, wander to any great distance from their mouths, but generally lie off, near at hand, and within perception of the fresh water. Should stake-nets stand in their way, they will evince great natural sagacity in avoiding them. We have been informed by the holders of this kind of fishery, that salmon are only to be taken in any quantity during dark weather, and moonless nights. Moreover, that in a clear sea, shoals of them will gather not twenty yards from the nets, without a single fish attempting to cross; and that they will rise and play round about them, seemingly without alarm. This latter fact we ourselves have often noticed near Queensferry, on the Forth, where we may mention that they are not unfrequently taken with the rod, although in salt water, and at a good distance from shore.

We refer those who question this circumstance to Mr Macqueen, the lessee of the stake-fisheries in that quarter. And as to the food of salmon at sea, we are of opinion, along with Dr Knox, that they live on small insects and animalculæ, which sort of subsistence is proved to be greatly more nourishing than worms or minnows.

An interesting experiment was made with trout some years ago, in the south of England, in order to ascer-

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

It is evident, from this and similar experiments, that a very minute species of food is best adapted for the growth of trout, and we do not see why salmon also should not thrive upon a similar subsistence, found in the salt water among marine weeds and shells, and too small to be easily discovered in their stomachs with the naked eye.

We may notice, while treating of the *salmo salax*, that the doctrine which holds the grilse to be a distinct variety of that fish is now nearly exploded; and it is maintained instead, that both fish are of one and the same sort, although in different stages of maturity. This has been proved by practical experiments, and is now beyond dispute. See the evidence of Murdoch Mackenzie, William Stephens, and George Hogarth, taken before the committee of the House of Commons in 1825, on salmon fisheries.

Yet, as to the herling, admitting it to be altogether distinct from the white and sea trout (the *salmo albus*, and *salmo trutta*), it is still with some a matter of controversy whether it be a young salmon or not. We have heard it alleged by anglers from Dumfriesshire,

that this fish is peculiar to the rivers in that county, and that it is not found in the northern districts of Scotland. This we take upon us to deny, for on the Tay and Earn we have captured it repeatedly, and noticed that it differed in many points from the sea trout and whitling, especially in the formation of the tail, which in the *salmo trutta* is not forked as it is in the herling. It is our opinion with regard to it, judging from the many characteristics which it possesses in common with the *salmo salax*, that it is undoubtedly that fish in a progressive stage; and in this we are the more confirmed, because we have noticed that it does not, like the sea trout, ascend our rivers for the purpose of spawning, but merely from natural instinct, or to get rid of the sea-louse. We shall not extend our remarks upon this subject, but leave it to the discussion of more practised ichthyologists, merely remarking, that as to the sea trout, whitling, and grey sewin, technically called by naturalists the *salmo trutta*, *salmo albus*, and *salmo eriox*, they are merely varieties of one species, as the *salmo salax* itself has its varieties, and these more strikingly marked, and easier distinguished one from another, than the above-mentioned fish. For instance, the river Shin, in Sutherlandshire, hath its three varieties of salmon, one ascending the main branch, another its tributary, the Orrin, and the third its tributary, the Rasay—for a further description of which, consult the evidence before the Parliamentary Committee on salmon fisheries.

Among the rarer sorts of fish which inhabit our Scottish waters, have been found the char, both the case and torgoch, or red char, the vendace, and the guiniad, or pollock.

The first of these, the char, although we have classed it with the more unfrequent kinds of fish, is only

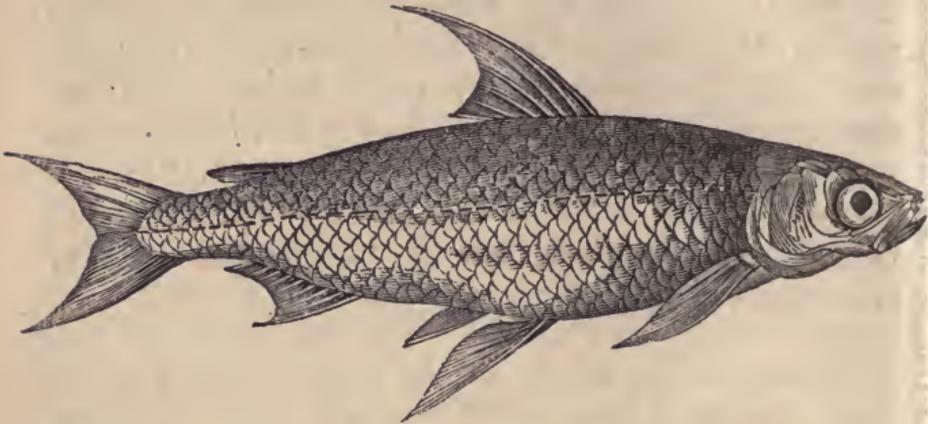
so in as far as the ignorance of anglers as to the method of taking it renders it no subject for their sport; for, as we are informed, it exists in very many of our northern lochs, and, indeed, is taken in some quantities with the net from Lochs Tay and Laggan, especially the latter, where it acquires a larger size, and is altogether a finer fish than we meet with in other parts of Scotland. Our char, however, is in general by no means equal in weight to that of Windermere, seldom equaling a pound, and averaging only a few ounces. It is known to take the fly, which should be well sunk, and leisurely angled with. On Loch Achilty, in Ross-shire, we lately captured with the fly no less than eighteen of these fish during a forenoon in July, besides numerous trout. These measured in general, with one marked exception, about eight inches; they were thick in proportion to their breadth, very red in the belly and fins; and although rising dully to the fly, yet, when hooked, lively and active. The one excepted was nearly double the weight of the rest, and we have no doubt that much larger ones exist in the loch. The water of Loch Achilty is very unlike that of the neighbouring lakes, being particularly clear and deep, and, although fed by several small streams, possessing no visible outlet. Its bottom, which seems covered with old wood, is rich and slimy, and contains a very sparing proportion of rock and large stones. Loch Bruiach, in Inverness-shire, also possesses char; but here they are shy of the fly, and, except during the month of September, are only to be captured by means of the net.

The char of the English lakes, although occasionally slaughtered with the minnow, abstains, we believe, altogether from insects. One of the great drawbacks to the capture of this delicate fish is its predilection for deep water, where neither net nor angler's tackle can

be used with advantage. In autumn, however, as might be expected, the shoal leaves its impenetrable haunts, and visits the rivers and shallows in order to deposit its spawn.

The next of the rarer species of Scottish fish, upon which we are briefly treating, is the vendace of Lochmaben, a full account of which is given by Sir W. Jardine, in one of the numbers of the Edinburgh Philosophical Journal, edited by the late Mr Cheek.

THE VENDACE.



This beautiful, delicate, and singular specimen of the genus *Coregonus*, *salmo marenula*, is entirely confined, in Great Britain, to one of the small lakes in the parish of Lochmaben, near Dumfries, although supposed by some to inhabit Switzerland, Silesia, and other parts of the Continent. It measures generally from four to ten inches, and resembles the herring in its appearance, being green on the back, and covered below with silver scales. The forehead of the vendace is very pellucid, and bears upon it the shape of a human heart. This fish is, in fact, remarkably transparent throughout; so much so, that one may detect the bones when holding it up before the sun.

The vendace swims about in shoals, and is much

hunted down by the pike. As a bait to these fish, it is irresistible, and greatly preferred to a small trout or par. The flavour of the vendace is highly delicate, resembling that of the spirlings caught in the Forth. Its food is a very minute species of shell-fish, or water insect, peculiar to the castle loch, as has been ascertained by Dr Knox and other naturalists; it refuses all the lures of the angler, and is only to be taken with the net.

Confounded, till of late years, with the vendace, is the guiniad, or pollock, of Loch Lomond, a fish common to Wales and some of the Irish lakes. The guiniad, *salmo lavaretus*, is both much larger and deeper formed, attaining sometimes to the weight of two pounds and upwards. It is found in Ullswater, and known there by the name of the schelley—an appellation similar to that which is given in Dumfriesshire to the chub and roach.

SONG.

Let ither anglers chuse their ain,
 An' ither waters tak' the lead,
 O' Hielan streams we covet nane,
 But gie to us the bonnie Tweed !
 An' gie to us the cheerfu' burn,
 That steals into its valley fair—
 The streamlets that, at ilka turn,
 Sae saftly meet an' mingle there.

The lanesome Tala an' the Lyne,
 An' Manor, wi' its mountain rills,
 An' Etterick, whose waters twine
 Wi' Yarrow, frae the forest hills;
 An' Gala, too, an' Teviot bright,
 And mony a stream of playfu' speed,
 Their kindred valleys a' unite,
 Amang the braes o' bonnie Tweed.

There's no a hole abune the Crook,
 Nor stane, nor gentle swirl aneath,
 Nor drumlie rin, nor faery brook,
 That daunders through the flowery heath,
 But ye may fin' a subtle troot,
 A' gleamin' ower wi' starn and bead ;
 An' mony a saumont sooms about
 Below the bields o' bonnie Tweed.

Frae Holylee to Clovenford
 A chancier bit ye canna hae,
 So, gin ye tak' an angler's word,
 Ye'd through the whuns and ower the brae,
 An' work awa, wi' cunnin' hand,
 Yer birzy heckles, black and reid ;
 The saft sugh o' a slender wand
 Is meetest music for the Tweed.

Oh, the Tweed ! the bonnie Tweed !
 O' rivers it's the best—
 Angle here, or angle there,
 Troots are sooming every where,
 Angle east or west.

CHAPTER X.

THE PAR.

FROM what has come under our personal notice, we consider we may be able to throw some light upon a matter as yet uncertain, namely, the true nature of the par. This small fish abundantly frequents our Scottish rivers, and, as is well known, is never found except in streams accessible to the sea trout and salmon.

We are aware that Pennant and other writers have disputed this fact, and attempt to prove upon their own observation (certainly not the most accurate) that par are to be caught in some waters which salmon are unable to ascend. Pennant mentions a stream in Inverness-shire in support of his assertion; the upper part of which is separated from the rest by an insurmountable waterfall, and yet contains par in considerable numbers. We have inquired into the truth of this statement, and find that it must have originated in some mistake of the learned tourist, who confuses with this fish, a very small variety of trout, inhabiting rapid and stony streams, and which, in external appearance, somewhat resembles the par, without possessing any of its fixed and characteristic developements. Like it, it is white and silvery, active for its size, and, in many cases, marked on the side with those bluish impressions, as of depending finger points, which are erroneously supposed to be the leading distinction of the other; we say erroneously, because anglers must have observed, how even common and good-sized trout are often set off with this peculiarity.

Nor do we wonder much at Mr Pennant's statement, since we have known observing and scientific craftsmen fall into a similar error, and hold out to be the par, what a little examination has proved to be the common river trout.

What, then, it may be asked, are the points which distinguish this fish? And first, let it be noted, how the par, with very few, if any exceptions, hath only one row of scarlet spots or stars extended on either side from the gills to the tail; whereas, the common trout has always two or more of such rows, more varied in colour, and less equalised in their dimensions. Again, the pectoral fin of the par is broader, and contains a greater quantity of spines, than that of the common trout. Thirdly, the gills are more silvery and clear of marks, being at no time impressed with more than one or two; while, in the trout, they have a yellowish appearance, and are studded over with a larger number of dark spots. The tail of the one, also, is more nicely forked than that of the other. In fact, there is in the whole aspect of the par, when narrowly examined, a singular difference from that of the trout. It is, besides, a nimbler and less cunning fish, and never seems to increase beyond a certain size, although well known to attain that maximum in the course of two or three months, from its first appearance during the angling season. And this is a fact to which we beg attention, as it will shortly go some way to support our theory concerning the par, that it is the young of the salmon in a certain state.

In order to prove this, it will be granted to us, or we shall boldly assume, that Pennant's assertion is erroneous, and that this fish is only found in waters visited by the salmon—that, in point of fact, it has some sort of connection, whether direct or indirect, with the sea. This postulate has been allowed by almost every

writer on the subject, and yet has done little towards settling the question at issue.

Three theories, barring the one of its being a distinct species, are abroad concerning the par. The first and most general opinion is, that the par belongs both to the trout and salmon species, and is a sort of mule betwixt them; the second theory maintained by some, reckons it to be the male of the sea trout, whitling, or finnock; and the third, which is by far the soundest, is held, certainly, we confess, upon suspicious premises, by the Ettrick Shepherd, and assumes that the par is nothing else than the fry of the salmon. We shall consider these three opinions individually, and give our reasons for supporting the last.

First, then, as to the par being a mule betwixt the salmon (under which term we here include grilse, sea trout, &c.) and common river trout. How happens it that two such comparatively large fish produce so attenuated a breed, when we know that the cross betwixt beasts, such as that of the horse and ass, is proportioned to the respective sizes of these animals, and that the four-footed mule is so much less than the one, and larger than the other; neither does the crossing of different birds, such as the goldfinch with the bullfinch, diminish their offspring in any degree: yet the par produced by one fish a yard in length, with another most probably not exceeding a foot, never attains half the weight of its smaller parent, and measures at most six or seven inches.

Again, it is singular, that in rivers where par lie, they muster as ten to one compared with the common trout—a most extraordinary proportion of mules! which, if we consider the well-known precautions of salmon while spawning, could not possibly be produced. These fish, in ascending our streams, pair off as spawner and

milter, the female to deposit her roe, and the male, not merely to impregnate, but guard the spawn against the attacks of trout and smaller fish, which naturally, instead of doing the same office, molest and devour it : and in the case of trout roe, the reverse happens ; it is a favourite food of the salmon, and not likely to be impregnated by him, who is known to watch so devoutly the operations of his own spawner. Hence, a very meagre portion indeed of the ova can possibly, and that by chance, when the water is heavy, be so crossed as to produce mules, if such a production were the consequence. How, then, is the fact of par being found in such large numbers reconcileable (supposing them to be mules) with the other fact of the comparatively accidental crossing which takes place between the salmon and trout ? We submit the question to the maintainers of this theory for a solution. Again, what is the ground upon which the opinion is founded, that par are a sort of mules ? Simply this, that they are incapable of breeding, that they have no spawners among them, and are all possessed seemingly of the same sexual structure. But is this the case with the mules of other animals ? For instance, in those of quadrupeds, are not the male and female generative parts as individually developed as in the two sexes from whose crossing the mules originated ? The seeming identity of sex, coupled of course with the incapacity of the par to extend its species, can form no argument in favour of its being held as a mule. Besides, they who reckon the par to be without roe, are, if we mistake not, greatly in error ; for we have noticed again and again, what to us certainly appeared an incipient spawn lying under the back-bone of many of these fish—which substance has a yellowish colour, and is long in the shape like the roe of the salmon. We were led

to remark this through the experiments of a Clyde angler we met with during a ramble some summers ago, who cut up in our presence several par, and pointed out the various distinctions betwixt the male and female fish. He likewise assured us of a fact, which during the experience of thirty years he had carefully noted, but whether worthy of credit or not, we ourselves are unable to decide, namely, that the par in Clyde every fifth year are both fewer and much larger than they are in the other four: if the case, this proves nothing; but still it is singular, and no doubt every angler must have observed in most rivers, that one season often presents him with different sized fish from those of another, and that they are few or numerous according to their size.

But leaving the mulists as sufficiently handled, we proceed to the opinion held by some, and by the author of an article in the Edinburgh Encyclopædia—that par are the males of the sea trout, whitling, or finnock. This theory is at once overturned by the well-known fact, that these fish have the tail straight, or nearly so, while the par and salmon have theirs fully and beautifully forked. But supposing, as we grant is possible, that the growth of the fish changed in some measure the appearance of that appendage, still we are by no means at a loss for another argument, to be taken from open and conclusive facts, which readily expose the error of this opinion.

In the Rochil, a respectable stream, which joins the Earn, opposite to Comrie, in Perthshire, there are few par, except in the lowermost parts, where they are pretty abundant during the summer months. Two or three miles up, above a point where salmon generally halt, owing both to the uncertainty of the floods, and likewise to the interruption of a small but ill-assorted

waterfall, in overcoming which, a large fish runs the risk of falling either among bare rocks or shallows, par are seldom or never caught: and yet the sea trout and whitling run up without danger, and spawn in immense numbers many miles on, through the whole extent of Glenartney; nay, it is well known throughout Perthshire, that the Rochil is the best stream in the whole county for these fish, and that a dozen or more, averaging three pounds each, may be taken by a single rod among the highest pools in a proper season. If, then, par are the males of the sea trout and whitling, or mules betwixt them and the common trout, of which there are vast quantities in this stream, why are they not to be found among the innumerable spawn beds along its course? A few, surely, might remain above, as well as under the point alluded to, and yet we ourselves have never been able to capture one individual, although we have angled there over and over again.

But a fact somewhat similar may be noted, nearer Edinburgh, on the stream which runs into the Forth, below Cramond, and also on the Esk, close to Musselburgh, both of which are visited by a variety of sea trout and whitlings. From the former stream we have taken them in considerable numbers; and, although angling with a small fly, we never caught or saw a single par. Also, at Musselburgh, the same thing has happened to us. Salmon, however, are said sometimes to ascend these waters; we have heard of one being caught with the rod above Kirkliston. This, however, on further inquiry, turned out to be a large common trout, bred in the long still pools below that village, and where overgrown fish are not unfrequently taken with the leister, near the head of Almond, during the spawning season. Salmon have certainly been caught close to the sea, and in the neighbouring bays, but we doubt

very much their breeding in either stream. The fry of these fish have not been discovered of late years in any shape, whether as common smelts or par.

We have thus disproved two theories respecting the par :—1, That it is a mule between the salmon and common river trout ; and, 2, That it is the male of the sea trout, whitling, and finnock. We are now narrowed to the following conclusions—either that it forms a separate and distinct species of fish, or is the real fry of the salmon in a certain condition. In disposing of one of these points, we prove the other.

Now, as to its being a separate species of fish, we need only refer to the facts alluded to above, in order to refute this notion—namely, its known relation to the sea, along with its want of any thing like a fully developed roe. But, besides these, we may further remark, that the par is known to grow rapidly, and that the same individuals do not remain in our rivers above a single season, because, as will be observed, the supply of every succeeding year is a supply of young and fresh formed fish, without any intermixture of a former breed. What, then, has become of the vast quantity left in our rivers during the bygone season ? The fact is, they all proceed naturally to the sea, there to undergo those processes which submit them back to us in the shape of grilse and salmon.

Nay, there is no other refuge for our opponents in this discussion to take to, unless they revert, as we once heard an angler do, to the cross system, and maintain the par to be a breed betwixt the minnow and trout, both of which fish exist in waters inaccessible to the salmon : moreover, the folly of the cross system is here re-exposed, because we imagine it more likely for the minnow and trout to produce a mule than a half sea-fish with one absolutely fresh-water.

We have proved, then, upon undeniable premises, that the par can be nothing else than the fry of the salmon; and we will now discover a few points of similarity in these fish, and relate a singular circumstance which, about a year ago, turned our attention to this subject. And first, as to the similarity between them. Both have the tail forked, the gills marked in the same manner; the pectoral fins of a dark blackish colour, while in trout they are pale or yellowish, also more extended than in the latter fish: they have both an activity mutually proportioned to their sizes, and an equal affection for rapid streams. The external shape, although not fully developed in the par, is yet similar to that of the salmon; it wants the proportions of a grown fish, no more than the foal those of the horse. Its head, indeed, is somewhat rounder, requiring elongation; the back, too, straight, and displaying a want of strength; but still the principal points are alike, discovering an intimate and mutual kinship.

And here an objection will be taken to the colour of the par, and its want of those silvery scales which belong to the salmon; but, let it be remembered that as yet it is, in a manner, an unclean fish, not having proceeded to the sea: how, then, can it be expected to retain this brilliant covering, when salmon themselves, in ascending rivers, throw it aside, and become, in some cases, undistinguishable from a large, common, ill-fed trout? We believe, however, that the young fry, when first produced, exhibit a coat of scales, which lies on them till spring, when many descend in shoals to the salt water, and the others remaining cast it off; nor does it grow again until the end of autumn, when they are prepared to journey seaward with the floods, which happen about that season.

It has been asked, why in many of our Highland

streams near the coast, few par comparatively are found, although salmon ascend them in great quantities? We answer, that these waters, situated in hilly districts, where the snow lies long, are more liable to be flooded in spring than our southern rivers : accordingly, larger numbers of the young fry are carried to the sea, in their first stage, than from the more equal currents of Tay and Tweed.

Nor is our hypothesis altogether imaginary, for we come to the relation of a circumstance, the happening of which grounded our belief in this theory ; and no assailable one it is, if our eyes, which are good, did not deceive us. Last spring, after the time when smoults generally descend, we chanced to capture a few of them in St Mary's Loch, the streams about which are a favourite breeding-place for salmon. These were of a large kind, and had been prevented from joining the spring shoals, by their inability to discover the outlet to the lake ; they were soft and loose in the scale, but seemingly an enticing bait for pike which frequent a smaller sheet of water immediately above St Mary's. In the afternoon, happening to use one of these smoults on our pike tackle, we remarked how its scales came off in great numbers, discovering beneath a perfect par, not to be mistaken in any one respect. This accidental discovery we further confirmed by repeated experiments, and are now convinced beyond a doubt of the fact, that par are the young of salmon in a certain state.

Nor have we availed ourselves in the minutest degree of the observations of our friend the Ettrick Shepherd, in the *Agricultural Journal* ; for we esteem his method of proof as somewhat fallacious, and at war with the established doctrine of chances ; yet we have conversed with those who have asserted the accuracy of Mr Hogg's statement, and we know it to be the con-

stant practice of the bard of Altrive, to mark the tail fin of his par with a peculiar incision, not difficult to recognise. We confess, however, that it is wonderful, first, that Mr Hogg should be able to catch the ten thousandth portion of the par frequenting Yarrow: second, that out of a few hundreds that he might catch and mutilate, such a number should reach the sea, undergo the many chances of disaster on their way thither, the more hideous perils of that element; that they should ascend to the exact stream of their birth, in preference to many others; and that, when of good size, and liable to be taken on ever so many occasions by human means, they should, escaping net and hook, otter and leister, arrive uninjured at Mr Hogg's feet, and allow him to transfix them through and through, in order to discover their personal identity. All these circumstances combined, it seems as if Fortune were peculiarly gracious to the poet, in overcoming what is next to a physical impossibility, in invalidating the origin of evidential law, and throwing the calculating system of philosophers back among the rubbish of ignorance and error.

We have avoided upholding Mr Hogg's method of supporting this theory, for no other reason than that we find ourselves unable to answer the many objections which it calls forth; but we think, notwithstanding, that the theory is a good one, that it is worthy of general credit, and that such a manner of support might prove no small advantage to our salmon fisheries in Scotland.

We call not for the interference of an act of legislature, in order to prevent the destruction of par—such a measure would fall too severely upon the brethren of the streams—it would rob our countrymen of a kindly and quiet privilege; but we would submit it to every

able angler, as a principle he ought to adopt, to commit again to the waters those tiny fish which come ignorantly to his hook, and, at best, are but a meagre morsel, and give small proof of his skill in the gentle craft. There are unprincipled poachers enough, who make it a glory to harass our waters with net and lath, who annually diminish by some millions the healthiest fry of our salmon, who depopulate many a river by means of their nocturnal enginery ; but we wish not to see classed with these, the humane and virtuous, the true and patriotic angler, who should always be above employing his energies on such indiscriminate slaughter, caring not to check the growth of some future salmon, by the unprofitable and childish act of destroying the infant fish.

CHAPTER XI.

LEISTERING SALMON.

AMONG the amusements of the lower orders in Scotland, that of spearing, or, as it is more popularly termed, leistering the salmon, is by far the most exciting. It is, we allow, a matter of no doubt, that this method of destroying fish is greatly prejudicial to their increase ; that by it vast numbers of salmon loaded with spawn are annually slaughtered, at a time when they can be turned to very little profit : but we are by no means prepared, without very solid reasons, sweepingly to condemn a practice permitted by immemorial usage, and which obtains the character of a manly and vigorous sport.

We have too great a love for our national amusements, to wish them altogether deranged by the unseasonable interference of the law ; and with respect to the use of the leister as a method of killing fish, we would rather see it encouraged, within certain limits, than tyrannically suppressed, which we know, in the south of Scotland, it never can be, as long as exists the old spirit of the Border.

A short description of this national mode of salmon-taking cannot fail to be interesting to our readers. We shall accordingly attempt to sketch off as graphically as possible a leistering on one of our waters. The months most suitable for this amusement in the southern districts of Scotland, are those of October and November, about and immediately after close time.

On the subsiding of a heavy flood, which, during

these months, brings into the tributaries of Tweed a considerable number of salmon, grilse, and sea trout, a party is generally formed, composed of the male inhabitants of the parish or district, from old men of threescore down to boys in their earliest teens. For several days previous, the blacksmiths, miles about, are employed in sharpening up and repairing the leisters or salmon spears, which are commonly three or four pronged, and have long slender shafts formed of ash or fir. Torches also of pitch, rosin, old ropes, and flax, are made ready—the state of the water is discussed—and a mimicry of the bustle prevalent before a foray, or martial adventure, is enacted among the petty villages or farm-houses bordering upon the stream.

On the afternoon of the intended operations, and immediately previous to their setting forth, every public-house contains a number of small and select groups, talking over their former feats and fortunes. Here is no less a personage than the Ettrick Shepherd, a good hand both at the rod and leister; on his right sits Wat Amos, and David Turnbull, landlord of the Gordon Arms, below Benger Knowe; to the left of the poet are seated Thorburn of Juniper Bank, and Forster of Coldstream, without question the ablest anglers on Tweedside; at another corner you may discern Walter Brydon of Ettrick, surrounded by a bevy of Scotts, Laidlaws, and Andersons. “Wee Jamie,” as Mr Hogg terms his only son, lingers impatiently outside, and, though a boy, is by no means unlearned in the art of transfixing a salmon. Here, too, is old “Jock Gray,” the Edie Ochiltree of Sir Walter Scott, the veriest gaberlunzie man in broad Scotland, and one of the best mimics alive.

But the sun is now gone down, and a star or two peer out from the eastern bend of heaven. Yarrow,

chafing her banks, is listened to by the eager band who are assembled outside the Gordon Arms, some armed with leisters, others waving red and gleaming torches, which cast their far reflections into the core of twilight. At length the order to march is given by the Ettrick Shepherd, and in the space of five minutes, our gallant group of Borderers are waist-deep in the bridge pool, on the look-out for a salmon.

One who has not witnessed it, will be surprised at the effect of a torch held over a stream during a dark night. Without being magical, it is astonishing: every pebble is revealed, every fish rendered visible in places even where the water is some fathoms deep. None of these, however, occur in Yarrow; in its most unfordable parts, you will seldom meet with any very profound or dangerous abysses. It is one of those rarely wrought waters which blend harmony with variety; an almost uniform depth of channel, with a pleasant mutability in the aspect and formation of its banks.

But, ho! a salmon is discovered; and the rapid plunge of a leister from the arm of a brawny shepherd, followed by an exclamation of disappointment, indicates that it has escaped his too eager and agitated aim; yet its fate is fixed—there is cooler blood, and a more practised hand, present, than that of this untried youth: for there stands Thorburn, his nicely poised leister directed, as if from his eye, upon the broad flank of the silvery fish, as it rushes, arrow-like, up the current. A shout, not loud, but joyous, proclaims the success of the blow, and, fast pinned by the unerring spear, writhes a fine new-run grilse in four feet water, unable to break from the firm hold of its relentless captor, who soon drags it ashore and completes its destruction.

And, now, two other fish are under inquiry; for Wee Jamie, who is prowling about the banks, avers that he disturbed some enormous monsters, which swam leisurely down towards the next pool: and there, to be sure, they are, milter and spawner, large, unclean, copper-coloured salmon.

Immediately, almost the whole group are mingled closely together, in some confusion; for each one is anxious to strike, however imperfect the glimpse he obtains of his object. Aloof, however, from the rest, stand the Ettrick Shepherd and Wat Amos, calculating upon the return of at least one of the fish to the former pool. Nor are they in error; for, though vigilant, those below have strangely mismanaged, and spoilt their opportunity—one of them extinguishing with the end of his leister the torch-light which directed his eye to the salmon; another losing his balance in the very act of striking, and sousing himself head over heels in water, not over-highly tempered; and a third, after having hit one of the fish, allowing it to dash upwards towards Mr Hogg, who, in true style, brings it to land, transfixed to the spine, and scarcely able, ere it expired, to make any thing like a struggle to escape.

The party in a short time passing Altrive, move up towards Douglas Burn, near the mouth of which three or four other fish are killed, one of them a large yellow trout, weighing above five, the rest, grilises, under ten pounds.

To a spectator at a short distance, not previously aware of what is going on, a group of salmon leisterers must possess a singular and romantic appearance, associating itself strongly with the olden times of Border adventure. The torches, with crimson flare, searching the hill-walled heaven, and hurrying, in all directions, fire and shadow over a dark mass of waters; the

figures, some fully exposed, others dimly visible, and thrown suddenly into view by the intervention of a stream of red light; the surrounding extent of moorland and pasture, embellished with a few gaunt trees and a mouldering tower; here a solitary sheep-fence, there a quiet hut; and, with these, the strange intermixture of human voices—all necessarily must work upon the imagination with a power and vividness which is seldom experienced among the more ordinary elements of poetry and romance.

But here is a gallant chase, worth fifty fox-hunts. No tiny fish have they started, or we mistake, but a twenty pounder at least, judging from the huge tail, which is helming it along the shallows. How it scuds, like the dolphin bark of Arion, or a rainbow rocket, throwing up ruby sparks! What a brilliant track of fire is there in its rear! And now it has escaped the ford, and the discharge of not a few leisters from the stragglers above; and here it is, in a long, dark, narrow pool, with a hollow bank of clay at one side, the other a flat layer of pebbles; it swims now more at its ease, in a sort of fancied security, although still restless, and every now and then probing with its chin the indentations and cavities of the left-hand embankment.

And now it is concealed from notice by the agitated state of the water, into which, through means of its snout, it has shaken down no inconsiderable quantity of clay; but the random search of Wat Amos's leister has again compelled it to trust to its fins, and it dashes up, in fine style, through a series of pools, followed by the whole group of sportsmen. A slight contortion of the tail indicates that it has received some small injury, but its speed is scarcely diminished, and it slips, almost miraculously, from under the shower of leisters with which again it is rapidly assailed.

As yet, Thorburn has held back ; but now, although third in the attack, one may observe, hung in air, his fatal spear, thrown from the steadiest hands among modern Borderers, and down, at the very feet of the Ettrick Shepherd, it falls unerringly upon the head of the devoted fish, which, hard pressed, is employing every means to escape.

In leister fishing, allowance must always be made for the refractory nature of the water ; and it is necessary, where the pool is of any depth, to strike below, and not at the fish. Salmon are rather attracted than frightened by the torch, and will often, if not otherwise disturbed, move slowly up towards it, or balance themselves steadily upon their fins within reach of the eager sportsman.

Sometimes an otter is killed by the leister, for that animal is as keen a hunter as man himself, and knows well the season when salmon spawn, and in what mood of water they can be captured with the greatest ease. A chase of this kind surpasses all other sports—the power and sagacity generally displayed by the otter increasing not a little the fervour and interest of the pursuit. One of these creatures, transfixed by the salmon spear, has been known to twist itself round the shaft, and divide it by the mere strength and sharpness of its teeth. Its great cunning, also, will enable it sometimes to escape, after being severely, if not mortally, wounded.

But our group of hunters are now somewhat wearied. The torches, one by one, are consumed. A cold frost settles down over the atmosphere, and even works itself into the wet garments and plaids of the satisfied Lowlanders. Above a score of fish have they immolated—salmon, grilse, sea trout, and yellow-fins—and here they lie in a goodly heap, to be shared out among the whole party. The best, a fresh-run salmon, is allotted

to Mr Hogg, who, with his true Border hospitality, invites his friends to wash it down with a sober jug of that true preventive of colds and rheumatisms, whisky toddy. The more rustic groups repair, some to the Gordon Arms, and others to their own dwellings, to enjoy the comforts of a huge fire and hot supper.

Leistering in Scotland, in broad rivers like the Tweed, is sometimes practised from a boat; and, in the Solway Firth, where the tides run rapid and the water is shallow, a horse was wont to be employed. We believe the method of spearing fish from the saddle is still in vogue, and can easily believe, that, although followed for profit, it affords no small or ignoble amusement among such perilous and unsteady sands as those which occur in the south-western districts of Scotland.

THE LEISTER SONG.

Flashes the blood-red gleam
 Over the midnight slaughter,
 Wild shadows haunt the stream,
 Dark forms glance o'er the water.
 It is the leisterer's cry!
 A salmon, ho! oho!
 In scales of light the creature bright
 Is glimmering below.

Murmurs the low cascade,
 The tall trees stand so saintly,
 Under their quiet shade
 The river whispers faintly.
 It is the leisterer's cry!
 The salmon, ho! oho!
 A shining path the water hath,
 Behind the shape of snow.

Glances the shining spear
 From harmless hands unheeded;
 On, in its swift career,
 The dream-like fish hath speeded.

It is the leisterer's cry !
The salmon, ho ! oho !
Along its wake the torches break,
And waver to and fro.

Wildly the eager band
Closes its fatal numbers ;
Across its glistening sand
The wizard water slumbers.

It is the leisterer's cry !
The salmon, ho ! oho !
And, lightning like, the white prongs strike
The jaded fish below.

Rises the cheering shout,
Over the rapid slaughter ;
The gleaming torches flout
The old, oak-shadow'd water.

It is the leisterer's cry !
The salmon, ho ! oho !
Calmly it lies, and gasps and dies,
Upon the moss bank low !

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE RAISING OF FISH AND CONSTRUCTION
OF FISH PONDS IN SCOTLAND.

THE observations introduced into our initiatory chapters on Scottish rivers and lochs, with regard to the soils best calculated for the breeding of good trout, will apply, not without reason, to our present remarks. In these we have shown, that a constant and plentiful provision is essential to the growth and increase of fish, and that certain dispositions of channel, or bottom, will furnish, more readily than others, the various kinds of sustenance required. Now, in treating of the construction of artificial ponds, whether intended for the raising or fattening of fish, we hold it to be of primary consequence, that some means be taken to secure a steady supply of food, otherwise the object of the experimentalist is defeated at its very outset.

To do this successfully must depend very much upon the natural conveniences of soil and situation. No one can rationally expect to find worms and insects under a dry, poor earth, or flies in any plenty apart from shrubs and trees. Undoubtedly those places which are, to a certain extent, fertile, and in the neighbourhood of wood, also mosses and moor ground, arising as they do from vegetable decay, are to be preferred before arid and unproductive lands for this purpose.

The most natural and effective situations, however, are small valleys and glens, pervaded by rivulets, and exposed in some degree to the sun. By throwing a strong bank across the lower part, or entrance, these

are easily transformed into reservoirs of water, well calculated to nourish many sorts of fish, especially those native to Scotland. This simple method of constructing a preserve is very common in our hilly districts, where Nature, the head architect, provides the greater requisites; yet on level grounds, with no such inherent advantages, it is, we confess, a matter both of expense and nicety to complete a pond well adapted for the breeding of fish.

Before we discuss the plans most approved of for fish enclosures, we shall briefly notice what sorts of fish thrive best in our northern climate, in order to point out the absurdity of introducing into preserves those more delicate kinds which require a warmer temperature. Of fresh-water fishes, naturalised in, or native to Scotland, the principal are the salmon, char, trout, pike, and perch, with their varieties; our southern districts afford the bream, roach, and vendace; but these are confessedly localised, and, except in a few instances, do not exist north of Dumfriesshire,

The carp, also, and tench, fish much esteemed for stocking waters in England, are met with only as curiosities among our preserves; they are rarely known to breed here, and require too much severe attention to repay the trouble of cultivating them to any extent for our tables. In a small pond at Redbraes, adjoining Edinburgh, seven or eight carp have been maintained for several years, along with numbers of perch; and though of both sexes, no disposition to shed spawn has as yet become apparent; in fact, it may safely be asserted by us, judging from what we have heard on the subject, that the carp will not thrive in Scotland, until some means be discovered for ameliorating the climate, and giving a soft quality to our waters.

In a paper by Mr Whyte, land-surveyor at Mintlaw,

which obtained one of the Highland Society's prizes, it is stated, that in some ponds belonging to Mr Fergusson of Pitfour, in Aberdeenshire, the tench thrives well ; and the carp, although not very prolific, breeds. This is owing, we imagine, to a particular softness in the quality of the water where these fish exist : in fact, it is allowed by Mr Whyte, in allusion to the carp ponds, that they are wholly kept up by rain water—a very different fluid from the hard springs which naturally supply our preserves.

It comes to this, that the only fish we possess, capable of being bred and fattened in artificial ponds to any extent, are the trout, the pike, and the perch, along, of course, with eels and minnows ; the former of which, namely, the eels, strange as it may appear, would almost seem to be produced spontaneously, or from the soil itself. We were lately present at the cleansing of an artificial pond at Powderhall, close to Edinburgh, which pond was constructed several years ago, and stocked only with perch, and a few trout ; yet, although it possessed no connection with any other water where eels were, we witnessed the capture of numbers of these animals, thrown up by the spades of the workmen. No eel had ever been placed in the pond, and such as were found there must either have travelled some distance overland, or else have sprung up of their own accord. The latter is assuredly an unphilosophical idea, and we leave scientific men to clear up the mystery. At all events, it may be put to those who have opportunities of judging, if such instances as this are not common, incredible as they may seem to others. It is necessary, however, we maintain, that springs should exist in the ponds.

A good deal of interesting discussion has taken place among naturalists with regard to the generation of eels

—some holding them to be viviparous, others oviparous. Although, by late experiments, some light has been thrown upon this question, it may scarcely be said to be set at rest.

Very singular stories have also been told of the overland migrations of eels, which, if true, may possibly account for the circumstance of their being discovered in artificial ponds and other places, into which they were not originally put. Those, however, who assert the fact of such migrations, unite in allowing that they are made for the purpose of reaching the salt water in the autumn months, and that eels are never found on land unless with their heads turned toward the sea. On considering the matter, we question very much if even its well-known tenacity of life would enable an eel to exist and move forward for a period of half an hour at most, upon a hard surface, and out of its element; and it also strikes us as not a little singular, that of the many who give credit to these overland migrations, so few should actually have witnessed them; nay, of these few, almost all allow the migrating eels to be not above three inches in length, and on every occasion found within a rood or two of the water-side.

But to return to the fish best adapted for artificial waters in Scotland. It may be asked, why is the char excluded? If a native fish, and for food so dainty and delicate, may not the experiment be hazarded, with some chance of success, of bringing it under the care and keeping of man? This we doubt; for be it noted, how the char is found only in lochs which are very deep and very clear—qualities that artificial fish ponds in no one instance combine. Moreover, for aught that naturalists have discovered, the common food of char may be entirely local, as we are of opinion it is; for in some districts, where there are numbers of small lochs of the

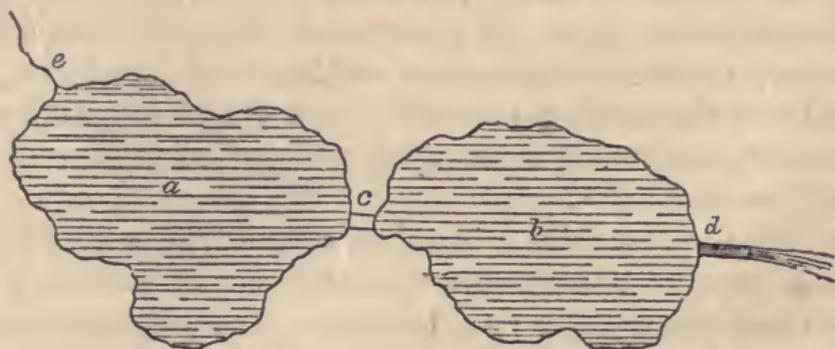
same make and features, this fish will be noticed to exist in one and not in another. Nay, it is well known that, on Windermere, the char, in order to spawn, ascends only one of two streams at its head, the Rothay and Brathay, although, seemingly, there is no difference in the sizes and natures of these waters. Mr Whyte mentions, that at Pitfour the raising of this fish was attempted, but without success. We assume, then, that the char cannot be forced, like many other fish. And now we go on to treat of the stocking and raising of the perch, the pike, and the trout, along with the nature of the ponds necessary for them.

And first, as to the perch. This hardy fish may be transported with great ease, being very tenacious of life. Even in wet moss, it can be carried alive from a considerable distance. Perch, if well fed, breed quickly in dead, dull waters. Their spawning time is March and part of April. There are two methods of stocking a pond with them; one, and by far the surest, is to obtain the live and grown fish; another is to collect the impregnated deposit, and lay it along the shoals of your preserve for the sun to hatch. A microscope will enable you to detect the proper state of the ova, which you will find in large beds along the margin of any tank where perch abound. When properly impregnated, these will appear slightly discoloured, and open or cleft on one side.

Ponds intended solely for perch do not require to be made large; they should slope gradually down towards the middle, from a depth of six inches to one of five or six feet. Water weeds ought not to be greatly encouraged. A series, or chain, of small basins, at different elevations, is preferable to a single large reservoir for this fish. These basins should be connected by a sluice and flood-gate, so that one may be readily

emptied into another for the mutual convenience of cleaning and repairing. Also, the uppermost ought to be shallower than those below, and more exposed to the sun, so as to serve for a nursery and breeding pond. Bream live well with perch in a warm situation; they are not, however, obtained readily in Scotland. Perch ponds should be let off and paved with channel stones every four or five years; many allow them to remain fallow for some months, and others sow them with grass and oats; a conceit laboriously encouraged by whimsy and theoretical writers of bygone days. We are no sticklers for antiquated and idle absurdities, and believe that many fish, for whose benefit they are performed, will thrive as well without them, provided you afford sweet, fresh water, and a plentiful allowance of food. Perch in some preserves have been known, although rarely, to attain the weight of three or four pounds, averaging, when well fed, from twelve to twenty ounces.

PERCH PONDS.



- a.* Upper, or breeding pond.
- b.* Lower pond.
- c.* Covered sluice, with moveable gratings.
- d.* Sluice with flood-gate.
- e.* Small feeder.

We proceed next to give a few directions how to raise and improve the pike; and we may notice, that

some old writers, Izaak Walton among the rest, assert, strangely enough, that this fish is the produce of the pickerel weed—a belief grounded upon the fact, that the pike often attaches its spawn to this plant, which, being transferred in a state of impregnation to an unstocked pond, of course the infant fish are brought out.

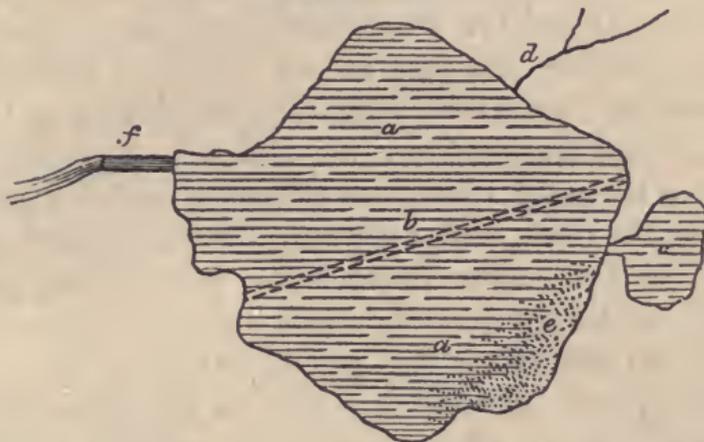
The pike pond, if for breeding and fattening to some extent, ought to be large, covering from eight to twenty acres; its mean depth, six or seven feet. One end, however, should be much shallower, and sown with bulrushes, or other water-plants. Previous to stocking it with this fish, a sub-stock of perch or trout should by all means be introduced, otherwise, without a great supply of such sustenance, pike will not only become thin and ill-tasted, but quarrel and devour each other. Nay, we would recommend that both of these sorts of fish be, if possible, made subservient for their use; although, of course, as we shall shortly discover, it is in vain to attempt raising a proper proportion of trout without the aid of a stream, directed through the pond. To facilitate, however, a steady supply of perch, small tanks should be constructed alongside of the leading preserve, with connecting sluices and flood-gates, so as to expel, when necessary, a shoal of live food.

Pike, for stocking, should be caught with a drag-net—of one size, and below two pounds weight. Although termed solitary fish, they are not so, but swim in small companies. No less than sixty-seven have been taken at one haul from the river Tay, near Almond mouth.

When stocking your pond, do not overdo it, by putting in more pike than is absolutely necessary: of fish under two pounds weight and above one, eight for the acre of water is quite sufficient. When constructing your preserves, include as many natural springs as

possible : they both help to keep the water pure, and supply the bottom with eels, upon which reptiles pike fatten prodigiously.

PIKE POND.



- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>a.</i> Pike pond. | <i>e.</i> Field of water plants. |
| <i>b.</i> Sunken mound. | <i>f.</i> Sluice to lead off water, |
| <i>c.</i> Perch tank attached. | with flood-gate. |
| <i>d.</i> Small feeder. | |

Next, as to the raising of trout. The error most prevalent with regard to this fish is, to suppose that, by providing an esteemed sort to breed from—for instance, of Loch Leven—you thereby secure to your table a first-rate stock, without calculating how to furnish proper food, and prevent the degeneracy of the fish. Very indifferent and badly flavoured trout will, it is ascertained, greatly improve when transferred into waters where food is plenty ; also white-fleshed fish, if one may use the expression, will become red over certain soils. What, then, is to hinder a naturally good trout from losing its flavour and firmness when imported into a poor, artificial water, from one that is rich in sustenance, and well gifted with shelter ?

We cannot but point out the inutility of sending many miles for a pitcherful of one variety of fish, when another, which will probably turn out better, may be

taken from the very nearest brook. As an instance how fish of an ordinary sort can be meliorated, we refer our readers to the changes undergone in Compensation Pond, alluded to in a former chapter. No one now, examining the trout taken from this reservoir, would conceive that they are all, or any of them, produced from those inhabiting Habbie's Howe or Glen-corse Burn ; and yet this is assuredly the case, although many of the pond trout have already acquired a reddish tinge in the flesh, and, externally, are very different indeed from the variety found in the burn—being thick, clear, and thinly spotted, while the others are lank, dirty, and covered with a great show of stars. This metamorphosis is entirely owing to superior feeding, the reservoir we allude to covering a large extent of valley ground, and, among other places, an ancient churchyard.

Now, if what we state be the fact (and nothing is easier for those who are sceptical than to make the experiment), of how little necessity are the troublesome methods in use to obtain a good stock of finely flavoured trout, provided the pond for breeding and improving be according to rule ! And, if otherwise, even the goodliest fish in the universe must indubitably fall off.

As to the arrangements to be pursued in the planning of a good trout preserve. Let the primary matter be the choice of your ground, in which, should you be exceedingly narrowed, and at a loss for good materials, then give up altogether the idea of a fish pond. If, however, you can discern the qualities of soil and neighbourhood recommended by us at the outset of this chapter, and, besides these, are able to command a small stream or brook, then set about and prepare your ground, as follows :—

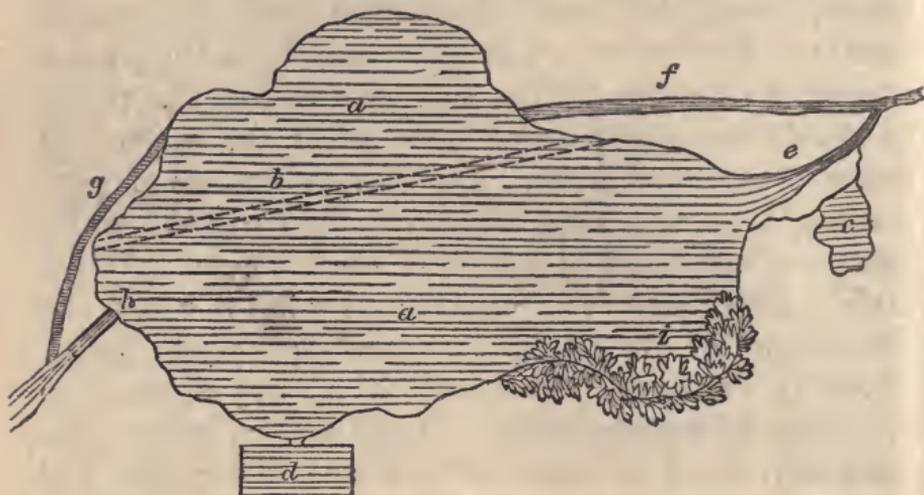
Choose from four to ten acres, less or more, of an

oval shape, but indented with small bays. Cast a long trench through the middle, from head to foot ; noticing that you can readily divert along it the stream just mentioned, which stream is intended as a spawning place, seeing that trout never shed their roe in dead water. Let this trench deepen gradually as the ground descends ; so that, at the intended foot of the pond, it should sink nearly three yards, while the upper part thereof is kept shallow. Dig from either side of your trench, keeping it slope and level, until within four fathoms of the intended margin of the fish pond. When this is done, turn your attention to what is called the dam-head, at the outlet or lowest part of the pond. From it, continue your trench for a short distance in the form of a paved sluice. Build stones, grass-sods, and clay, along the bank on each side, if needful, and drive in a few piles to strengthen it. Then set a flood-gate at the outlet, and another to serve as a check in case of accident, three yards farther down, where your paved sluice terminates. A few cart-loads of coarse channel, not from the sea, ought to be emptied over the earthy parts of your pond, which, otherwise, are apt to get covered with weeds, or else to encourage eels, the marked enemies of trout in all stages. After this is done, let loose your stream, and form your preserve, introducing trout of about six inches in length, eight or ten to every acre. Raise also at the head a small nursery of minnows, connecting it by distinct sluices both with the pond and its feeder. These are a favourite food of trout, and fatten them at a quick rate.

Some throw a sunken mound across the pond, rising to within a yard or so of the water-surface. By the assistance of this embankment, the fish are preserved from injury, at those times when you require to repair

your preserve ; since you thereby are enabled to expel only one-half of its contents at a time, keeping the other occupied during your cleansing operations.

TROUT PRESERVE.



- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <i>a.</i> Trout preserve. | <i>e.</i> Feeder. |
| <i>b.</i> Sunken mound. | <i>f.</i> Channel of diversion. |
| <i>c.</i> Enclosure for minnows. | <i>g.</i> Waste wear. |
| <i>d.</i> Tank, or stew-pond, with
grating. | <i>h.</i> Outlet of pond, with gate. |
| | <i>i.</i> Alders and willows. |

The first, or parent breed, in an artificial fish enclosure, generally grows to a great size, and with astonishing rapidity. As an instance of this, we may mention, that some years ago, several trout, weighing each about three or four ounces, were transferred from Loch Skene, in Dumfriesshire, to a newly constructed pleasure pond, belonging to Mr Younger of Craiglands, near Moffat, and that, in the course of eighteen months, they attained, individually, the weight of as many pounds ; although Loch Skene itself produces no fish above twelve inches in length. The present breed from these trout is much inferior in size, owing, of course, to the increase of their numbers, and the minuter proportion of food attainable by each individual. We

could mention other instances of a like nature, connected with the planting of natural hill tarns near Loch Alsh in Ross-shire ; in which the original stock themselves, although mere burn trout, attained very considerable dimensions, leaving behind them a numerous but dwarf progeny.

In our opinion, although not generally the practice, part of the parent or stock breed ought to be carefully preserved, in order to serve as a check upon the too plentiful spawnings which are apt to occur, and to devour, as their great size and appetites will enable them to do, the superabundant fry. Nay, in some places we would introduce a pike for this purpose, and believe him to do more good than harm.

On commencing this chapter we remarked how the neighbourhood of trees was of advantage to fish ponds : here, however, we do not wish to be misunderstood. By the neighbourhood, we mean not the contiguity or actual overshadowing of wood ; for nothing can be more deleterious to dead waters than the autumnal effusion of some sorts of leaves ; also the barring of the sun's heat is any thing but agreeable to fish, who love to doze in the shallows, and nap luxuriously at noon-day. Still we maintain that woods at a short distance are favourable to the growth of trout, furnishing them with many varieties of insects ; and even at the margin, to a certain extent, willows and alders ought to be encouraged, for on them the most esteemed flies breed, and under their roots the largest trout delight in lurking.

Many, alongside of their main preserves, employ smaller ones, in which trout can be fattened readily, and made to grow to any size. These stews should connect with the principal pond, and have moveable gratings in front to keep in the fish.

Besides the leading sluice for directing the feeder, another, termed a waste wear, should be formed, especially in places where floods are frequent, diverging from any convenient recess, in order to draw off quickly the superfluous and prejudicial element. This in dry weather should be kept closed by means of a gate.

During strong frosts in winter, the fish in artificial ponds are apt to suffer greatly, especially the young fry. To prevent this there is no proper remedy. A becoming disposition of large stones at the bottom of your reservoir, will, nevertheless, serve in part the purposes of shelter; although it is very true that the greater damage done by severe frosts results from the exclusion of air. Wherefore, order holes to be made in the ice that the fish may breathe properly, which most certainly they will attempt to do, coming up in great numbers to your vents, and by the agitation they make sometimes preventing them from re-freezing.

Perhaps the finest sheet of artificial water in Scotland is that at Drummond Castle, on the estate of Lord Willoughby D'Eresby. It covers a large extent of ground, and is stocked among other varieties with Loch Leven trout. These, however, owing to the soft quality of the water, and the want of a sufficient feeder, multiply indifferently. They are also subject to the attacks of perch, with which (in our opinion improperly) they are allowed to consort. Still they preserve much of their original flavour and size, being abundantly supplied with their favourite food. And as to the custom of introducing perch into trout preserves, we may remark, that it is greatly prejudicial, not only to the spawn of the latter, but the grown fish themselves, seeing that a well-armed, thick-scaled perch will not hesitate to attack the ill-defended trout, if provoked while feeding, and either injure him with his spines, or inti-

midate him from taking his natural quantity of sustenance.

We have thus briefly given our ideas concerning the raising of fish in Scotland, repelling, as we allow, the introduction of those which require a milder temperature and more lenient waters ; for it must be observed, that the mere quality of the water is a great matter, and that a Thames ditch, though it will raise carp, will not breed trout ; so, in like manner, a Scottish enclosure where trout thrive well, will prove any thing but friendly towards the carp, tench, bream, and barbel.

Before concluding this chapter, we are led to notice the very singular and successful experiments lately made, in order to introduce sea fish into artificial salt-water estuaries. These, it seems, are hollowed out to a considerable depth, and kept subject in a degree to the influence and changes of the tide ; although, at its lowest ebb, they still retain a large inland body of water. In fact, their only connection with the sea is by a gulf or strait, which, with the tides themselves, is formed alternately into an influx and reflux current. Upon this gulf is placed a wire grating to prevent the escape of such fish as the estuaries are stored with. The cod, haddock, ling, whiting, flounder, and even salmon, along with many other sorts of salt-water tribes, are thus maintained and kept within reach, at all seasons and in all weathers.

A very remarkable pond of this kind has existed for some years back at Portnessock, in Wigtonshire, on the south-west coast of Scotland, in which not only have fish been provided for, but actually domesticated ; so much so, indeed, as to recognise their keeper, and even take their food out of his hand.

Also, at Valleyfield, on the Firth of Forth, near Culross, there is a salt-water preserve of this sort, be-

longing to Sir Robert Preston, in which are fed stores of fish of various kinds. Of these, the turbot, brill, salmon trout, cod fish, skate, flounder, smelt, sole, and herring, are the most distinguished. The sustenance given to them consists chiefly of offals and broken shellfish, &c. Upon these, many of them thrive well; others, however, as might naturally be expected, lose much of their flavour and firmness.

It is a matter of some uncertainty, whether ponds of this description will eventually become available, or remain as matters of mere curiosity and amusement. We believe, however, that to some who have great local conveniences within reach, the expense of constructing such estuaries can be attended with no mighty loss; at any rate, there is, to a certain extent, a satisfaction in possessing them, which amply repays no inconsiderable degree of outlay.

CHAPTER XIII.

RECOLLECTIONS AND ADVICES.

WE think it proper, in this part of our treatise, to insert a few anecdotal notices, if they may so be termed, respecting such animals as are naturally the enemies of fish, and help not a little to diminish their numbers. Among these the otter stands foremost. The voracity of this creature is well known, and the uncommon massacres it will often effect among the choicest of our trout and salmon, render it greatly obnoxious to anglers. There are in Scotland comparatively few waters abounding in fish, which are not haunted to some extent by the otter, which, although naturally shy, and no lover of daylight, will at times, when in the pursuit, show a bold front, and has been known to contest its prey with man himself.

As an instance, we have heard it asserted by a gentleman, on whose word we place the most perfect reliance, that when angling for pike on the Loch of the Lowes, and about to land a fine fish of ten or twelve pounds weight, he was surprised to observe a large otter swim ferociously towards it; nor did it cease its attack, until it had succeeded in carrying away the pike, hook, and all, to the astonishment of those present.

Another individual informed us, that, when angling in St Mary's Loch at night, he has frequently been followed at a short distance by an otter, ready to pounce upon such fish as he might happen to hook, although generally, by his presence, deterring any from rising. The same person, lately a resident at the head of the

loch, close to Corsecleugh, once observed one of these animals lying asleep upon a piece of meadow-ground, close to the water, and on attempting to kill it, was forthwith assailed in return, and compelled to sound a retreat.

While angling in the still part of Tummel, immediately above Loch Tummel, we lately stumbled upon an otter, amusing himself under some bushes. Although within reach of our fishing-rod, the fellow raised himself boldly in the water to gaze at us, and seemed, like an upstart keeper, to question our right of angling so near his retreat. After a minute or so, he began to be satisfied with our appearance, and leisurely retired under water.

An otter catcher once informed us of a rare variety of this animal he had taken in a trap, and which he termed the king of the otters. According to his account, it was considerably larger than one of the common sort, and strangely spotted over with whitish spots. The capture of this specimen he considered a great achievement, as, although known, it was reckoned by most otter catchers extremely rare.

Those who employ night lines for pike, will sometimes observe, how even the strongest are unaccountably broken; this we ourselves have remarked, and can attribute it to nothing else than the interference of one of these creatures, whose nocturnal depredations help not a little to destroy the finest fish in our waters. It has been said, that when an otter sets its eye upon a particular trout or salmon, it never loses sight of it, and after a few minutes' chase, is certain to secure its victim.

Besides the otter, the angler has two accomplished enemies in the heron and the water ousel. The former, however, confines himself to small fish, such as

par and minnows, and is not able to master the stronger inhabitants of the flood; as for the latter, its object of attack is the spawn or roe, both that of the salmon and the trout. On this it preys with great voracity, devouring more than its own weight in the day, and searching even at the bottom of deep pools, in order to appease its appetite. The dainty manner in which the heron feeds upon the perch is worthy of remark. Being prevented by the thick, indigestible coat of scales, and sharp spines of this fish, from swallowing it entire, the bird manages with its bill to take off the skin, and so get at the edible parts. We have started herons at this work, and examined with minuteness the half-flayed victim left behind.

Our Scottish waters are sometimes visited by the wild swan. St Mary's Loch, to which that bird is poetically transported by Wordsworth, is, however, a very rare place of resort. About four years ago, a large one was shot at the foot of Corsecleugh Burn, and at the same time two smaller ones were wounded and taken. One of these was sent by the person who captured it, to the late Sir Walter Scott of Abbotsford, and, we believe, lived for some time.

The large black-backed gull, esteemed a rare bird, we have frequently seen about St Mary's, as well as a fine specimen of the blue falcon, inhabiting the rocks at the Grey Mare's Tail, a few miles off. The nest of this latter is annually robbed, and yet, what is singular, the parent birds always return; nay, it is asserted, that if one of these should happen to be shot, the survivor provides itself with a mate before spring, although necessarily from a great distance.

We once saw what we should suppose to be a great curiosity, passing over our head while angling on the Earn in Perthshire. This was a white eagle, of a large

size, and holding a steady flight, as if at a considerable distance from its nest.

While on birds, we may remark, what is well known to anglers, that the more familiar sorts are frequently captured with the fly. We once took a snipe by this means at Meggat Foot, while in the act of throwing our line over a trout which we had just raised. Also, on the Tyne, in East Lothian, we landed a bat, of which, at the moment, there were five or six playing about our tackle. At another time, we got hold of a wild duck, which sprang up at our feet when lashing the Machony, a small stream near Muthill, in Perthshire. The bird somehow proved too strong for us, and carried away our cast of flies in a twinkling. We luckily, however, found left behind it a full-grown flapper whereon to revenge ourselves.

A friend of ours also brought in, near the Water of Leith, several swallows in succession, one windy afternoon, on small midge flies, which, on passing, they darted at eagerly. On Lochnanean, Spittal of Glen-shee, Colonel Macdonald of Powderhall happened, while fishing from a boat, to run in among a flock of sea-gulls, and actually captured a score of them with his tackle, notwithstanding a most vigorous resistance.

Besides birds, the angler sometimes chances to hook other creatures of various sorts—for instance, water-rats and frogs: and we know of one brother of the rod, residing in Edinburgh, who happened to strike his huge salmon fly into the flank of an ox grazing behind him. The animal, of course, took to its heels, dragging after it the astonished fisher, who, in order to save his pirl-line, which was soon run out, forthwith exerted himself to keep pace with the rapid brute, although compelled at last to submit to the necessity of losing his tackle.

In pursuing this train of miscellaneous observations, we may notice, what has not escaped the remark of many, that mostly all dogs discover a singular antipathy or indifference towards live fish; yet we know of one belonging to the landlady of the St Mary's Loch club cottage, by name Gipsy, a cross breed betwixt the colley, or sheep-dog, and the Scotch terrier, which loves nothing better than to take its station on the shallow run betwixt the upper and lower lochs, in order to watch the shoals of perch which, during the months of March and April, congregate to spawn in this place; and when an opportunity occurs, Gipsy will be observed to make a sudden dash towards the bottom with its head, and generally secure a fish, which it carries to land, and forthwith kills. There is no race of beings this animal appears to esteem better than anglers; and it never forgets, even at the distance of two or three years, one who has permitted it to accompany him to the stream side. When there, it seems almost to take as much interest in the landing of a fish as the performer himself; and, if ordered to go in and seize the trout while yet in the water, will comply with the utmost alacrity. Of pike and eels, Gipsy is somewhat shy, and approaches them with considerable caution. Although fond of fish when cooked, he rejects them, like other dogs, in a raw state.

We shall devote now a portion of this chapter to the feats of anglers; and in order to impose silence upon vaunters, and undeceive the credulous, we allow it to be known plainly, in spite of the marvellous relations of Sir Humphry Davy and others, that no Scottish trout-fisher with the fly ever did, upon an entire average, manage to capture one trout, upwards of a pound weight, for every hundred falling short. We talk of common yellow unforced fish, not those which ascend

from the sea, or are bred in artificial ponds. As for numbers, we believe that, in some places and weathers, a good hand at the rod may take, in a day's angling, from twelve to six-and-twenty, or even thirty dozen. A friend of ours, Mr John Wilson jun., captured, in the space of six or seven hours, no less than fourteen score some odds, from a small loch situated in the Caledonian Forest, near Loch Laggan; and this on a close sultry day, without a breath of wind. Thirty pounds weight of trout is considered a good day's work on Tweed, and few anglers are able to take so much.

On this river, it is of great importance not to overlook the feeding hours of the large fish, which are commonly for the fly from half-past ten to half-past one during the day, in spring, and in the afternoons, from five to seven, or eight, if the weather be warm. The summer feeding hours are of course both earlier and prolonged later. The best Tweed anglers confine themselves at most to a couple of pools, unless the water be very much reduced, and so rendered capable of being quickly fished over. Few rivers, however, will bear a perpetual scrutiny of this sort, without their inhabitants becoming shy and cautious. One of the best takes on the Innerleithen district of the Tweed, was achieved by George Graham Bell, Esq. advocate, a couple of springs ago, with minnow, at a time when the water was flooded, and full of snow-brew, as it is termed. The largest yellow trout taken by him on that occasion weighed five pounds, and the entire quantity betwixt forty and fifty pounds, all of which were killed in the short space of four hours.

The St Ronan's or Border Club, established to encourage the athletic exercises among the Lowlanders of Scotland, adds angling to its other amusements, and gives an annual spring medal to the most successful of

its competing members. This trial of skill and patience commonly takes place about the end of April or the beginning of May. The attendance, however, is seldom numerous, and chiefly local. Edinburgh anglers engaging in the contest, have of course very limited advantages in many respects, compared with such as are resident on the spot, and acquainted with every pool in the river. The first medal given was gained by Mr Thorburn, Juniper Bank, without very much competition. On the following year, he was succeeded by Colonel Macdonald, and after that by other anglers of celebrity. The inconvenient time when this competition takes place, renders it a matter of great indifference to those distant from the scene of action.

A salmon medal was likewise offered by the club, but we believe only once contested. On that occasion, unless we recollect wrongly, the Ettrick Shepherd carried off the prize, by killing the only salmon. This fish, a large one, weighing twenty-seven pounds, he captured almost without the assistance of his reel, having unfortunately dropt its handle. By great good chance, however, the fellow leapt out of the water in his endeavours to escape from the hook, and fell upon the bank.

Some of the best Tweed salmon-fishers are found below Melrose, about Kelso and Coldstream, where the fish are more plentiful. During the month of March, should it prove mild, and the river be clear of snow, a good angler sometimes captures above a score, or even two score, of salmon-kelts. As many, at certain times, might probably be taken on some of our northern rivers. These, however, especially such as run westward, yield a greater sufficiency of sea trout and whitlings than full-grown salmon. We have heard that when the late Sir Humphry Davy angled in the Tweed, he hap-

pened, by good fortune, to hit upon an immense fish, weighing about forty-two pounds, immediately above Yair Bridge, and captured him, after a severe struggle. This feat he makes no mention of in his *Salmonia*, although, certainly, worthy of some notice. Few fish above twenty pounds' weight are ever taken in Tweed; and yet we believe the salmon of this river are generally as large as the Tay fish, and much more so than those of our other rivers.

The best craftsmen in Scotland are perhaps to be found among the lower orders, despite of their clumsy rods and rough tackle. We have met with such as were loading their creels at every throw, and yet seemingly without effort or science. In fact, the best proof of a good angler is his ability to conceal his skill. An indifferent-looking fisher often proves better than one who is all method and nicety, and wishes to let you know it. Our custom, when a brother angler heaves alongside, is to act our worst, and so prevent him from spoiling the water out of spite, which he is very apt to do, for the benefit of one he considers more skilful than himself.

And here we would advise, among other things, always to give the precedence to him who seems determined to take it from you, by his rapid advances towards the pools you are engaged on; for, be assured, he is at once vulgar, ignorant, selfish, and upstart, and demands only your silent contempt. Even rustic anglers respect the rights of those before them, and consider it unlucky to pass each other, unless from necessity, or mutual understanding. Never refuse to show another the contents of your creel, should he ask you; but do not blazon them abroad to every one you meet, for vaunters gain no respect by their readiness to chagrin others. If you can help a brother angler in a difficulty, do it,

whether by the gift of a few hooks, which cost you almost nothing, or by assisting to mend his rod when broken. Any such small service you will generally find well repaid. Do not grudge a mouthful of what was intended for your own refreshment, to one, although a stranger, who seems to require it as well as yourself. Be more civil to the gamekeeper than the squire, if caught in a trespass, but always put on a good-humoured face in order to get easily out of the scrape. When attacked by a watch-dog, give him across the head with the butt of your rod, and send a stone after him to keep him company to his kennel. Should a bull attack you, trust to your heels, or, if too late, stand steady, and jerk yourself out of the way the moment he lowers his horns; he will rush on several yards, as if blindfold, and take a couple of minutes before he repeats his charge; use these to your advantage. Never carry another man's fish, nor part with your own to adorn an empty creel; in the one case you are tempted to bounce, and in the other you act the tempter. Should you hook a large fish and lose him, there is no need to publish your misfortune; sympathy in such a case is out of the question; and if you gain credit, you do more than you deserve. When engaged to compete with another angler, set about it silently; a boast on your part is an advantage to him, which you may understand the better on the close of the contest. When crowded over by a very indifferent angler, take it good-humouredly; it is easier to depreciate skill than to possess it. Beware of tackle-puffers, and of such especially, of whom there is at least one in Edinburgh, who can afford to sell real Limericks at one-fourth of the cost at which they can be fabricated in Ireland. Had King Solomon been an angler, he would have added another chapter to his book of Pro-

verbs, and Dr Johnson, out of respect for the wise man, would have spared his ill-judged sarcasm. The greatest losses an angler can sustain are those of his patience and good temper; they are worth a cart-load of salmon. While crossing a rapid ford, expose as little of yourself as possible to the force of the water; keep the legs close, your side towards the stream, and one calf covering the other; should you feel yourself losing ground, plant the butt end of your rod firmly above you, but do not rest a single second in any one position without protection from the strength of the current. When angling, always keep one eye upon Nature, and the other upon your hooks, and ponder while you proceed. Never fall in love with one you meet by the water-side; there are situations when every woman looks an angel. And, last of all, keep up the fraternity of the craft. Anglers are a more gifted and higher order of men than others, in spite of the sneers of pompous critics, or the trumpery dicit of a paradoxical poet. In their histories, there are glimpses snatched out of heaven—immortal moments dropping from Eternity upon the forehead of Time. As a gift of his calling, poetry mingles in the angler's being: yet he entreats for no memorial of his high imaginings—he compounds not with capricious Fame for her perishing honours—he breaks not the absorbing enchantment by any outcry of his, but is content to remain “a mute, inglorious Milton,” secretly perusing the epic fiction of his own heart.

Blame him not that he hoards up the pearls of his fancy—that his forehead is unbared for no honour—that he hath buried his virtues in a lowly place, and shrunk from the gaze and gathering of men—that he courts no patron smile, and covets no state preferment—that he is barely heedful of crowns and their

creatures, of party struggles and party declensions—that he wills for no privilege but that of his meditative pastime, and runs not headlong among the meshes of care, in which are so intricately entangled the wealthy, the ambitious, and the powerful. He is happier in the nook of his choice, than the usher of sovereign mandates on the throne of his inheritance.

And when he quits his humble heritage,
It is with no wild strain—no violence ;
But, wafted by a comely angel's breath,
He glides from Time, and on immortal sails
Weareth the rich dawn of Eternity.

CHAPTER XIV.

ANGLING DISTRICTS.

THE following list of fishing districts in Scotland may seem to many not sufficiently specific ; the task, however, would be endless, and the advantages very uncertain, were we to describe with particular accuracy the features and contents of every Scottish water, the varieties of trout it produces, the baits and flies most of service, and all the minutiae connected with it. There is attached to every county, or series of counties, a general character, which amply supplies the necessity of so doing ; and we would only burden our treatise with an unnecessary appendage, did we not deem it sufficient merely to jot out rapidly the principal points of attraction to the angler, and not to enter into any elaborate analysis of their virtues, which his own skill will render him best able to appreciate.

There are few districts in Scotland where sport is not to be met with in some shape or other, improving, no doubt, as it retires among Grampian recesses, or the less frequented valleys of Ross-shire and Sutherland. Of our Lowland rivers, the leading advantages are their better provision in point of accommodation, the facility with which they can be reached, and, above all, the immense superiority they give to the finished and able angler, over the unpractised noodles which frequent their banks ; and this is a great drawback to our northern waters, that the fish they contain have little subtlety, and are too easily captured. One wearies of constant success, obtained without any opportunity of exercis-

ing his skill, and is glutted with the continual vision of huge heaps of fish slaughtered for no earthly purpose.

In the Highlands, the angler ought to confine himself almost entirely to trolling for large trout, along with salmon and sea trout fishing. He will find these far more exciting sports than the tossing out of a few dozens of par or such trash, which every village urchin could do as readily as the best rod in Britain.

We shall here sketch out what we reckon to the zealous lover of angling will prove as pleasant a tour as he can well take over Scotland. Let him be at Kelso, or Coldstream on the Tweed, at the beginning of March. Salmon are then in the river, and may be taken in large quantities. These, however, with few exceptions, are newly spawned, lean, and ill tasted; they show but poor fight compared with fresh-run fish, but still there is amusement at this early season in taking them, when one is keen and in good temper.

Before April, let the angler take his leave of this part of Tweed, and proceed upwards by Melrose to Clovenford and Innerleithen. Should the weather be cold, he must not expect first-rate trouting; if warm, and what is termed in England the March brown fly be upon the water, depend upon it he will cram his creel. St Mary's Loch is nine or ten miles from Innerleithen, and at all events a trip should be taken in that direction. Yarrow and Meggat are both good streams, and in the loch itself the spring trout rises freely at a large dark fly. The angler may also try the Lyne and Biggar waters, and, crossing over to Clyde, fish down to Hamilton. A salmon or two may be killed in this month below Stonebyres.

From Hamilton we would proceed to Glasgow, and descend by the daily steamer to Inverary. Loch Awe is only nine miles distant from that town. There are

plenty of inns in its neighbourhood ; at Dalmally, Cladish, Portsonachon, and other places. To fish Loch Awe properly, a boat will be required, which can be obtained for a reasonable hire. The boatman employed is always competent to instruct one upon the likeliest feeding grounds, and other such matters. We may state that the best part of Loch Awe for the *salmo ferox* is above where the river Awe issues, and directly below Ben Cruachan. In the rivers Awe and Urchy, salmon abound ; the former, also, is much frequented by whitlings. When inclined to leave this district, the angler may strike in upon the military road, passing Queen's house and leading through Glencoe. This he may do by proceeding up Loch Etive, and the stream which falls into it, or in many other ways—but none certainly so romantic as this. Glencoe leads to Loch Leven, an arm of the sea, and one from it may proceed to Fort William, either by Ballychulish, or by a mountain path through Glen Nevis, well worthy to be preferred by the lover of nature. At Fort-William let him try the Lochy : he will find it, if slightly swollen, a first-rate river, especially for sea trout and grilse. From thence, he should proceed to Inverness by steamer, and cross over about July to Sutherland, or else strike aside to Loch Laggan, by the course of the Spean. He will find near the head of the loch a good inn, and a strange fish of a landlord. Dalwhinnie, above Loch Ericht, and Dalnacardoch on the Garry, a short distance from Loch Garry, should also be visited ; and passing through Blair Athol, the angler may follow the stream down to where it meets with the Tummel ; he should then hold up the vale of Tummel to Loch Tummel, where large strong trout are to be taken from a boat. At Kinloch Rannoch, a few miles farther on, there is a good inn, and the angling on some

parts of the loch is reckoned excellent, as it also is on the Gawin, and Loch Lydoch. Crossing the hills to the south, a forenoon's walk will bring him to Glen Lyon, down which he should angle his way to Fortingal, and in the evening settle himself at Kenmore on Taymouth. Instead, however, of following the course of Tay towards Dunkeld, we would advise him to proceed by the loch side to Killin, from thence to Loch Earn Head, the Trosachs, Lochs Chon and Ard, Stirling and Edinburgh. Should he, however, prefer visiting Sutherland and Ross-shire, by Inverness, we would leave him to select his own route, aware that he can scarcely go amiss after good sport among the numerous waters of these northern districts. The Shin, Oikel, Ewe, Carron, and others, are all, in their season, good salmon rivers, and the *salmo ferox* inhabits many of the large reservoirs and lochs. Good humour and perseverance are the angler's two good angels, and without these his pastime becomes a torment, and our advice of no value.

CAITHNESS.

The extreme north of Scotland will not disappoint the venturous angler, provided he meet with favourable weather and flooded rivers. Without rain, he must confine himself wholly to loch fishing, which, during summer, is certainly the most satisfactory. Caithness, like the neighbouring counties, is well watered, both by streams and reservoirs. Of the former, the more important are the Forss, Thurso, Wick, and Berrydale waters, all of which are frequented by salmon. The lesser streams are Dunbeath, Langwall, a tributary of Berrydale, Wester water, and the burn of Rattar from Loch Sciste. The lochs in this shire are Lochs Hallen, Watten, Lochs More, Scirach, Sciste, Calder, Ruard,

Stemster, Toftingall, Calam, and Shurery. These in general abound in trout, and several of them are accessible to the salmon. There are small towns and inns at the mouth of every considerable river and along the coast, although the inland districts are but scantily supplied with accommodation for the angler. The number of fish killed in the river Thurso and bay, amounted, in 1822, to 5908; in 1823, to 8067; and in 1824, to 5767, salmon and grilses.

SUTHERLANDSHIRE.

Although little frequented by the angler, this county offers a variety of sporting waters, unequalled by any other in Scotland. It teems with lochs and rivers, the former abundantly stored with fine trout and char, while the latter are much visited by salmon and whitlings. The gillaroo and *salmo ferox* of Loch Awe are found in many places. Of streams in Sutherland, the principal are the Naver, from a loch of the same name falling into the sea at the bay of Torresdale; the Helmsdale, from Loch Baden, in which salmon abound; the Halladale, the Brora, from Loch Brora, where the angling is first-rate—Shiberscross water is its principal feeder; the Fleet, the Strathy, and the Shin, a good salmon river, where the fish run large, and are killed in great numbers at a linn and waterfall some way up; near it are the Cassly, remarkable for the clearness and small size of its salmon; and the Oikel, a water of considerable size, which joins the Shin above Dornoch. The chief lochs are Shin, Naver, Assynt, Baden, Hope, More, Layghal, Brora, and Ulaball. Loch Shin, the tamest and least romantic of the lochs in Sutherland, is a large expanse of water, about twenty-four miles in length; many of the others are of a considerable size, and most of them contain trout in great quantities.

Such, also, as are connected with the sea by means of rivers, are well stocked with salmon. Lochs Craggie and Beannachd, or the loch of blessing, in the parish of Rogart, are remarkable for the superior angling they afford. Almost the sole proprietor in this shire is the present Duke of Sutherland, who holds the soil in right of marriage. A strange and unconstitutional, not to talk of illiberal system of policy, seems to be gaining root in Sutherland, countenanced no doubt by his present Grace, but proceeding in a great measure from the imperious underlings to whose advice he is subject. Will it be believed, that one of the most extensive counties in Scotland, situated almost on the extreme north of Great Britain, as wild in part as when it came out of the Creator's hands, with all its boasted improvements at this very moment a natural desert, and likely to continue so for centuries—will it be believed that the whole of this territory is virtually excluded from his Majesty's dominions; that the subjects of this free realm, at the beck of its influential proprietor and his haughty representatives, are denied access to its remotest corner; that without special permission (a thing not to be obtained by mere application, but granted, if granted at all, to suit the personal interests of certain hangers-on of his Grace) no one may throw a feather across the most insignificant of its countless pools, or finger a blade of mountain grass, or lift a single stone from its dragon-guarded soil? There are pretty comfortable inns at Dornoch and Clashmore; at Golspie, not far from Brora; at Bonar Bridge, and Culrain Inn, commanding the Carron, Shin, and Oikel rivers; also at Oikel Bridge; Lairg, near the foot of Loch Shin; Altnaharra, head of Loch Naver; Bettyhill of Farr on the Naver; Kirkabole Inn, near Loch Layghal; Innisindamff, at Loch Assynt; and at Lochs Eribole and Inver;

near all of which good fishing is to be had, especially during a rainy season. The fisheries on the Naver, the Helmsdale, and the Brora, draw an annual rental of about L.1700, their produce averaging in value L.6800. The produce of Brora and Shin in 1806, amounted to 44,811 salmon and grilse.

KINCARDINE.

The rivers in this shire, if we except the Dee and North Esk, which partly water it, are small, although well stocked with fish. The Cowie, the Carron, and the Bervie waters, deserve notice; they are ascended during floods by salmon and sea trout. The Dye and its tributaries, the Feugh and Avon, enter Dee opposite Banchory. The Luther also runs through the county, falling into the North Esk, and contains numbers of small trout. There are no lochs within the county worthy of the angler's attention. The rental of the North Esk is estimated at L.2400 annually; that of the other waters in this county does not exceed L.300.

ROSS-SHIRE.

The investigations of the angler have as yet been very partially extended to this county. Such, however, as have visited it, allow a good repute to the numerous streams by which it is intersected—the outlets many of them of lochs and tarns, where the trout are large and well conditioned, feeding, as they do, over rich and weedy soils. Among the more important waters, we may mention the Oikel, which bounds Ross-shire on the north-east; the Conan, running into the Cromarty Firth, near Dingwall; the Ewe, from Loch Maree; and the Carron from Loch Leven; which two waters, along with the Shiel, Croe, and others of minor note, belong to the western coast. Conan is a dark,

massy river, of considerable size and depth, well frequented by salmon, and containing pike and yellow trout. Its tributaries are the Meig and Orrin, along with the Black Water, an excellent but severely preserved salmon stream. Its proprietor appears to have singular notions with regard to his fishings, letting them under strange limitations, and at a great disadvantage to himself. It is remarkable of the Black Water, that the fish ascending it, owing to its inky nature, in a couple of days become quite dark-coloured and seemingly unclean. There are fine falls both on it and the Conan, above which the salmon is seldom caught. The Ewe, esteemed by Sir Humphry Davy the best salmon water in Scotland, is of very inconsiderable length, reckoning only two or three pools. These, however, when the water is in trim, are literally alive with fish; at times you may raise one every other throw in. They do not, it must be allowed, fasten readily, being fresh from the sea, which appears to have some effect upon their visual organs, as it is a matter of difficulty to secure one out of five that offer themselves. This is a strictly preserved water, as also is the Carron, which likewise, in favourable weather, abounds with salmon, grilse, and sea trout. The Shiel and Croe, in the district of Kintail, enjoy the same reputation. Small flies should be generally used in these waters. Among the lochs in Ross-shire which claim our notice, is Loch Maree, a superb expanse of water, extending from head to foot sixteen miles, studded with wooded islets, and walled in with magnificent mountains. Salmon frequent its waters, along with abundance of trout. The best angling lochs in Ross-shire are, however, of a smaller size, although still very considerable in their dimensions. These are Loch Monar, in Strathorrin; Lochs Fannich and Luichart, at the head of Conan river;

Loch Rosk, near Achnasheen; Lochs Ledgowan, Achnanault, and Cullen, near Achnanault; Loch na Feigh, Badienoch, and others, near Grudie Bridge; Lochs Garve and Achilty, where char are found; Nech Van, Dramee, and Loch-an-Dhu, near Contin; Loch Bennachan, in Strathconan; Loch Bran, &c. &c. Many of these contain great quantities of pike, which do great injury to the trout, by reducing their numbers, although tending materially to increase their size. In Lochs Monar, Ledgowan, and Badienoch, trout, weighing from two or three to ten pounds, are not unfrequently taken with the fly. We have captured them of a like size on the upper part of the Black Water, angling with a piece of a trout for pike. In Loch Badienoch, a small hill tarn, we took a fish, with the red professor, weighing nearly seven pounds, its length not more than twenty-two inches, and, when cooked, cutting redder than a salmon. There are inns at Strathgarve, Contin; an excellent one at Achnanault, at Kinlochewe, Jean Town, Craig, Shiel House, &c. There is also a good public-house on the rivers Farrar and Glass, running into Loch Monar.

NAIRN.

Findhorn crosses this shire, running towards the north-east. It abounds in salmon, as does also the Nairn, a considerable stream rising in Inverness-shire, on the mountainous district of Badienoch, and falling into the Moray Firth. Loch-an-Dorb is the principal sheet of water in the county.

CROMARTY.

No rivers of note water this county; one of its districts, however, contains a number of lochs, the principal of which are Laurger, Ankynoch, Baddagyle, Skinaskiuk, and Battachan.

ELGINSHIRE OR MORAY.

Spey washes the south-east boundary of this county. As a salmon river, it has no equal in Scotland; the fishing, belonging to the Duke of Gordon, at its mouth, is rented for considerably more than L.6000 a-year. It affords also capital rod-fishing. Findhorn runs parallel to it, on the north side, and is reckoned an excellent salmon stream, being large and rapid. Lossie is the only other water worthy of notice in this shire; it rises from the hills of Dallas, and, as a good angling river, is not behind Spey and Findhorn. The lochs in this county are not numerous: Spynie and Loch-na-Bee form the principal, both containing pike, the latter some trout. The salmon flies in use among the northern counties are very similar to those employed in the south of Scotland, although perhaps of a larger size, and somewhat more fanciful.

The fisheries in this county, taken in connection with those of Nairn, are valued at L.25,000 annually.

BANFFSHIRE.

Banffshire is watered by numerous streams, containing salmon and trout in considerable quantities. At the head of these is the river Spey, rising in the county of Inverness, from the western district of Badenoch. Its tributaries, in Banffshire, are the Avon, the Fiddich, and the Dullan. Avon receives the Livet and the Tervie, and many smaller waters empty themselves into Spey from the south. Besides these, we find the Deveron, an excellent angling stream, falling into the sea at Banff. It is joined, above Rothiemay, by the Isla, and farther up by the Bogie, both good trouting rivers. There is an inn at Tomantoul on the Avon, where the angler may put up; also on the Spey, at Ballindalloch, Aberlour, Rothes, and Fochabers. Keith on the Isla,

and Huntley on the Deveron, are also well provided with accommodation.

ABERDEENSHIRE.

Although possessing several distinguished waters, Aberdeenshire is barely entitled to the praise of the angler. Some of its streams, the Dee especially, are rocky and rapid—prime haunts of the salmon, but frequented indifferently by good-sized river trout : others, however, the lower parts of the Don and the Ythan, are reckoned excellent, flowing, as they do, through a richer soil. Salmon, in any quantity, ascend Don only a short distance. The Urie, which falls into it at Inverury, with its tributaries, the Gadie, Shevock, and Lochter, is a sluggish water, running through a pastoral country, and contains a fair allowance of fish. The other leading streams in this shire are the Ugie, formed of the Strichen and Deer waters, and the Deveron. The tributaries of Dee are principally Luchar and Gormack burns, the water of Gairden, the Muick, the Ouich, Lui, and water of Geauley.

Its lochs are Loch Muick, containing numbers of small trout, Loch of Skene, well provided with pike and perch, Loch Cannord, Loch Callader, and Brotachan.

The best fishing stations are at Ballater on the Dee, about forty-two miles from Aberdeen, also at Castleton of Braemar.

The average annual number of salmon and grilises, taken betwixt the years 1813 and 1824, amounted to 52,862 on the Dee, and 40,677 on the Don.

FORFARSHIRE.

The North and South Esks, in Forfarshire, are reckoned good salmon streams. The former flowing

from Loch Lee, is joined in its course by the Luther, Cruick, West-water, and Tarf; which, along with numerous smaller streams, afford excellent trouting. South Esk, a larger water, receives the Noran and Prosen, Lemno and Carity, entering the sea at Montrose. Besides the Esks, we find, belonging to this shire, several streams of less importance, among which may be noticed the Lunan, Finny Burn, Dighty, and Elliot: joining Isla on the west, we discover the Dean, a dull running water, abounding in very large red-fleshed trout; it should be fished early in March, before the rushes, which grow plentifully in its course, appear above the surface; also the Kerbet, and Glammis Burn, both of which are well stored with fish, and merit the angler's attention. A few small lochs are to be met with here and there. Among others, Loch Lee contains large trout: Lochs Brandy and Churl also abound with fish. Perch are found in the Loch of Forfar; and Rescobie, along with the Balgavies, is not without its scaly inhabitants.

STIRLINGSHIRE.

The Forth, as we find it at Stirling, is only suited for the net and coble. Higher up, salmon may be taken with the rod: they are not, however, very plentiful, preferring to ascend its tributary the Teith, a more rapid and transparent stream. Pike and perch are found in abundance, and many good trout frequent its sources. Of tributaries, besides the Teith and Allan Water, it has the Kelty and Duchray below Loch Ard, also the Goodie from the Lake of Monteith. These are respectable angling waters, but by no means greatly stocked with fish. Carron and Bannockburn run through this shire—the former, like the English rivers, slow and winding, without many trout, being injured by numbers of bleach-

fields and machinery of various kinds. To the west of the county flows the water of Endrick, with the Blane its tributary, which falls into Loch Lomond, and is well filled with trout and roach. The scenery on its banks is highly romantic. Kelvin Water, with Allander, border Stirlingshire, but are not possessed of any great attractions to the angler: Avon also divides it from West Lothian on the south-east. A few small lochs are to be met with, but none of any note or interest. Stirlingshire and its angling districts are of easy access, and inns are plentifully scattered about the county.

PERTHSHIRE.

To the angler, Perthshire offers a choice field, if we may so call it, for the exercise of his art. Its rivers and lochs are numerous, of various dimensions, and well stored with trout, salmon, pike, and perch. The inns and fishing stations are generally good and accommodating. The principal river in this county is the Tay, a noble salmon stream: its many fisheries, however, confine the use of the rod to the most rapid parts, which cannot be approached with the net. The Linn of Campsie, betwixt Perth and Dunkeld, and the stretch of water running from Loch Tay towards Aberfeldy, are undoubtedly the best resorts for the angler. The chief tributaries of Tay are the Earn, Almond, Ordie, Islay, Bran, Tummel, and Lyon Water. The Earn is a favourite stream with the sea trout and grilse: it runs in general somewhat sluggishly, and contains numbers of pike. Its sources are the May, a first-rate angling burn, the Machony, the Turit, and the Rochil—the last, passing through Glenartney, is much frequented by the smaller sort of sea trout, or whitlings, during the months of July and August. Almond, which falls into Tay immediately above Perth, flows in the

upper part through one of the most remarkable passes in Scotland, and teems, where it is uninjured by mills, &c. with small lively trout. An expert angler may take from eight to sixteen dozen in the course of a day. The Islay is reckoned an excellent salmon river; it meets Tay on the left betwixt Dunkeld and Perth, and is well adapted, along with its tributaries the Ardlie, &c. for rod-fishing. Braan and Ordie contain trout in considerable numbers. The Tummel, which joins Tay at Logierait, may be reckoned among the more tolerable waters in Perthshire. Some parts, however, excel and contain large trout. Salmon seldom ascend above the falls. Into Tummel, and above Pitlochrie, flows the Garry, a tolerable fishing stream. The Tilt meets Garry at Blair Athol, and farther up enters the Bruar, both affording fine sport to the angler. Lyon Water, falling into Tay below Kenmore, contains salmon and trout in considerable plenty. The districts of Perthshire through which Tay and its tributaries flow, are beautifully varied and marked with fine natural scenery. Lochs are scattered in all directions, filled with fish of various sorts and qualities. The principal of these are Loch Tay, into which fall the Dochart and Lochie, good angling streams; Lochs Bha, Lydoch, Aich, Rannoch, and Tummel, connected in a series by the Gawin and river Tummel; Lochs Ericht, Garry, Earn, Turit, Freuchie, and Broom, all well stored with fish. Loch Tummel contains very large trout and pike; of the former, six or seven may be killed in a day, from two to twelve pounds weight each: a large red fly or small trout are the best lures, and a boat, of which there are several on the water, is necessary; the outlet is reckoned by us the surest ground, especially in the evening. Loch Turit produces, besides pike and perch, a fine red trout, which grows to

an immense size. Lochs Freuchie and Broom abound in red trout, reckoned at the table superior to char; both are much netted. Besides these we could mention fifty others; many of them first-rate, and abounding in fish; these, however, are generally small, averaging a quarter of a pound, and may be captured in triplets.

The best quarters for anglers are Dalnacardoch, situated on the Garry, some miles above Blair Athol; Dalwhinnie on Loch Ericht, Kinloch Rannoch, Cuschiville, Bridge of Tummel, Auchinleck on Erichy, Monlinearn on Tummel, Amulree on Loch Freuchie, Fortingall and Killin: at all of which places, good reasonable accommodation may be had, and sport expected.

Teith is the principal river in the western district of this county, falling into the Forth above the Bridge of Allan. It abounds in salmon, and in some parts the trouting is good. Keltie is its largest tributary. Immediately below Teith, Allan Water joins the Forth, on the whole a sluggish stream, containing pike in great abundance. The lochs near the head of Teith are numerous, some of them very indifferent for angling in, although highly beautiful. Those properly bordering on Stirlingshire, and united with its leading river, afford the choicest sport, namely, Lochs Chon, Dhu, Ard, Arklet, and Voil. At them good accommodation can be obtained; boats also can be procured, out of which, with moderate success, the angler may take no scanty weight of fine well-flavoured trout, red in the flesh, and of uncommon strength and vigour. The others, excepting Loch Lubnaig, are considerably impaired by the quantities of pike they contain. Vennachar and Katrine, however, produce some beautiful red trout, to be caught by trolling with minnow from a boat. Good inns are to be met with near most of the lochs in this district of the county.

ARGYLESHIRE.

The Argyleshire river is more famous for its small salmon and whitlings than its yellow trout. The latter seldom attain any size among the rocky and barren streams of this county. They are lean, large-headed, and weak, very different from those bred in its lochs, which mostly possess rich weeded or channelled bottoms, favourable to the growth of fish. We shall not attempt to classify the vast numbers of waters scattered over this wild and mountainous region, nor is it necessary. The angler has only to be there; and if the weather be favourable, he cannot go amiss for sport, whether he seeks it among the lochs or streams.

The likeliest months, especially during rain, are July and August, when the white trout ascend in great quantities. Many of the tarns in this shire are literally chokeful of fish, and a very indifferent hand may easily capture from six to fourteen dozen. The principal rivers in Argyleshire are the Awe, which flows from Loch Awe into Loch Etive, an arm of the sea; the Urchay from Loch Tulla, the Avish, the Creran, Etive, the Euchan in Morven, and the Coe. The Shira, Ary, and Douglas Water, fall into Lochfine; the Lochy, Druiskie, Cona, Scadle, and Gour, into Loch Eil. In Islay are the Anaharly, Laggan, and Lorn rivers. In Arran, Scordale and Iorsa; the Aros on the Isle of Mull, &c. &c. A green fly made so as to resemble the grasshopper is reckoned very killing on all of these streams. The principal lochs are Awe, Eck, Tulla, Treachtan, Avich, Conich, na-Chiurn, Sulemore, Dulate, Camloch, Dowloch, Scamadale, Curhary, Uisk, Ardglash, Assapol, Glasken, and Garrasdill. There are good quarters for the angler in some parts of Argyleshire, especially near the neighbourhood of Loch Awe, where, besides the inns at Dalmally, Cla-

dish, and Portsonachon, a comfortable lodging-house has lately been erected nearly opposite to Kilchurn Castle, and boats provided expressly for lovers of the sport. At Bunaw, also, beds can be procured. Oban and Inverary, along with many places of minor note, furnish excellent accommodation ; and the angler will hardly be at a loss for lodgings, should he apply at the numerous boat-houses and cattle farms scattered in all directions over the county.

INVERNESS-SHIRE.

We may extend the remarks we have made upon the rivers in Argyleshire, to many of those in this county. They are mostly too rocky to breed good yellow trout, while they abound in salmon and whitlings. Ness is the largest river, running through the shire, and teems with fine fish. Contending with it, the Spey, on entering Elgin, takes the lead. The smaller, but by no means inconsiderable waters, are, the Lochy, running into Loch Eil at Fort William, the Beauly, the Sheil, the Foyers, the Garry, the Coiltie, the Glass, the Morriston, the Enneric, and the Kinnie, all of them choice streams, and affording excellent sport to the angler. The Findhorn and Nairn have their sources in this county. A large red professor with gold tinsel is taken with avidity by the sea trout in these waters. Green silk bodies we have found also to be very killing, especially in the lochs which are every where scattered throughout Inverness-shire. The principal are, Lochs Ness, Oich, and Lochy, Laggan, Ericht, and Treag, in the south ; Ashley, Affairie, Dundelchalk, Bruiach, Benevran, Clunie, Luing, Ruthven, Garry, and others, with Lochs Quoich, Arkaig, and Shiel, lying to the west. Loch Laggan and others contain char and a very fine

variety of red trout, of a beautiful orange appearance, which grows to a large size, and fights well. There are good quarters in many parts of Inverness-shire, at Fort William, Roy-Bridge, and Loch Laggan head; the General's Hut near Foyers, Fort Augustus, Cluany, Don-an-Down, Invergarry Inn on Loch Oich, Invermoriston on Loch Ness, Loch Houran head, Lochs Aylart and Arisaig, with Glenfinnan Inn at Loch Shiel; also, in the eastern districts the angler can be accommodated at Moy on Loch Moy, near the Findhorn, at the bridge of Carr over the Dulnain, and on the Spey at Avienore and Pitmain. Many of these places are attainable by the steam-boat, others can be reached by public coaches in the summer time.

The salmon fisheries in the county are farmed annually for about L.3000. Those most valuable are on Loch Ness and Loch Beaully. A singular method of capturing fish is practised at Invermoriston, where there is a salmon leap of some height. Individuals are stationed with harpoons or small spears on each side of the fall, which instruments being fastened to a line of some length, they dart at such fish as attempt, by throwing themselves into the air, to reach the upper part of the river. Many salmon are transfixed in this way, and hauled ashore by the fishermen. The number of salmon killed on the Ness fishings in 1822, was 684, and 76 grilse; in 1823, there were captured 192 salmon, and 466 grilse; and in 1824, 587 salmon, and 1601 grilse.

FIFESHIRE.

The rod is not much in use among the few and sluggish waters of this shire. Some of these, however, breed large and strong trout, which afford excellent play. The principal rivers are the Eden, which passes Cupar, and the Leven, with its tributary the

Ore. These are all of the same character, level and rich bottomed; the two latter containing pike and perch in considerable numbers, with a few heavy trout to be taken most readily during an east wind, and sprinkling of rain. A large red fly we found our best lure, but minnows may be used with great success. Sea trout are to be caught at the mouth of the Leven, during spring and autumn. The few small lochs situated in Fifeshire produce pike and other dead-water fish. In a burn running from Kilconquhar Loch, near the village of Elie, we have killed good trout.

KINROSS-SHIRE.

The far-famed Loch Leven lies in this county. It belongs to various proprietors, and is let to a tacksman, by whom, during the open season, it is daily netted. A consideration will give strangers the privilege of angling in it. The trout are of several varieties, generally red, and many of them large. They rise badly at a fly, but may be taken with the minnow and trolling line. The North and South Quaichs and the Gairney run into this loch, which waters abound in small fish; the loch trout also ascend them, during the September and October months, for the purpose of spawning; lobworms are a good bait at that season. The fishings on Loch Leven are said to have been greatly injured by the late drainings carried into operation over the shallow part of its surface. It is perfectly natural they should be so. The abstraction of the best feeding-grounds must evidently injure the quality, reduce the size, and diminish the numbers of the fish. In a very short period this celebrated trout-preserve will become entirely worthless. Kinross-shire seems a dull tame-looking shire, and, except Loch Leven Castle, contains no place of any interest. Pike and

perch abound. A few small tarns lie above Cleish, but their produce is very indifferent. On the whole, this county is no residence for the angler.

THE LOTHIANS.

The streams in our metropolitan county are the Water of Leith, or Currie Water, the North and South Esks, and part of the Almond, which divides it from Linlithgowshire. The first of these is full of trout, shy in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, but rising freely a few miles up, especially at the grey and dun midge. The Esks are poor angling waters, much poisoned by manufactories, and too rocky to breed good fish. Those parts of them, however, which are under restrictions, abound in small trout. The Almond is better, and the small burns of Linhouse and Gogar, which run into it, contain some fair-sized fish. We have caught remarkably fine ones at Kirkliston, and farther down; also sea trout and small grilises in the neighbourhood of Cramond. Trout are found in considerable quantities among the Pentland burns, and especially in Compensation Pond above Glencorse, where we have killed betwixt five and six dozen in the course of a day. Cobinshaw Bog is also a good piece of water, containing large fish. Gala and Heriot run southward through this shire, and afford excellent sport. Torsonce Inn is the most conveniently situated for these waters.

In the county of Haddington, we find the Tyne, a sluggish rich-bottomed stream, producing large well-fed trout, somewhat shy and tender mouthed. A black midge forms the best lure, and they rise freest when the wind is easterly. A few salmon and sea trout are found below East Linton. Beal Burn is almost the only other angling stream in this district, and abounds with nice trout. The Avon borders upon Linlithgow-

shire, and is, upon the whole, a tolerable angling water. The Canal and Linlithgow Loch contain pike, perch, and some beautiful trout, to be caught with the dead minnow and worm.

PEEBLESSHIRE.

Tweed runs through this county, gathering its tribute from numerous small streams, all of which breed shoals of trout and salmon. Of these, the principal are the Fruid, Tala, Biggar Water, Lyne, Manor Water, Eddlestone, Leithen, and Quair. Each of these, but especially the Tala, abounds in fish. Lyne also, although much deteriorated of late, was at one time considered a good water. The best stations on this the upper part of Tweed, are the Crook Inn, the Inn at Rommanno Bridge, situated on the Lyne, West Linton, Peebles, and Riddel's Inn, Innerleithen.

Belonging properly to this shire, the Meggat, which flows into St Mary's Loch, recommends itself to the fly fisher. We have heard it reckoned the best stream in the south of Scotland, and have ourselves often taken numbers of fine heavy fish out of it, in the course of a morning, when the water was slightly flooded, and the trout ascended from the lake in quest of food. Into Meggat fall the Winterhope and Glengaber Burns, both well stored with fish. The black and red professor, along with the blue and hare's ear bodies, are the most killing flies for this county, and may be used with success in all its streams.

The upper part of Tweeddale may be easily reached from Edinburgh, by the coaches to Dumfries.

SELKIRKSHIRE.

There are many good stations for the angler in this county. It is watered by Yarrow and Ettrick, considerable streams. The primest part of Tweed also runs

through it, stretching from Juniper Bank towards Abbotsford. The Ettrick joins Tweed near Selkirk; and Gala Water, which bounds the county to the north-east, enters it a few miles farther down. The Ettrick has a number of tributaries, all of them excellent. The principal are Timah, Rankle Burn, Back, Faahope, and Kirkhope Burns. On Yarrow, are Douglas and Altrive Burns, both filled with trout. Selkirkshire contains several lochs, among which St Mary's is the choicest. The Loch of the Lowes produces good pike. The other lochs are Clearburn, Hell Moor, Ale Moor, Shaw's Loch, King's Moor, Oaker Moor, and Windy Loch, some of them containing trout, others pike and perch.

The best fishing quarters are Clovenford Inn, on the Cadon Water, and Riddel's Inn, Innerleithen. At St Mary's Loch, good lodgings are easily procured, especially at the upper end, where there is a nice cleanly cottage, provided with every requisite for the angler, and kept by an industrious and obliging landlady, Mrs Richardson, the Tibby Shiels of one of the Noctes in Blackwood. The Gordon Arms, and other stations on Yarrow, along with the inn near the Hopehouses, Ettrick, may also be recommended. The scenery in Selkirkshire is chiefly pastoral; descending from the hilly country, it assumes a more varied aspect, enchanting the eye with the beauty and positions of its landscape.

The most killing flies for St Mary's Loch, are black hackles, and wings of the woodcock, teal, or mallard feather; a smallish fly, with hare's ear body, takes well in calm weather; red hackles are most efficient in autumn, or after a heavy flood. Coaches from Edinburgh pass through Selkirk at least twice in the day.

ROXBURGHSHIRE.

Tweed waters this county, receiving the Leader opposite Melrose, the Teviot at Kelso, and still farther down the Edon. Teviot, the leading stream, has many tributaries; of these the principal are the Borthwick, Slitrig, Rule Water, Ail, Jed, Oxnam, and Kail. The character of their channels is generally alike, and they all contain numbers of trout; few of which, however, exceed a pound or two in weight, although salmon and sea trout are to be caught during the late autumn floods, and in spring, of a size sufficient to give considerable play to the angler. Teviot itself is much harassed by poachers from Hawick and its neighbourhood, who use close time as the season of their depredations, and employ for apparatus, leisters, lime, and nets, without ceremony; hence, no fish of size, except such as ascend from Tweed, are to be found in this river. In Roxburghshire, good accommodation for the angler will be found at Melrose and Kelso, on the Tweed; also at St Boswell's, Jedburgh, and Hawick, along with the smaller villages scattered up and down the shire.

AYRSHIRE.

The angler will find in Ayrshire a few excellent trouting waters. The leading ones are the Rye Water, Lugton, and Caaf, falling into the Garnock; the Irvine increased by the Kilmarnock, Carmel, and Annoch Waters; the Water of Ayr, a very clear stream, abounding in trout; the Doon, from Loch Doon, containing salmon, red and white trout, and char; the Girvan and the Strichen, into the last of which fall the Asshill, Duck, and Feoch Burns. A number of small lochs are situated in Ayrshire, among which may be mentioned, Lochs Doon, Finlass, Bredenholm, Cornist, and Balloching. Loch Doon contains a very

singular sort of trout; the length of the fish being in nowise great, while it possesses a remarkable thickness and breadth, and is of a blackish colour. Dalmellington on the Doon is not a bad station for the angler.

BERWICKSHIRE.

The Blackadder, which flows through this shire, has few equals in the south of Scotland for the fineness of its trout. These are large and red-fleshed, being nourished upon a mossy soil, well known to impart a high colour to fish. Blackadder is mostly preserved; salmon seldom or never ascend it, preferring to its somewhat sluggish water a quicker and more limpid stream. The trout are capricious, and vary their food often, seemingly without reason. Whitadder receives this water at Allanton, a small village where the angler may obtain a bed, and is well stored with trout, although much fished and netted in the lower parts. The Leader, Eden, and Leet, are within the shire, and afford, as all the tributaries of Tweed do, excellent sport. Ey is the only other river in Berwickshire which is worthy of notice: it abounds in small trout, which cannot fail of producing amusement to some anglers during the season. Dunse, Greenlaw, and Coldstream, are the best quarters for resort. There is an excellent inn also at Elmford, on the Whitadder, and one or two on the Ey Water. Besides these, the angler may have good quarters at Lauder, Carfrae Mill, and Earlston, on the Leader.

KIRKCUDBRIGHT.

The Stewartry of Kirkcudbright abounds in streams and lochs. Among the former, the Dee, the Ken, the Cree, and the Urr, take the lead. These offer in some parts excellent sport to the angler, containing trout, salmon, and herlings in considerable quantities. Of the lesser rivers, the Fleet, Tarf, Deugh, and Clu-

den, are worthy of mention, being nowise insignificant, either as regards their size or quality. Like the others, they are frequented by the salmon and sea trout, and breed numbers of fresh-water fish. The lochs within the stewartry, although not extensive, are very numerous, many of them well stocked with trout and char, and others filled with pike. The principal are, Lochs Ken, Grannoch, Rutton, Milton, Auchen-reoch, Loch-invar, Loch Dee, Moan, Enoch, Dungeon, Trool, Greenoch, Skerrow, Whinyan, and Glentoo.

DUMFRIESSHIRE.

The Nith, Annan, and Esk, are the principal rivers. Nith rises in the county of Ayr, entering Dumfriesshire at Corsincon; it is reckoned, in some parts, a good salmon water. Of tributaries it has the Euchar, which falls into it near Sanquhar, the Minnick, Carron, Scarr, and Cluden; most of these, especially near their sources, abound in trout; salmon and herlings also ascend them during spring and autumn.

Annan rises from a hill betwixt Peeblesshire and Dumfriesshire. Its character is pretty much the same as that of the Nith, although, perhaps, it offers along with its feeders more choice angling. Below Moffat, Evan and the Moffat Water are its first tributaries; the latter is much lashed, and contains few yellow trout of any size, although the par and such small fish are very abundant. The Wamphray, Kinnel, and Ae, the Dryfe, Milk, and Mien Waters, successively enlarge the Annan before it enters the Solway Firth.

The Esk of this county is formed by an union of the Black and White Esks, at Kingpool, in the parish of Westerkirk. It is afterwards increased by a number of streams, not unworthy of attention. Of these, the principal are, the Meggat and Stennis, the Ewes,

Wauchope, and Tarras, along with Byre Burn and the Liddle, all of which are stocked with fish. To Tarras, the well-known lines,

And Tarras for the good bull-trout,
If it be ta'en in time,

are still applicable. The Esk enters Cumberland, after receiving these waters, and runs into the Solway Firth. Besides the principal rivers and their tributaries, there are in this county a few minor streams, not to be overlooked by the angler; of these, the Lochar, Pow, and Kirtle, are the most worthy of his attention. The Lochar, from Locharmoss, is a dark sluggish stream, somewhat dangerous to angle in, owing to the unsteady nature of its margin, but containing large fine trout. The waters in Dumfriesshire are much harassed by poachers. Large trout are seldom allowed to remain unmolested, and should any chance to escape notice, they become shy of the hook, and confine themselves to the deep and inaccessible pools, feeding at night, and with great caution. Few lochs are found in this shire. Those worthy of remark are, Loch Skene, in the northern district, which produces a very fine tasted trout, to be caught in great plenty only during a warm south-west or south wind, and with small black flies. The lochs at Lochmaben contain trout, bream, fine pike, and a remarkable fish termed the vendace, which resembles in size, shape, and appearance, the common herring. This species is only to be taken with the net. The pike, roach, and chub, or, as it is called there, the skelly, abound in many of the rivers of this county, especially the Annan. They also are generally famous for the numbers of herlings and sea trout by which they are visited, during the months of July and August. The salmon fisheries on the Solway Firth, Annan, and other waters, yield a rental of L.1400 a-year. There

are good stations for the angler at Beatock Inn on the Annan, and Moss-paul on the Esk. Accommodation also may be had at Lochmaben.

WIGTONSHIRE.

Many of the streams which flow in the south-west of Scotland partake, in the lower districts, and as they approach the sea, of the character of English waters. They are deep and sluggish, containing pike and other dead-water fish in considerable abundance, although in most of them trout and salmon are to be found. Of rivers in Wigtonshire, the Cree, Bladenoch, Tarf, Luce, and Cross, are the principal. Cree is well stocked with salmon during the spawning season; trout and smelts are also to be caught in this water. A few salmon and herlings frequent Badenoch and Tarf; besides these, the latter breeds pike and trout in great numbers.

This shire abounds in lochs. Those at Castle Kennedy produce pike, perch, roach, and trout, along with a few carp and tench. The other principal lochs, mostly of the same nature, and containing the same sorts of fish, are Maberry, Ochiltree, Castle Loch, Mochrum, Ronald, Dowalton, Appelby, and Eldrich.

RENFREWSHIRE.

The extensive encouragement given to manufactures in this county has considerably injured the great proportion of its rivers. In the lower districts of the shire, fresh-water fish have become comparatively scarce, although trout in some places are still to be found. The chief streams in Renfrewshire are the White and Black Carts, along with the Gryffe Water. Besides these, we find the Earn, Calder Water, Shaw's Burn, Ardgowan, or Kipp Water, and the Rotten Burn, all of which contain fish. Of lochs, the principal is that of Castle Semple.

DUMBARTONSHIRE.

Loch Lomond is the chief point of attraction in this county. It measures from north to south twenty-three miles, and is reckoned, as is well known, the finest sheet of water in Great Britain. Pike, trout, and perch, abound in all parts of it. The salmon also ascends by the river Leven during floods. It affords, however, no remarkable temptations to the rod-fisher, although at certain times he may manage to fill his creel without trouble. The Falloch, Luss, Fruin, Uglass, and Snaid, are its principal tributaries from the north and west sides. Endrick is received on the south-east of the loch, and at the foot it discharges itself towards Dumbarton by the river Leven. These streams abound in small trout, and the latter occasionally contains salmon. In Glenfalloch we have caught twelve dozen easily during a dry summer and unfavourable day. Besides Loch Lomond, a few small lakes are to be found in Dumbartonshire, but none of these are worthy of much notice. There is accommodation for the angler at Auldtarnan Inn, on the Falloch Water, at the head of the loch; also, at Luss and Balloch, on the lower extremity.

CLACKMANNAN.

The upper part of Devon, north of the Ochils, is well stored with trout: farther down there are some fine linnis, but too rocky to contain good fish, and netted not a little by the inhabitants of the district. We remember, however, filling a large basket in the course of a forenoon with the red professor, some years since, above the Rumbling Bridge. The scenery in many places is fine—here pastoral, and there beautifully wooded. There are inns at Muckart and Glendevon, where the angler may reside. Salmon and sea trout

ascend the Devon to some length during close time, but seldom sooner. Except Gartmorin Dam (an artificial sheet of water two or three miles from Alloa, from which we have taken numbers of pike and fine perch), there are no lochs in this shire. A small burn, called the Black Devon, passes the town of Clackmannan, and is inhabited by a few trout.

LANARKSHIRE.

Clyde flows from a mountainous range, at no great distance from the sources of its rival, Tweed. The angling some miles above Biggar is good; the trout, however, are capricious, and attached to small flies. Those preferred are winged with the blue feather of the fieldfare, and have red hackles, or dark fox hair for the body: a second kind used is the woodcock wing, and hare's ear fly; and a third, the common black hackle. Below the falls at Stonebyres, a midge with wings of the blue jay feather, and dark body, is very deadly. Gaudy salmon flies for this part of Clyde are sometimes used—yellow and scarlet feathers, mixed with tinsel. Of tributaries, Clyde has many, and they are generally good angling waters. Among them we find—the Duneaton, Elvan, Daer, Blackwater, Midlock, Gonnar, Culter, and Douglas Waters—the Mouse, Nethan, Avon, and four Calders. Duneaton water is reckoned the best for trouting in. There are good inns at Abbington, Crawford, and Elvan Foot, in the southern parts of the shire, and no want of them farther north, as you proceed down the Clyde. Very large trout are sometimes taken above the falls. One weighing fifteen pounds was captured some years ago at Robertson Ford. Salmon, also, which is singular, have been killed at the head of Clyde, proceeding, as some have asserted, during high winter floods, from the

Tweed, which is closely connected with one of its feeders. A variety of trout, termed the Duchess Ann, after Ann Duchess of Hamilton, by whom it was imported from England, is found in the lower parts of the river, some miles farther down than Stonebyres. It is of a silvery hue outside, with bright scarlet spots, and cuts red, growing to a large size. The best rod-fishing for salmon lies betwixt the lowermost Fall and Hamilton, a stretch of several miles.

ACTS REGULATING THE SALMON
FISHERIES IN SCOTLAND.

BY an act, passed in the ninth year of George the Fourth, A.D. 1828, for the preservation of the salmon fisheries in Scotland, and repealing that of 1424, it was enacted, that no salmon, grilse, sea trout, or other fish of the salmon kind, shall be taken in or from any river, stream, lake, water, or estuary whatsoever, or on any part of the sea-coast, between the 14th day of September and 1st day of February.

II. That such person, or persons, as take, fish for, or attempt to take, one, or any of the fish above mentioned, during close time, shall forfeit and pay any sum not less than one pound sterling, and not exceeding ten pounds; also, that the net or engine employed by the offender shall be included in the forfeiture.

III. That a trespass with intent to kill fish shall be punished with a penalty of from ten shillings to five pounds.

IV. That such as sell, or have in possession, smoults, or the young fry of the salmon, or disturb the parent fish while spawning, shall be fined in sums not exceeding ten, nor under one pound sterling.

V. That those who take or expose to sale fish of the salmon kind, captured betwixt the 14th of September and the 1st of February, shall pay for each fish so exposed from one to two pounds, as shall be thought proper.

VI. That such person, or persons, as make use of lights to assist in killing fish, shall, for each offence, forfeit not less than the sum of two, and not exceeding that of ten pounds.

VII. That the sum of five pounds, ordained by the act 1477, as a penalty for using cruives during the forbidden season, shall be raised to a fine of not under five pounds, nor above twenty pounds.

VIII. That the occupiers of fisheries must secure, remove, or put to some other use, their boats, oars, and tackle, for the period prohibited, or otherwise incur a penalty of from two to ten pounds.

IX. Provides that the penalties above mentioned shall go to the informer, and be recoverable before the Sheriff and Justice of Peace courts.

X. That it shall be lawful for any two proprietors of fishings to call meetings of the other proprietors, by three several advertisements ; at which meetings it shall be held lawful to assess one and all of the said proprietors for the purpose of enforcing the said act, and appointing clerks, bailiffs, and other officers.

XI. That it shall be lawful to detain offenders against the above provisions of the act, without any warrant, and to bring them before Justice of Peace or other competent courts.

XII. That Justices of Peace, although interested, if not parties, may act against offenders, or give evidence against them.

XIII. That no prosecution, unless instituted within six months of the offence, shall hold good against parties.

XIV. That this act shall not extend to Tweed and its tributaries, nor to those rivers lying in the counties of Dumfries, Wigton, and the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright.

A local act was also passed in the 11th year of George the Fourth, chapter liv. for the effectual preservation and improvement of salmon fisheries on the Tweed and its tributaries, rescinding all former statutes, and providing new regulations in their stead ; which provisions are, in some respects, similar to those enforced by the general statute on our northern rivers, with this leading exception, that the opening of Tweed does not take place until the 15th of February, nor does it close before the 15th of October ; moreover, it is allowed on this river to angle with the rod until the first day of November.

The minor provisions of this act are, perhaps, somewhat too tyrannical and destructive of public liberties ; for we hold it to be at the option of none to increase the value of their landed property by impairing the natural rights of usage, which, on contrasting the statute of May 29th, 1830, relative to the Tweed fisheries, with other previous enactments, appears to us to have been the case.

By the act regulating the salmon fisheries in Dumfriesshire, the rivers in that county running into the Solway Firth, open on the 10th of March, and close on the 25th of September.

With regard to the act of 1828, for the preservation of our

salmon fisheries north of the Tweed, we take upon us to hazard a single remark. This act, the result of those examinations which commenced in 1825 before committees of both Houses of Parliament, is a piece of ingenuity which does no great credit to its contrivers. It seems to be organised entirely out of a mass of local statements, of the most interested and contradictory nature. We are not prepared to assert that its effects upon our fisheries are hurtful in the extreme; but that by them others equally beneficial have been supplanted, it requires no discernment to perceive. The great error of the act of 1828, consists in the regulation with respect to close time, or the fence season. By allowing our rivers to open as early as the 1st of February, a very palpable omission seems to have taken place on the part of the inquiry committees, as to the time when our salmon finish spawning, also whether the number of running exceeds that of return fish during spring, and whether it be not the case, that the balance against the clean of those newly spawned and useless is in the proportion of twenty to one, or to that effect. We do not speak of such salmon as are caught in the salt-water estuaries, or with stake nets along the sea-shore; for these, no doubt, are generally in good condition even during February, but we allude to those taken inland, whereof by far the greater part are fish that have rotted for months in fresh water; and this leads us to suggest, as a first amendment to the present act, that some leading distinction be made, in point of time, betwixt the opening of fisheries situated at or beyond the mouths of rivers, namely, in bays or estuaries, and those which exist on their banks, at some distance from the mouth. And as to the periods themselves, it might be recommended, that the stake net, or sea fishing, commence on the 15th, not the 1st of February, and that the drag net, or river fishing, begin at least a fortnight later. Also, a material change should take place on some counties with regard to the termination of the open season, and some provision be made for the benefit of such as angle with the line, whose privileges, under the existing statute, are not a little confined. Also we confess freely to an opinion entertained by us, that cruive fishings for salmon should be entirely abolished, as by them immense injury is done on many of our northern rivers; firstly, by the hindrance they present to unmarketable fish in ascending to spawn; secondly, by their rendering even well-conditioned salmon

(which, when captured, are not immediately taken out of the box) perfectly soft and useless ; thirdly, by the opportunities they afford to the tacksman to avoid many specifications of the act, and especially the one ordaining the use of what is termed the Saturday slap ; and, fourthly, by their interference with the natural rights of upper proprietors on the river. Nay, we would go further, and also have a veto placed upon net fishings, excepting those on the sea-coast and at the mouths of rivers, ordaining the use of the rod only. Nor would such an arrangement, if carried into effect, prove in the least degree prejudicial to the proprietors of fisheries, who might still farm their waters with advantage, in the same manner as shootings are let.

Apart, however, from this view of matters, we think it expedient that many of our waters north of the Tweed, especially the Tay and its tributaries, should remain open to rod fishers until the middle of October ; all other methods of destroying salmon being prohibited from the 14th of September, as they are at present, and we have no reason to believe that such a provision could be productive of any material injury to our Scottish fisheries.

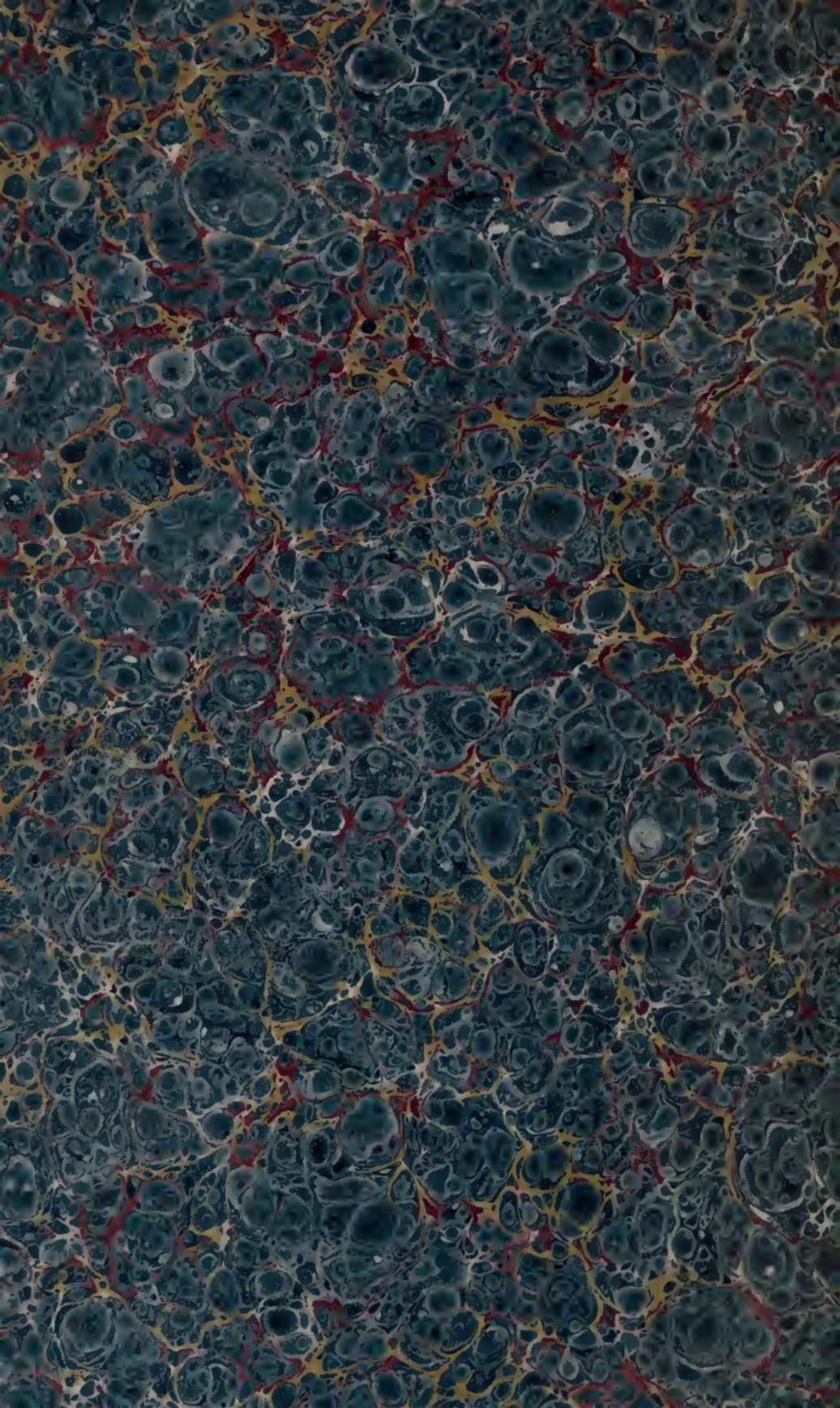
THE END.





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