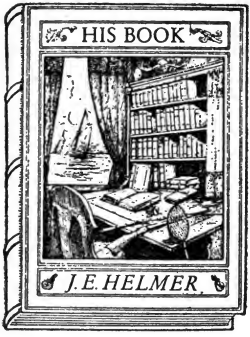
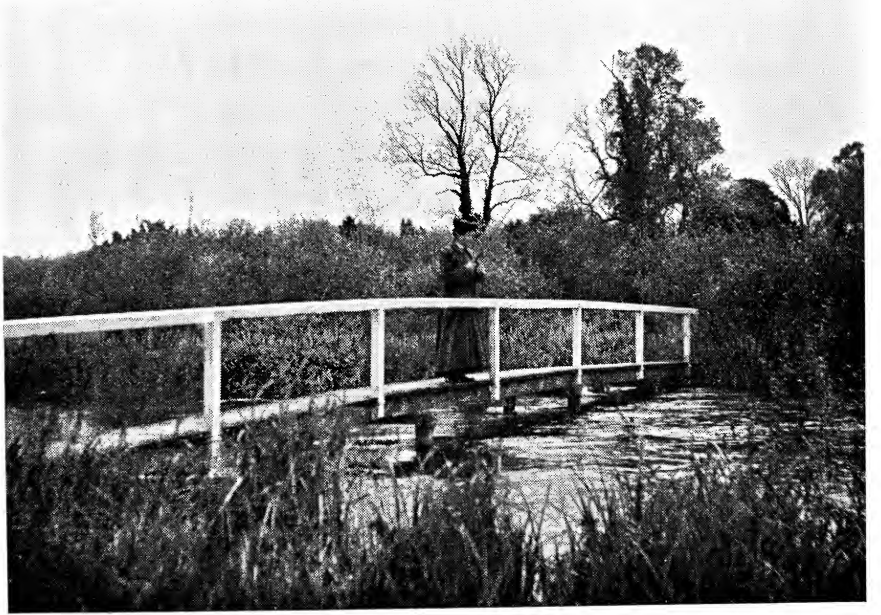


EASY-CHAIR MEMORIES



Easy-Chair Memories

and

Rambling Notes

By

The Amateur Angler

(E. Marston, F.R.G.S.)

Author of "Thomas Ken and Izaak Walton," "After Work," "An Old Man's Holidays," &c., &c., &c.

"A little nonsense now and then
Is relished by the best of men."

London

Sampson Low, Marston & Co. Ltd.

1911

Printed by Ballantyne, Hanson & Co.
At the Ballantyne Press, Edinburgh

PREFACE

My angling days are over. The May fly imitation, which goes by the name of "The Rosebery," and which caught my last two-pound trout, hangs still as a trophy on the forefront of my old cap (still in wear), where I had fixed him after he had done that doughty deed. That trout, judged by his lanky length, ought to have weighed nearer four pounds than two. He must have seen his best days long before he took that last and fatal leap. His will was as good, and he was perhaps hungrier than he ever had been, but his power of resistance had departed, he came to grass, almost without a struggle. Like that old trout, I, his captor, have seen the last of my best and fishing days. I can only now live over again in memory the happy days spent with many friends by many a riverside. If the flesh is weak the spirit is still alive, and that has led me, perhaps

unwisely, to put together the accompanying *Memories.*

It may truly be said that my readers hitherto have not been limited to the angling class; *they* know too much already to accept me as an instructor in their art, and indeed I have always regarded ignorance of the true science of angling as my chief merit. The contents of the present volume are sufficiently miscellaneous to support that statement, and to confirm the impression which I have always, and very successfully tried to convey, that I am but a mere

AMATEUR ANGLER.

June 1911.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

IN SEARCH OF REST AND QUIET, 1904

PAGE

In a quiet corner—Extensive views—The Golden Valley—Motor accident to a royal Duke—A jolly young farmer "half seas over"—Churchyard of a healthful parish—My headquarters—A perfect Arcadia—Disillusion—A disreputable old woman—Salmon in the Wye—My first fishing—Small adventures by the river.

Fire: A terrible thing has happened—Fine old mansion said to be afire—I visit the scene—Mansion safe—French barn blazing—A grand sight.

Over the Black Mountains: Llanthony Abbey—Descent from the mountains—Narrow lane—Meet wagonette coming up—Driver won't go back—We couldn't—Awkward dilemma—Father Ignatius and his new monastery—Return over the mountain by starlight 1

CHAPTER II

FISHING IN THE WYE, THE LUGG, AND THE TEME

Fishing in the Lugg—Two *rods* and three *girls*, Margerie, Minnie, and Molly—88 degrees in the shade—What then in the sun?—Molly caught a trout—Great excitement—Two rods crestfallen—Lord Roberts—Visit to Ludlow—Fishing in the Teme 27

CHAPTER III

EXMOOR, 1903

PAGE

Exmoor—"Jack Russell"—Rev. Joseph Jekyll—The Barle—Torr Steps to Lanacre Bridge—The Doone Valley—Audrie Doon claims descent from Carver Doone—Anecdote of Jack Froude and Henry of Exeter 34

CHAPTER IV

SOME JUNE DAYS ON THE CHESS, 1908

June days on the Chess—Big trout flopping about—Great expectations—The master says, "Don't be too sanguine!"—We tried them—We fished up and down—No result—"What fools you two-legged creatures are!"—I threw a stone at him in a rage—A record fish—The May fly—An old-fashioned Chess trout—"The Rosebery" performs wonders—A flabby two-pounder—Grasp your nettle 42

CHAPTER V

OUR WHITSUN HOLIDAY ON THE ITCHEN, 1907

The House that Jack built—The Old Man—New style of waders—The Itchen revisited—The beauties of Nature unappreciated—"Wickham's Fancy" preferred by trout—Some "psychic" moments—The keeper—Trouble in the river—My Lady Piscatrix unfortunate—A beautiful trout on the hook in full play—"Come away—time is up"—Big trout lost 55

CHAPTER VI

BURNHAM BEECHES, *May* 1908

PAGE

The Beeches in spring—Frost and snow—Cuckoo first heard 30th April—Lovely day in May—Burnham Beeches and Burnham Birches in December—Migration of the swallows—Our dog Cæsar—His travels and adventures with me—His misbehaviour—I gave him a thrashing—*Twa* dogs—Pinto, a Chinese terrier, gave much trouble . 68

CHAPTER VII

IN THE DAYS OF MY YOUTH, 1904

Early days—Country life—What I might have been—Various incidents—Peacock going to roost—Nature has played pranks with me—I become a publisher 83

CHAPTER VIII

HOW WE LAUNCHED THE *COLUMBIA*

The building of the launch—Transport across country five miles to the river—Will she float?—Various pessimistic opinions—Triumphant success . . 95

CHAPTER IX

THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD'S REEL

An account of the reel once used by James Hogg—Sundry adventures in connection with it—A bet of a rump and Dozen—B. with spinning minnow and Cyril with Phin's Delight 105

CHAPTER X

Fergy the guide, and his moral and instructive lies about beasts, birds, and fishes 114

CHAPTER XI

ON THE SHELF, 1907

How it Feels to be "Retired"

PAGE

On the shelf—How does it feel to be "retired"?—Nothing to do—Some other old boys—Shall I shave for the remainder of my days?—A long white beard—Firm resolution 124

CHAPTER XII

COUNTRY RAMBLES, 1909-1911

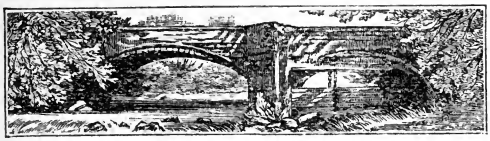
Country rambles—A beautiful toad—A stag-beetle—A seven-mile walk—In the woods—The angler and weasels—The fool and the fly—Life and adventures of a yellow-hammer—An urchin would a-wooing go 132

CHAPTER XIII

Bonaparte on the *Northumberland*—His arrival at St. Helena 150

ILLUSTRATIONS

PISCATRIX AT WORK (see page 66)	*Frontispiece*
	FACING PAGE
FRENCH BARN BEFORE THE FIRE . .	12
„ „ AFTER THE FIRE . .	14
LLANTHONY ABBEY RUINS . . .	18
APPARITION FIGURE OF OUR LADYE OF LLANTHONY	22
BIBLE READING IN THE CLOISTERS . .	26
A FISHING LESSON BY THE MASTER .	42
DOWN STREAM — RAINBOW POOL AT BOTTOM	44
THE SERPENTINE WALK	48
THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT . .	54
YE OLDE MAN AND HIS WADERS . .	56
OUR KEEPER	62
BURNHAM BEECHES	68
LIFTING THE "COLUMBIA" . . .	96
GETTING THE "COLUMBIA" AFLOAT .	100
NAPOLEON ON BOARD THE "NORTHUMBERLAND"	150



CHAPTER I

IN SEARCH OF REST AND QUIET, 1906

In a quiet corner—Extensive views—The Golden Valley—Motor accident to a royal Duke—A jolly young farmer "half seas over"—Churchyard of a healthful parish—My headquarters—A perfect Arcadia—Disillusion—A disreputable old woman—Salmon in the Wye—My first fishing—Small adventures by the river.

Fire: A terrible thing has happened—Fine old mansion said to be afire—I visit the scene—Mansion safe—French barn blazing—A grand sight.

Over the Black Mountains: Llanthony Abbey—Descent from the mountains—Narrow lane—Meet wagonette coming up—Driver won't go back—We couldn't—Awkward dilemma—Father Ignatius and his new monastery—Return over the mountain by starlight.

These two little words represent exactly what I had been dreaming of for some weeks. I said I will go far away to some "green retreat," where the madding crowds of a great city are for ever unheard, and where motor-cars have not yet penetrated, and—here I am, in a quiet

corner of an old house on the side of a hill surrounded by an almost perfect circle of still higher hills, some of them wooded to their summits; others cultivated, showing every variety of greens of meadows and turnips, the dark foliage of trees, and the yellow fields of waving corn, here and there grim tops of bare mountains; and I said that "if peace can be found in the world, the heart that is humble might look for it here." The semicircular view that I get from this window extends probably twenty miles, and from the other side of the house I get the other half of the circle with equally distant and attractive views. A little higher up the view extends in some directions for fifty miles. There are only a few houses scattered hereabouts; no traffic, no vehicles, no noise of any kind, except occasionally the barking of a dog, the lowing of a cow, or the distant snorting of a railway engine as it winds up the valley. Down yonder, a mile away, flows the Wye, a broad and mighty river, hidden from my present view by rows of trees, by a big and scattered village, by the square tower of the old church, and by the ruins of an old castle. Happily, motor-cars

have not yet found their way up here, though they do run through the valley. It was not far from here that one of them nearly slew a royal Duke.

Apropos of this untoward incident, I was travelling the other day in a crowded railway carriage down the Golden Valley—my friend found that his shoulder was being made the pillow for a jolly young farmer "half seas over" and a little more. On being roused up, he cried out, as if continuing part of his dream, "I say, it was the Duke's fault; that's my opinion, an' I dunna care who knows it. The accident happened close to my house. I say the motor was goin' forty miles an hour, an' I can prove it; that's *my* opinion. Perhaps some other member of the present company will be good enough to contradict me or to favour us with *his* opinion?"

"How can you prove it?" said one. "Prove it!" says he; "this way. The Duke started from (so-and-so) at a certain hour, and he was here at a certain hour (naming it). The distance is (so-and-so); that means twenty-five miles an hour right on without let or hindrance. In course there must ha' been

many a stop or slow up on that up-and-down road, so I say it, and stick to it, that when he came on our level road he must ha' made up for it by going at least forty miles an hour! Can any o' you gents contradict that? I wait for a reply. No answer; well, then, I say again it was the Duke's own fault, an' if he'd bin a poor man *he'd* a' bin fined; that's *my opinion.* I'm gettin' out at this station, an' if any or all o' you'll come along down to my house, my missis 'll give you as good a cup o' tea as ever you had in your lives, and all the et ceteras." And off he went.

To come back from this digression. "Now," said I to myself, "you have found the rest and quiet you were dreaming of, what are you going to do with them?"

I have already discovered that the air of this place is pure and bracing. The church, which is still higher up, commands lovely views all round it. The churchyard contains two grand old yew-trees which might have provided bows for Robin Hood. One of them is just 25 feet in circumference at a height of about 5 feet from the ground, and the other looks as big.

The churchyard is very large and nearly devoid of inhabitants—a proof of the healthfulness of the parish. Within a compass of twelve square yards I found the names of six old folks whose united age was 503, being an average of eighty-four, all of which goes to prove that I have hit upon a spot where the average of life is long, and where life is really worth living.

Having thus fixed my headquarters, I have now to settle how I can best occupy my time. My first walk descending from this Arcadia down through the old village was, I am bound to confess, a disillusionment. In a main thoroughfare leading to the station an old beldame rushed out of a passage after a little girl of five, cursing her in the most unmentionably disgusting language; then another pretty little toddler of about four years old came out of another door, and screamed and hissed at the old woman like a venomous little adder, as if no particle of good had ever entered her tiny head, using such horribly filthy and abominable words as I could not have conceived it possible for any human being to imagine or utter; it really made me

shudder. Of course, she could not have known what she was saying, the words came so glibly from her little lips; she must have been carefully and regularly taught them by her disreputable parents.[1] Nothing worse could possibly have been said, or said with more dramatic effect, in any slum of the great cities. In two days I have already learnt that within a mile of my peaceful Arcadia the devil has got a sure grip; the demon of drink is at the bottom of it all. Human nature, left to itself, is just as rampantly wicked in the peaceful country as in the slums of a town.

Last night and this morning the rain came down in torrents, but this afternoon and evening the sun shone brightly, and the scene from my alcove is glorious—beyond my power of description. My first inquiry was about the *fishing*, for although I am now too old to care about undergoing any great fatigue or exertion, yet the old passion survives. I met with a jolly old gentleman, who, although he is no fisher-

[1] I am reminded by my son of an old reprobate, who had been giving a sample of his bad language in the presence of a clergyman, who asked him where he learned such horrible profanity. "Learned it!" said the old rip, "why, it's a gift!"

man, yet he is well known in all the country-side; he most kindly volunteered to get me permits all round (and especially from Lady S.), whether for salmon or trout; there are on this part of the Wye some fine salmon pools, and I could have had my fling at the best of them, but I am no salmon fisher. Then there are within twenty miles of this spot many tributaries of the Wye where good trout fishing is to be had, and if my new old friend is as good as his word I shall not fail for want of opportunity.

The sun was setting over the distant hills like a glowing furnace; and now, as I look up, it has vanished, leaving an afterglow behind the clouds which shoots up in flames of gold. This has been a singular day; if one goes out with a walking-stick one is caught in a downpour; if with an umbrella, then the sun shines brilliantly. I shall go a-fishing to-morrow, the weather and "my lady" permitting.

I have now been in this "fit retreat of health and peace" just a week. I came in fine weather, but it has been growing worse and worse every day. Yesterday was the

worst; it rained without intermission most of the day, brightening up in the evening. I determined to explore the big river in the immediate neighbourhood. Hitherto I had rather despised it as a river for fly fishing for trout, but I was told by a gentleman whom I met by the riverside, himself a salmon fisher and sportsman in general, that there was some very good trout fishing to be had close at hand and free; as for salmon fishing there was none to be had for love or money. I did not want salmon fishing, so that did not matter. The gentleman, evidently a military man, was good enough to walk down and show me the point where the free fishing began and where it ended—perhaps a hundred yards; "beyond that point," said he, "there are lots of fish—chub, trout, and dace—but you must get permission from a person in the town," whom he named. I rushed off promptly to the person in the town, who, for a trifling consideration, told me I was free to fish in this protected water, but he did *not* tell me, and it never occurred to me to ask him, how I was to get at this water. It seemed so easy to get from the free ground

to the preserved, there being only a little brooklet (which I had not even noticed) which separated them.

I started off for my rod and tackle, an hour's hard walking, and when I got back to the spot the little brooklet had suddenly grown up into a rushing stream, quite impossible for me without waders to ford—ordinarily it can easily be crossed dryshod. I was in a fix; there was absolutely no other access to the preserved water but over that stream which came from under the railway which ran alongside, but high above the river, and separated also from it by a tall, impenetrable quickset hedge. My only chance seemed to be to follow the railway. So I climbed up and on to the railway, and, at the risk, I suppose, of some penalty for trespass, I followed the line and the thick hedge for several hundreds of yards, till I came to a tall, white gate, which had painted on it, "Please shut this gate"; but it *was* shut, and locked too. I climbed over it, and was then in the meadow of protected river.

I wended my way to the riverside, which was, nearly the whole length of it, closely

lined with trees, so that nowhere was it possible to make a cast, though doubtless it contained many spots admirably suited for float fishing with a worm or maggot; but I had none of these. It is perhaps needless to say that the whole length of the riverside was lined with *barbed wire*, quite protective and impenetrable. After going up the river towards the free part, where a couple of men were pulling out fish of some sort as fast as they could with worm and float tackle, I at last found a break in the wire, viciously broken, no doubt, by some exasperated angler. I got through this and found myself on the banks of the Wye.

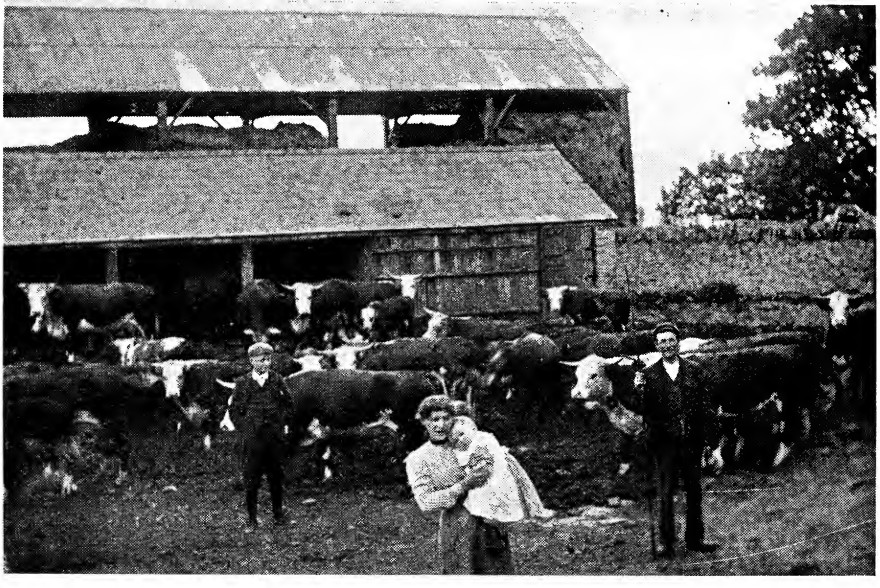
It had taken me quite two hours to get there, and during that time the river had swollen immensely, and was now the colour of good old Dublin stout. Very good for bottom fishing, but for fly casting absolutely useless to attempt it. The two fishermen advised me to wait, as the river sometimes goes down as quickly as it rises, but for one afternoon I had had quite enough of it. I was a bit tired, not disheartened. I think I rather liked the quandary I had got into, and

which I was not out of yet. I had to get back down the meadow to yonder tall white gate; when I got over *that* I was still a prisoner on railway premises, and no outlet into the road but tramping back towards the station, where I ran the risk of being locked up as a trespasser! The fence between the rail and the road was here a very high black boarded one, quite impossible to get over. I followed this for a considerable distance till I came to a place where a couple of boards had been knocked off. "I think," said I to myself, "I think I can squeeze through that opening." I tried it, but it was no go. I managed to get one side through, but for the life of me I couldn't get the other half through. A very pretty exhibition I had made of myself, half through and half not! I struggled back and wandered on disconsolately till I came to a timber-yard—not a soul to be seen anywhere. I wandered about that yard for some time, till I came to a door with a great padlock on it. I thought it useless to try that; but I *did* try it, and to my delight it let me into the turnpike road. I got home eventually rather fatigued. It

was the end of my first day's fishing. I was not a bit disheartened. On the contrary, I mean to have another go at the river to-morrow.

Fire

To-morrow has now arrived, and this is what happened. I was preparing for the start, when a lady rushed into my room, pale and distracted, crying out, "A terrible thing has happened. Mr. G.'s man (being the new old friend I mentioned at first) has just come in to say that his country residence, a couple of miles away, has been burnt to the ground, all his valuables destroyed, and he had not paid his insurance! It means a loss of thousands to him." This terrible affair upset my fishing arrangements for *this* day. I determined to walk over and have a look at the wreck of the old mansion myself. I had a pleasant ramble through the fields till I came near the spot, when the smoke from the burning edifice coming full in my face had a very peculiar smell, not at all like what one would expect from the ancient timbers of an old house, and then I came in



FRENCH BARN BEFORE THE FIRE

To face page 12

sight of the house itself, which did not look one bit like a house afire. On the contrary, there it was, placidly sitting in front of its fine old lawns and flower-beds as if nothing was the matter. The smoke and peculiar smell, however, were stifling as I walked on. At length I discovered what was burning. It was a French barn full of new hay, about 200 yards farther on, alternately smouldering and blazing away. I at length got round to the windward of it, for a keen westerly wind was fanning and blowing against it. It was a really magnificent sight. It was a very large pile divided into five separate sections, part hay, part clover, and covered by the corrugated iron roof, which fortunately had fallen flat on the burning, smouldering mass, and to some extent protected and prevented the burning bits being blown over on to the adjoining farm buildings, which were in imminent danger. The scene was so picturesque that I found a lady photographer, and sent her to make a photograph of it.

The whole of the woodwork being newly coal-tarred (as if on purpose), quickly disappeared, and what remained was these five

great, dense blocks of hay and clover two feet apart, out of which jets of flame were bursting in every direction, and in the centre of each of these openings one could see great roaring oven-like caverns. The whole heavy mass was afire, and no engine could have affected it, for the fire was working from the centre outwards; it will take days to burn out. The barn is situated on the side of a hill facing northward, and is at any time a conspicuous object as seen from the surrounding hills, and to-night when the great blaze comes, it will be seen for many miles, as the smoke is now. I felt so interested in this novel sight that I walked over there again this afternoon. I found a very intelligent man in charge. The pile was still blazing in fiery spires and jets over top and sides. My photographer had been there and taken several views. My opinion is that the cause was spontaneous combustion, but the attendant, the farmer, and all the knowing ones were against me, and were decidedly of opinion that it was caused by a tramp who had gone to sleep in one of the openings. It was first discovered by the bailiff's man between three

French Barn Afire

To face page 14

and four o'clock by seeing a red glare through his window curtains. It was then a grand blaze, for the woodwork newly tarred was in fine condition. He got up immediately and sent off for an engine. Now I cannot but fear that if a tramp had gone in there to smoke and sleep he must surely have been asleep before the fire was discovered, and doubtless suffocated; his charred remains will some day be found if he ever did enter that awful gulf. When the engine came no water could be found, so it left at once and the fire went on. The barn contained a hundred tons of new hay and clover.

Here is a photograph of the French barn with cattle and a shed in front of it taken a few weeks ago before the bays were quite filled with hay. If Mrs. Weaver produces as good a one of the fire it will be interesting. I hope to get it in a day or two.

So ends my second attempt at fishing. I may make a third and last attempt on Monday.

Over the Black Mountains

Monday, 20th August 1904.—Angling, no doubt, is a very pleasant occupation—in antici-

pation and in the exercise of a vivid imagination it is delightful; but angling is not the only thing that contributes to one's peace and rest. The other day I had a house—or, as it turned out, a barn—afire to relieve the monotony.

On Monday last we made up a pleasant party, and we took a drive over the Black Mountains, about sixteen miles (there and back), which brought us to the well-known and ofttimes described ruins of Llanthony Abbey, in the lovely and romantic Vale of Ewyas, Monmouthshire. That *was* a ride—when you come to realise it; a large brake, half-a-dozen people, drawn by a strong pair of horses up steep hill-sides in deeply-rutted tracks, jogging over stones, rattling our bones, sometimes being ordered to get down and walk up steep banks for a mile at a time. And then when we got on what we expected to find a level path—level it was in a general sense, but when one descends to particulars there was nothing level about it—the track was deeply rutted, full of all sorts of gullies and stones, over which the horses dashed along to make up for time lost in climbing. So we

got along the upper passes; then we came to the descent, not unlike the ascent, only the road was narrower—just room for one vehicle between the tall banks and hedges; half-way down we met a wagonette and one horse—and there we were. The one-horse man would not go back, and we could not. Not likely that a two-horse chaise should give way to a one-horse chaise! The end of it was that the one-horse man had to take his horse out of the shafts, push back his trap downhill for two or three hundred yards till he came to an open space; then he took his horse back, and we passed each other in a friendly way. We then came upon a wagon-load of fern. We overcame that and all other difficulties, and at last we reached Llanthony Abbey. I am not going to describe it.

Llanthony Abbey

The abbey dates from the days of William Rufus. The ruins are most picturesque, and shut in from the outside world by a circle of mountains, approached by such a route as that which I have slightly described. There is a sort of farmhouse restaurant built into

the old ruins, and that was the portion of the abbey which first attracted our attention. Tea and bread-and-butter; you know, we were rather hungry after our long drive through the finest and purest mountain air in the world, and we were quite ready for a modest repast. The bread was *home-made*, just, I am sure, the same as was baked by the monks of old in the capacious ovens of the old abbey,[1] and the butter and milk and cream from cows descended from the cows with crumpled horns in the olden time. Such loaves, half a yard in circumference—and such butter! The tea was modern and commonplace. Talk of *peace* and *quiet*—here we have it! It seems to be the very spot for those who prefer a monastic life:

> "I envy them, those monks of old,
> Their books they read, and their beads they told;
> To human softness dead and cold,
> And all life's vanity."

It is surrounded by streams said to abound in fish, as is the case with all old abbeys and

[1] This bread was whitey-brown, stone-ground such as I remember in the days of my youth—not the indigestible teeth-destroying pure white stuff we have been fed upon in these latter days, and which Sir Oswald Mosley has so vividly condemned.

RUINS OF LLANTHONY ABBEY

To face page 18

monasteries. But there is *no* peace for some people, so we mounted our wagonette and away! The usual and shortest way to and from the abbey is from Abergavenny, but we came there from over the hills and far away in the north.

The New Monastery and Father Ignatius

On our return it was not likely that, at about four miles away, we should pass by the *Modern Monastery*, founded only thirty-six years ago by Father Ignatius. The situation is as pleasant as that of the old abbey; it was growing late when we found our way there, and the dim shades of evening seemed in full harmony with the new monastic pile. The road is a simple lane, and in wending round towards the monastery we came upon the very beautiful marble monument of the Virgin, recently erected just on the spot where she is said to have appeared some years ago to Father Ignatius himself. It is enclosed in iron railings, and with a vestal lamp perpetually burning in front of it. It consists of a life-size figure of the Blessed Virgin; this monument had not been erected when the Baroness de Bertouch published her *Life of*

Father Ignatius in 1904. I am indebted to the courtesy of Mrs. Leycester-Lyne for the use of the beautiful photograph which I have given herewith, and which has not been published before.

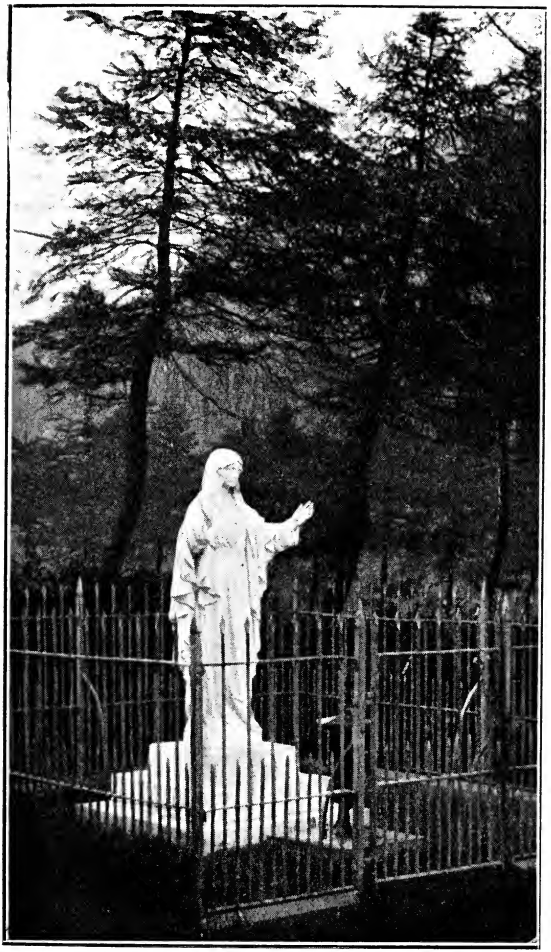
The story of the appearances of "Our Lady of Llanthony" is told at considerable length in the Baroness de Bertouch's *Life*, which was produced under the Father's personal supervision. From this work I gather that the first appearance was on the evening of 30th August 1880. Four boys were playing in the abbot's meadow between vespers and compline; it was just eight o'clock and still light. John Stewart, a boy of twelve and a half, suddenly saw a bright, dazzling figure gliding across the meadow towards him; a halo of glory shone out from the figure all around in an oval form. The form was of a woman, a veil hung over her head and face, the hands raised as if in blessing; it approached very slowly. The appearance was like the pictures of the "Immaculate Conception." Three other boys saw the same. They saw the beautiful form enter the hedge, and after remaining there in the light for a few moments it passed through the bush and vanished. The boys

all ran round to the gate to look down the road the other side of the hedge, but the vision had disappeared. They all ran in in the greatest excitement to tell their tale. "The Light in the Bush" was witnessed by the brethren on other occasions. On 8th September they all went into the meadow: it was perfectly dark everywhere else. The bush was all aglow with light, presenting a most mysterious appearance. They knelt opposite the bush and began to sing the "Ave Maria," and on their doing so they at once perceived the form of a woman surrounded by light at the top of the meadow by the gate; it advanced slowly until at last it stood before them in the bush, but sideways the face and head covered by the veil. On 14th September the Rev. Father, who had been absent, returned home; and on the 15th he and his brethren had sung the last vespers of the Feast of the Blessed Virgin. By eight o'clock it was very dark; they sang the "Ave Maria" three times. No sooner had they begun to sing an "Ave" in honour of the Blessed Virgin herself than the whole heavens and mountains broke forth in bulging circles of light—circles pushing out

from circles; and in the central circle stood a most majestic heavenly form robed in flowing drapery. The vision was most distinct and the details very clear; but it was in the "twinkling of an eye." These are the witnesses of this mighty and glorious vision—the Rev. Father Ignatius, Brother Dunstan (now an Anglican priest), Brother George Swain, now of Wisbeach, and Sister Janet.

The reader will accept or reject the foregoing attestations according to his individual measure of light.

The monastery itself is plain enough in its outward appearance, so far as we could see, but the interior, to which we were very politely conducted by a lady, in the garb of a nun, is very gorgeous. We were only admitted into a first enclosure, most elaborately decorated, and in which is a very finely-modelled life-size figure of the Saviour on the Cross. We could only peep through a sort of lattice-work into the dim interior, where the modern monks read the Bible or imitate those of old in chanting the ancient service. "There are never many monks there," said Father Ignatius; "under monastic rule, men



MARBLE STATUE OF "OUR LADYE OF LLANTHONY"

To face page 22

come and learn to love and pray, and then they go to other places and to other lands to carry the spirit of Llanthony far and wide."

The remarkable establishment is not Roman Catholic, as is usually supposed, but strictly monastic. It is described as "The cradle of the widely-spread monastic revival all over the land, and noted all over the world." "The two popular days for visiting the monastery are Ascension Day and the anniversary of the apparition of our 'Lady of Llanthony' (30th August), when there are continuous public services in the monastery church. The visitors are of all denominations, from Roman Catholics to Salvationists, from nobles to ploughboys."

Father Ignatius was the son of Mr. Francis Lyne, a much respected London merchant, with whom, notwithstanding a wide difference in their religious opinions, he had lived in perfect harmony till within the last ten years of his father's life. It then happened that a family dispute arose between Mr. Lyne and another member of the home circle. The settlement of it was left finally to the arbitration of Father Ignatius, whose judgment was

wholly against his father. Mr. Lyne was furious that his son should put his father in the wrong; but the Monk could not retract his verdict, and he would not, whereupon Mr. Lyne, in presence of others of his family, took a terrible vow "to crush the Monk."

He wrote broadcast to the London and provincial papers attacking his son by a volley of wild, incoherent accusations, . . . exhorting the public to beware of a man who was "a thief, a deceiver, and a dishonest person; one who had killed his mother, and would soon be able to say that he had brought both his parents in sorrow to their graves." In this way he did his son immense injury for many years. In 1888 Mr. Lyne's perturbed spirit found rest—he died reconciled to his son. "The Monk's unqualified forgiveness helped to make the closing hours sweet."

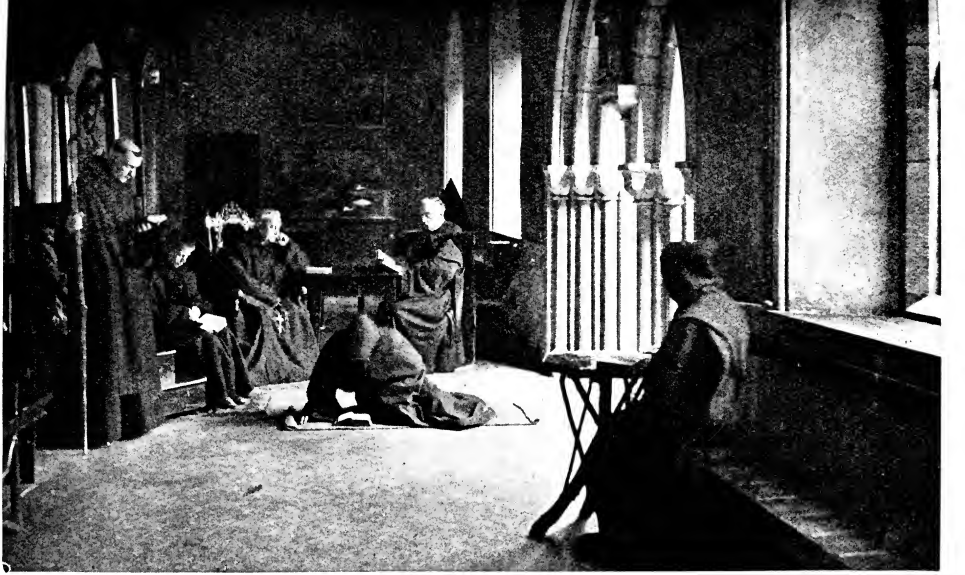
I have been personally interested in this termination of Mr. Lyne's career; after a long time of pleasant business relations with him, I had a singular experience of his wrong-headed obstinacy. He asked my firm to allow our names to appear as publishers of a pamphlet for him, and without seeing it we

unhesitatingly agreed. I forget the title or the special object of the pamphlet, but on looking into it we found it was full of matter which was distinctly libellous of the whole bench of judges, and after taking counsel's opinion we refused to publish it. The dear old gentleman was perfectly furious. He immediately brought an action against us for breach of contract, and he lost his case.

I may add that I have read the Baroness de Bertouch's *Life of Father Ignatius* (compiled before his death). I find it very brightly written and intensely interesting. It is quite beyond my province to discuss the many questions involved in it. I will only say that it has left on my mind a feeling of great admiration for the simple-minded, earnest, lovable character of "The Monk of Llanthony."

We were glad to have had the opportunity of paying this hurried visit to a place so renowned. Our homeward path was more interesting than the outward, because the mist, which had for the most part hidden the hill-crests and the distant views, had now cleared away, and we found that in the morning we

had passed without seeing them some superb views, embracing many counties, and also that our path had led us in many places along the very verge of deep precipices, down which, but for the care of our driver, we might at any moment have been dashed. As the shades of evening closed o'er us, and the stars came out, the scene around us of clear-cut mountain ridges, of peeps now and then into far-off counties beyond, the mountain sheep bleating, occasional neighing of forest ponies, all made for *peace* and *quiet*, only disturbed by the rough jolting of our *two-horse chaise*.



BIBLE READING TIME IN THE CLOISTER, LLANTHONY MONASTERY

(*From the Baroness de Bertouch's "Life of Father Ignatius," by permission*)

To face page 26

CHAPTER II

FISHING IN THE WYE, THE LUGG, AND THE TEME

Fishing in the Lugg—Two *rods* and three *girls*, Margerie, Minnie, and Molly—88 degrees in the shade—What then in the sun?—Molly caught a trout—Great excitement—Two rods crestfallen—Lord Roberts—Visit to Ludlow—Fishing in the Teme.

Tuesday, 21*st August* 1906.—I took my departure from this land of "rest and quiet," and in due course found myself happily welcomed in the old town of Ludlow. My experience quite justifies the assertion that August is the worst month for trout-fishing, and that bright sunshine, low water, and lazy grayling, sleeping on the bottom of the stream, do not contribute to basket-filling.

The next morning we went to the Lugg, five of us, in a wagonette, fourteen miles away,

and up among the hills where I had been a year ago. There were only *two rods* among us, the rest were *girls;* they are christened "Madcap Margerie," "Merrie Mirrie," and "Molly the Artist" (that same pretty hazel-eyed little Mary who, years and years ago, held a big dish at the door, with solemn face and laughing eyes, to receive the contents of my empty basket). It was good to have them with us, because they kept us alive, boiled our kettle, made our tea in a charming little wooded enclosure by the river, and, generally speaking, made themselves useful. It was a hot day—one of those 88 degrees in the shade days recorded in the London newspapers. To fish in the open stream in such a state of things was hopeless. I sought a spot in some way shaded by rocks or trees, where the water did not reflect the bright sun—such spots were few and far between. After tea I had strolled up to one of these shady nooks, and in getting down to the water over the slippery shale I fell down backwards, and in doing so smashed the rim of my net in two. I had no sooner done this than I heard a shouting and screaming, and, looking up, yonder was pretty Molly rushing

towards me as fast as she could run, in breathless excitement, and crying, "Uncle! Uncle! I want your net. We've got a trout that length (spreading abroad her two hands to the extent of about a yard). He is in a pool, and we have blocked up the two ends so that he cannot get out, and now I want your net to catch him!" She seized my net, broken as it was, and off she dashed like a young gazelle. I walked slowly down to see what was the matter. When I arrived on the scene—a pretty scene it was! I only wish I could have snapshotted them: Madcap Margie and Merrie Mirrie, shoes and stockings off, up to their knees in the pool, chasing the poor trout round and round, and Molly lying at full length on the bank above, leaning over the side, net in hand, and making a dip now and then as master trout came in sight. The net had been deftly repaired by the help of two pocket-handkerchiefs. At last she made a successful dip and landed the monster on the green grass! Hurrah! Wasn't there a jubilation! Now they had got their fish in the net, they didn't know what on earth they should do with it. They were afraid it would bite if they touched

it, and I arrived just in time to assist in ending its torments. It measured just 8 in., and weighed probably 4 oz. They cooked it next morning, and ate it all themselves—the little cormorants! Never did trout taste like that trout, and now they are crazy to go a-fishing again.

As to the *two rods*, they got only one small trout between them! How could fish be expected to be caught in such weather? The sun's "perpendicular rays" penetrated the very depths of the water, and no doubt caused the girls' little trout to seek a cooler element in that shaded but fatal pool. I can only say the *two rods* did all that could be done under the circumstances, and they consoled themselves with the reflection that they are not the only experts who have failed; but no mercy was shown them on the long drive home. Those girls triumphed over them; they crowed over them; they jeered at them; they boasted of their own superior skill; and the *two rods* were crestfallen indeed! On our way home through old familiar scenes, I pointed out to the girls a small clump of trees, on the top of one of which I had, seventy years ago, built

myself a little hut, where I learnt my school lessons, swaying in the wind. Thus ended another of my fishing days.

Lord Roberts

Thursday was not a fishing day, and Friday, 24th August, was a day to be remembered in the annals of our beautiful little town, for it was honoured by the quite unexpected visit of Lord and Lady Roberts. They appear to be touring privately through the country on a motor-car. They arrived at the Feathers Hotel (that fine old example of black and white) on Thursday night. Their privacy was soon betrayed. His lordship was recognised, and the next morning the streets were filled with spectators anxious to get a peep at him. He strolled round the castle, where he met two young ladies, to whom he expressed his delight at the beauty of the scenery. He was met by two old soldiers, whom he cordially recognised; and when one of them told him that he had marched with him to Candahar, he almost embraced him. "Then I saw you there," said the Earl. "Yes, my lord." "Then you have got your medal?" "Yes." "You ought to

wear it." The veteran explained that he was only in his working clothes, and that he wore his medal on Sundays and holidays. His lordship repeatedly said that he had never been in Shropshire, or in Ludlow, before; he was surprised and delighted at all he had seen, and he hoped at no very distant date to return and view at more leisure the very charming district. I am glad to give this brief testimony to the charms of the old town.

Fishing in the Teme

I find that my fishing excursions only serve as pegs on which to hang all sorts of irrelevant material. I have been unlucky in choosing the month of August for a holiday, for, of course, I know by old experience that for fishing it is the worst month in the year. During my fortnight I have devoted three separate days to fishing in three separate streams—the Wye, the Lugg, and the Teme. I have told the story of the two first, and now I come to the Teme.

It was on Friday last, 24th August, the memorable day of the visit of Lord Roberts to our ancient borough, that in the afternoon

we started by train; by *we*, I mean the *two rods* and the bevy of three enthusiasts, whose names I have already indicated; our destination being one of the most picturesque and enchanting bits of fishing on the Teme. I need not further particularise than to say that it was not many miles away from Little Hereford—preserved water, of course, and so attractive-looking that it was impossible to conceive how any one could fish in such water and *not* catch fish! And yet we did it! and yet again I may say we had a most delightful time in those green meadows, by those still waters open and free on our side, overshadowed by high rocks and trees on the opposite side. The girls were buoyant and merry, rushing about from point to point seeking for side-holes where solitary monster trout may haply be found, and finding none, whilst the *two rods* swept the stream from end to end, with the only result of a brace of chub and a brace of grayling.

CHAPTER III

EXMOOR,[1] 1903

Exmoor—"Jack Russell"—Rev. Joseph Jekyll—The Barle—Torr Steps to Lanacre Bridge—The Doone Valley—Audrie Doon claims descent from Carver Doone—Anecdote of Jack Froude and Henry of Exeter.

THE land which was the principal scene of the adventures of John Ridd and Lorna Doone will from that fact alone always possess an exceptional attraction for pilgrims from all parts; but beyond this, the great Moor itself has an infinite variety of attractions, and whilst Mr. Snell's object has not been to produce a mere guide-book, of which there are several very good ones already existing, his book is in some measure a guide-book and a good deal more. He says he has known and loved

[1] By F. J. Snell, M.A. With sixty-five illustrations. Crown 8vo, pp. xiii. and 340. Methuen & Co., 36 Essex Street.

Exmoor from boyhood, and he has been at considerable pains in collecting information on topics which do not usually come within the scope of a guide-book—as for example, the breed of Exmoor sheep, the eccentricities of Exmoor ponies, and the ancient breed of red deer. The first part tells the story of the forest from Saxon times down to the year 1818, up to which date it ranked as a royal forest. The first chapter of Part I. tells of it under the Briton, Saxon, and Dane. Chapter II. is devoted to forest law and forest life, and Chapter III. to the decline of the forest. Then we come to the Doones, whose story is pretty fully discussed in Chapter IV. Chapters V. and VI. describe the roads, the sport, and who kept the hounds from the days of the Tudors down to the days when his late Majesty King Edward VII. hunted there in the autumn of 1879 in the company of that venerable sportsman, the Rev. John Russell, familiarly known as "Jack Russell."

Part II. is devoted to the animals of the forest—deer, ponies, and sheep—and Part III. introduces a very amusing little drama entitled "An Exmoor Courtship: or, a Suitoring Dis-

course in the Devonshire Dialect and Mode near the Forest of Exmoor." Another division gives an extremely interesting account of the folklore, and tells of witches and ghosts, pixies, barrows, and the Devil, the latter gentleman having had a hand in laying the rocks which form that curious bridge of stepping-stones named Torr Steps. The last part supplies a brief biographical account of some of the most prominent worthies of Exmoor.

I must own to a personal predilection to all that pertains to Exmoor, having in days gone by made the acquaintance of one of the worthies hereafter mentioned, the Rev. Joseph Jekyll, whom Jack Russell pronounced "one of the finest and hardest riders in that or any other country," having fished the Barle from Torr Steps to Lanacre Bridge, and explored the Moor in search of the Doone Valley, and, not least, as having known and for many years enjoyed the personal friendship of the author of *Lorna Doone*. It is gratifying to find that the legend of the Doones, though it seems to be questioned by some writers, is fully supported by our author, who furnishes most interesting details, which really form "the background,"

as the author says, or "the sort of rough process of which *Lorna Doone* is the consummation." One author, Mr. Rawle, has maintained that there is "no evidence of the existence of the Doones in the national records," and he adds, "none of the old inhabitants of the district round Oare ever heard of the Doones until after the publication of *Lorna Doone*." Mr. Snell, in reply to this, says that "Mr. Rawle has not carried his researches far enough to convince him that long before Blackmore had written a syllable of his romance there was in existence a well-established tradition of the Doones." Mr. Snell says that he stumbled on Blackmore's track in the autumn of 1900 at Withypool. Mr. Tudball, the village postmaster, whose father was landlord of the Royal Oak for twenty-seven years, can vouch for the fact that Blackmore wrote part of *Lorna Doone* whilst staying at the inn. There seems to be abundant legendary evidence as to the fact of the real existence of the Doones, and now, at the eleventh hour, he produces a rather sensational bit of evidence. A lady, who signs herself "Ida M. Browne" (her real name being Audrie Doon), wrote an article in the autumn of

1901 in the *Somerset Free Press* (since reprinted in pamphlet form) which "professes to be a plain historical account and reads as if genuine —if it be a concoction, it is one of the cleverest we have seen for some time," so says Mr. Snell. . . . "The writer begins by confessing her surprise that Blackmore should have succeeded in embodying the traditions of her family so correctly in *Lorna Doone*," and "supposes he must have got it from some Scottish family of his acquaintance." This lady claims to be a descendant of the Doones, and tells all about them, and it appears she very satisfactorily traces her own ancestry back through the Doones of Doone Valley to the Earl of Moray, who was murdered 23rd January 1570. Miss Doon tells the whole story of the Doones, and she claims "Carver" Doone as her great-great-great-grandfather. This chapter on "The Doones" will greatly interest the readers of *Lorna Doone*.

"The Worthies" whose stories are told are Sir Thomas Ackland, the Rev. John Froude, the Rev. John Russell, Mr. Charles Palk Collyns, the Rev. Joseph Jekyll, Mr. Mordaunt F. Bisset, and Miss Alice King.

Here is an anecdote taken by Mr. Snell from *The Memoirs of the Rev. John Russell*, and told by Russell of his friend Jack Froude and "Henry of Exeter" (Bishop Philpotts).

"The Bishop was determined to have an interview with Froude . . . he started for Knowstone with that object in view. Froude suspected that such an event might occur, and set to work to frustrate his lordship's designs. He stationed a signalman within hail of his house, on the only road leading to it from Tiverton, giving him orders, if he saw a chaise and pair coming, to hasten thither and sound the alarm.

"Accordingly when the Bishop did appear, Froude and his household were fully prepared for his reception.

"'Can I see Mr. Froude?' inquired his lordship in that mild tone which he habitually adopted when he meant to carry his point. 'Be good enough to say the Bishop of Exeter wishes to have a few words with him.'

"'Please walk in, my lord,' replied the old housekeeper, Jane, who had gone to the door, and would have gone to the stake to serve her master. 'Mr. Froude is at home, but is up abed wi' some ailment or other.'

"'Nothing serious, I hope,' said the Bishop, taking a seat in the state apartment; 'and if so, I daresay he wouldn't object to see *me* at his bedside.'

"Jane paused for a moment, and then, with some hesitation, replied, 'Perhaps not, my lord; leastwise if you bean't afeered o' going there. 'Tis a faver o' some sort, but I can't mind what the doctor call'th it.'

"The Bishop cocked his ear, and looked uneasy. 'A fever, did you say? Rheumatism perhaps, from exposure to wet?'

"'No, no; I've got that myself bad enough. 'Tis something a deal worse, I reckon.'

"'Not scarlet fever, I hope?'

"The housekeeper shook her head despondingly. 'Worse than that, my lord.'

"'Typhus?' inquired his lordship, no longer able to hide his look of alarm.

"Iss, that's it; seem'th to me that's what the doctor ca'd it. 'Tis a whisht job, fai'!'

"The Bishop clutched his hat, and with little ceremony took his departure, . . . and he never set foot again in the parish of Knowstone. When, adds Russell, the Bishop had fairly disappeared, Froude put on his long

gaiters and went out hunting for the rest of the day."

The volume is enriched by several inimitable hunting sketches by Mr. F. Carruthers Gould and many photographs.

CHAPTER IV

SOME JUNE DAYS ON THE CHESS, 1908

June days on the Chess—Big trout flopping about—Great expectations—The master says, "Don't be too sanguine!"—We tried them—We fished up and down—No result—"What fools you two-legged creatures are!"—I threw a stone at him in a rage—A record fish—The May fly—An old-fashioned Chess trout—"The Rosebery" performs wonders—A flabby two-pounder—Grasp your nettle.

June 1.—Never did a Tityrus piping beneath the branches of a wide-spreading beech behold a prettier scene than that which is spread out before me this evening, as I am now sitting on a rustic bench—as singular and interesting a scene as any one may care to see. "Is this," I said to myself, "a bit of the same old England that I lived in only four weeks ago? Surely not!" Then the bare branches of oaks and elms and beeches

A Lesson in Fly Casting

To face page 42

were borne down by a picturesque mantle of snow; now they are clad in the most gorgeous apparel of every shade of luscious verdure.

This morning my good genius, or I think I may more truthfully say a kind Providence, had led me by devious ways, through many green lanes bordered by luxurious young foliage, and landed me here, in one of the sweetest little "fishing boxes" that one could wish to see or dream of.

My brother angler, my ancient friend, Izaak Walton, as I have quite appropriately named him (for when clad in angling apparel he resembles him exactly), dwells here, in what Keble calls his "green retreat,"[1] and you may be sure he welcomed me with all the dignity and old-world courtesy naturally to be expected from the representative of such a master. He is my senior by a fortnight; he has three more grandchildren and three more great-grandchildren than I have. He is my master; I am only his youthful pupil in the

[1] "O who can tell how calm and sweet
Meek Walton! shows thy green retreat."
KEBLE.

art of catching fish. He wields a fly-rod with youthful vigour, and he knows as much about trout and grayling as did our common ancestor. I am not going to localise the scene or paint a portrait—I will only tell my little story in my own way; those may fit the cap who can.

Our river is here, close to the door; our garden lawns gently slant up from it. Our hearts leaped within us as we looked down upon it, and as we saw big trout flopping up or lying still within an inch or two of the top of the water on the look-out for food, but with wonderful discrimination between the true and the false, we said to ourselves, my daughter and I, what baskets we shall fill, what records we shall make, before this glorious day is over.

"Let me recommend you, my young friends," said the master, "to moderate your enthusiasm, don't be too sanguine; those trout know a thing or two—many an expert angler has come here, inspired like yourselves, and has gone away with an empty creel; they belong to a school older than Winchester or Eton—they have had a classical education.

On the Chess—above Rainbow Pool

To face page 44

It is true there are among them a few impetuous young upstarts, full of the self-conceit that has led some of them into trouble. You will know them by their sides, which are iridescent with the many colours of the rainbow; they have but recently arrived from a foreign country, they are full of pluck, and if they do get into trouble they will fight like heroes to get out of it, and the old Chess trout will look calmly on. Go and try them, my children, and my blessing go with you!"

We went and tried them. My daughter casts her fly in sportsmanlike style, and I—well, I have caught many a trout in my time, and I flattered myself that I had acquired some little skill in the art of beguiling them. There were the trout, fine stalwart fellows—the river seemed to swarm with them. Our stretch of water extends above and below the house for something less than a mile. We fished that river up, and we fished it down. There were the trout above us, and below us, and in front of us, rising in all directions. We stalked them in every conceivable way. We dodged behind bushes, we went down on our knees to them, whilst we threw our luring flies over them. My

felt hat became like a "catch 'em alive-o" paper—stuck round with changed and rejected insects.

My daughter left me in the evening for a twenty-mile drive home, carrying with her one solitary half-pound trout, caught by herself, and an exactly similar one caught by me.

Really, those trout insulted us; they treated us with scorn. There they lay on the top of the water, picking up and sucking in all sorts of invisible things, but our pretty images which floated over their noses they wouldn't look at. There was one particularly big fellow, who would sometimes turn upon us an insolent stare, as much as to say, "What fools you two-legged creatures are!" Nothing in my fly-book would please him. In a rage, at last I picked up a stone and threw it at him. He dodged it, and returned to his place.

June 2.—Thunder and heavy rain during the night, as predicted by the master. He was right, and the reason for his fish not taking our flies sufficiently explained; but it does not explain why, despite of thunder, they went on taking the natural fly all the time.

River swollen and muddy all the morning

from last night's rain. No fishing in the morning. In the afternoon I started alone, and fished the upper water. Trout not quite so impudent, a little more amenable to reason. Hooked and lost two good fish; I won't boast about their weight. I hooked and caught one, a good fighter. He weighed 1 lb. 3 oz.

June 3.—Fine but cloudy morning. Had trout for breakfast—well cooked, tender and sweet. The master approved of the weather—said he thought it might do, and that possibly the wary ones or some of them may be caught napping. We went together, the master preceding me through the wood to the open meadow. I, happy fellow, rested on the stile to put on a new fly—a large showy one of many colours. I saw a rise away under the opposite bank. My *Old Man's Fancy* reached the edge of that ring. Heigh-ho! a splash and a dash, and didn't "my heart go pit-a-pat, like sparks in burnt-up paper."

Never before in my fishing days have I had hold of such a monster. "He must be five pounds at least!" I cried out all to myself, for the master was out of sight. Gracious goodness, my net! I had left it fifty yards away by

the stile, and there was this fellow splashing and dashing, jumping out of the water, away up stream, tearing my reel round, down again before I could reel in, now buried in the mud at the bottom, now off to the opposite bank like a shot, maddened, determined at whatever cost to rid himself of the accursed thing sticking in his gullet. I am of opinion that shame was the chief cause of his anger; to think that he, the father of the flock, should be so caught in a trap he had so often knowingly avoided. I allowed him to have his own way—for I understood his little ways; to hold tight when he suddenly springs out of the water is pretty sure to snap something, but the moment he sprang I slackened, and he was outwitted, so I saved my tackle. Gradually, foot by foot, I enticed him down stream till I could safely stoop to pick up my net. By that time he was, I thought, quite exhausted; but the moment his eye caught sight of the net he knew quite well what it meant. He had seen so many of his relations and friends tumble into a thing like that, to be no more seen by him. He made a last and final effort to be free. My famous little rod was bent double,

SERPENTINE WALK

To face page 48

line and hook held fast. He filled my net, and, indeed, cracked it. He was safe—I was proud, I was satisfied. The master smiled when he saw him, and remarked the best way to cook him was to boil him and eat him cold with *sauce mayonnaise.* I had regarded him as a record fish for me—he looked so big and fought so well; and I was a little chagrined to find when in the scales that after all this fuss his weight was only 2 lb. 6 oz.

June 4.—Thunder and lightning all night —a little rain. At the end of our lawn is a little coppice—a kind of maze of zig-zag paths and cosy nooks—where lovers like to hide themselves—and at the end of this maze the river has a tiny weir or waterfall of about six inches, the water falling into a rather deep pool; and this pool, we discovered, was the resort of the patriarchs of the trout family. There we found them looking out for whatever may float over the weir of an attractive character.

No May Fly has yet made its appearance, but I put on a small stiff-winged grey May Fly, as a trial—it goes by the name of "The Kennet." It was well received as it floated

lightly over the fall; evidently it was expected, and there was commotion among the big ones—as may be guessed, a big rainbow was first in the field; he made the dash at his full speed, while others were only taking time to think about it; of course he won the prize, and he didn't seem to like it, but he fought splendidly, and he weighed 1 lb. 7½ oz.

Luckily for me, and unfortunately for the fish, the master had accompanied me, for just there the bank is very steep, and not being so nimble as I once was, there was quite a chance of my toppling over into the water; but the master, with his youthful activity, by getting on his knees and stretching downwards, soon got him into the net; not, however, without considerable risk to himself.

Not long afterwards an old-fashioned Chess trout, one of the ancient family, of a yellowish body but beautifully speckled all over back and sides, envious of the fate of the gay new comer of rainbow tints, desired also to taste my Kennet; after a brilliant fight, worthy of his ancestors, he submitted to his destiny,

and will shortly be eaten cold; his weight was 1 lb. 8 oz.

Impossible to fish in this broiling sun, I will recline on yonder bench under the old yew, and survey the gorgeous scene around me. I am not going to spoil it by an attempt to paint it in words. See yonder little wagtail—be quiet, Bobs; take your nose away. I'm off to the land of dreams!

Now comes tea on the lawn, to rouse me out of a pleasant dream about big rainbows and natives, and now, almost without warning, comes a strong, cold north-east wind. Thunder still rumbling in the distance. No more rise. No more fishing to-day.

June 5.—*Hélas*, my last day! The master had gone to town, and I was left to my own devices. I strolled down the river, rod in hand. Wind, cool from north; no rise; sat down by the pool; saw two or three Chess trout beginning to move about languidly as if they would not mind taking something if it dropped into their mouths. I put on a May Fly called the Rosebery. One of the Chess fellows, after dodging round it for a bit, took it just gingerly between his lips, and

before I could strike he spat it out. I allowed him time for thought. He said to himself, "Sorry I didn't hold on." I could read his thoughts, for he looked hungry, and began to lash about with his tail, still with his eye on my "Lord Rosebery." I gave him another chance, and he greedily seized it. I am pretty sure he was the same pompous fellow I had stoned yesterday. I was disappointed in this fish. He gave in too easily; he was a coward in his heart, as many of your boastful, blustering fellows are; there seemed to be no fight in him. He came to bank, and submitted to his fate like a stupid chub. He must have been in a sort of trance. Ten minutes or a quarter of an hour after I thought I had killed him—I took him home and put him on the scales to be weighed—he suddenly woke up and jumped off the scales on our housemaid's toes. Instead of weighing 3 lb., as the old gardener said he would, he barely turned the scales at 2 lb.! He was a remarkably handsome fish; but when I examined his flesh he seemed a bit flabby—a melancholy sort of fish, disappointed in love perhaps.

It is now only eleven o'clock. I must try for a bigger and a better one. I have grown rather inclined to despise the smaller fry; half-pounders have no longer much attraction for me. I have observed in this transparent water that there be diversities of temper and disposition among trout. Some are aristocratic, autocratic, and pugnacious; some are of a jolly sort, free and easy, but will *not* submit to be put upon—they maintain their ground; others are cowards and slink away at the least threat. I want only one more good fight with a big one like the Yankee rainbow I had yesterday; then I say again, *hélas!* and I must be gone. I am sorry to say the big rainbow I had my eye upon kept his eye on me, and would not be betrayed. Instead, I got a despised half-pounder that fought a brilliant fight before he came in to be packed in nettles with the big one. *Nettles*, the master tells me, are the very best things to put round the fish when you consign him to your basket or pack him up to send to your friends. Of course, when I caught my big trout, I remembered the master's advice;

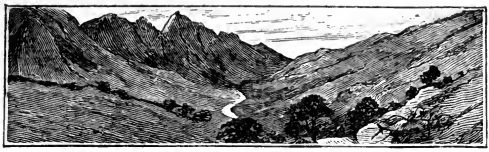
also, unhappily for me, I remembered and believed the old quotation—

> "Tender-handed stroke a nettle,
> It will sting you for your pains;
> Grasp it like a man of mettle,
> And it soft as silk remains."

Accordingly, full of excitement, I plunged my hand into a great bunch of young nettles and grasped them "like a man of mettle," and I regretted it for many hours afterwards. My fingers and the palm of my hand tingled most disagreeably all through the night. No longer will I put any faith in those often-quoted lines. Let those who still believe in the truth of them put their faith to the test as I did. The next time I have to gather nettles I will do as our housekeeper did when she packed our fish—she put gloves on.

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

To face page 54



CHAPTER V

OUR WHITSUN HOLIDAY ON THE ITCHEN, 1907

The House that Jack built—The Old Man—New style of waders—The Itchen revisited—The beauties of Nature unappreciated — "Wickham's Fancy" preferred by trout — Some "psychic" moments — The keeper—Trouble in the river—My Lady Piscatrix unfortunate —A beautiful trout on the hook in full play—"Come away—time is up"—Big trout lost.

THIS is the House that Jack built; and here is the Old Man, all tattered and torn, you may be sure a fisherman born, who lodged in this house that Jack built. The Old Man was an angler with a worm, a bent pin, thread and willow wand in the days when George the Fourth was king. He may have hooked a trout or two before King William died, he lived through the Victorian era, and now in King Edward's days he is still able and willing to go a-fishing. I have given you his portrait, not on account

of any merit in himself, but because of the waders he is wearing, for it is to these first of all I want to draw attention.

These waders are not particularly elegant, but they possess a novel feature, for which I wish to express my admiration. The special feature is the laced opening in front, which runs down nearly from the knee to the toe. This expanding gusset enables you at once, as it were, to walk into your waders in your ordinary boots; it obviates all need for change of any kind; you can fish all day in your everyday easy shoes, and when you have done slip off the covering, and there you are, ready for your arm-chair. The present pair now being worn by the Old Man, as seen in the picture, is, I believe, the first and only pair ever made. I have worn them myself for three days almost consecutively; I found them perfect in every way; they have saved me much trouble, and free from unusual pressure on corns and bunions. With these to cover your feet and legs you may go fishing in your slippers, the one essential being that there should be no room left inside for wobbling, the boot or shoe should fill the wader foot. It is proper to say that these

Ye Olde Man and his Waders

To face page 56

waders were specially made as an experiment by Messrs. Anderson, Anderson and Anderson, from a sketch and suggestion furnished them a year or two ago by the editor of the *Fishing Gazette*. They were made accordingly, but arriving at the end of the season they were put away on a high shelf, and unfortunately overlooked; they were only brought to Piscator's mind when the "A.A." complained of the troubles and difficulties he had with ordinary waders. It is a simple, inelegant, but most useful invention. I have intentionally stepped aside from my original purpose in order to express my opinion of these wonderful boots. I should say that, so far as I know, they are not "on the market." My original purpose was to tell your readers of our two or three days' doings on the Itchen at Whitsuntide.

Itchen, O Itchen!

> "Green be thy woods and fair thy flowers,
> Thy waters never drumlie."

I should like to apostrophise thee, only I know that sentiment is in this new century regarded only as a synonym for *bosh*—and yet I am bound to say that when I recall the delightful days I have spent on the banks of the Itchen

in many years gone by, and that nearly eight years have come and gone since my last visit to its pleasant banks, it did give me a thrill of pleasure to find myself once more on the Itchen, albeit on a stretch of it I had never seen before; my former visits being mostly limited to one locality.

To recall past pleasures would only be to revive old memories of those who helped to make those pleasures, many of whom have long since passed away, whilst I might almost say that

> "I have lived to be
> The last leaf upon the tree."

It is not my intention to recall the names of those old friends. More than a generation has passed away since I first contributed the results of my angling doings to the *Fishing Gazette*, a self-imposed duty which I have rarely omitted to give of all my little excursions ever since. A new generation, then unborn, has arisen and become ardent anglers. They know not Joseph, but

> "Let them smile, as I do now,
> At the old forsaken bough
> Where I cling."

May they live a happy life, and enjoy the pleasures of angling till they are each left to cling as last leaves in a blessed state of happy old age.

Angling is said to be "the contemplative man's recreation," and it is true that your bottom fisherman may sometimes repose on that part of his anatomy, and contemplate and "think as he smokes tobacco"; but your fly-fisherman who wants to catch trout has something else to do.

We are all of us apt to prate about the beauties of Nature when we go a-fishing, but, truth to tell, we are more apt to have our attention intently fixed on the one object we have in view. In imagination we paint pretty pictures of the delights of wandering on soft, velvety grass by the side of still waters on balmy summer evenings; in reality, our walk on the river's margin is not in the least velvety. We drag our tired feet through long dead grass covering hard clods and deep holes made by the hoofs of cattle when the ground was soft and wet. One of our eyes is constantly on the look-out for those harsh foot-traps and the other for a rising trout. One has no time to

note the lovely cock pheasant that dashes up almost from under one's feet; or the wild-duck performing her little arts of deception, fluttering and splashing in the water as if disabled by broken leg or wing—keeping always at a safe distance—to distract our attention from her brood of young ones hidden away somewhere in the rushes; or the moorhen performing similar antics; or the young vole nibbling luscious young grass under the bank; or the water-rat swimming across the stream with a babe on its back; or the restless, incessantly chattering little sedge-warbler; or the pretty blackcap flitting here and there, singing a sweet little song in the bushes; or the white-throated fly-catcher darting up for an insect; or the swifts and swallows skimming the water and snatching up every fly that rises, ofttimes making a dash at your own false fly, but with wonderful quickness perceiving the fraud and avoiding it; and a thousand other curious things we may note were we not so intently occupied in the deadly pursuit of little fishes! But it will not do to analyse "the contemplative man's recreation" too closely; man may boast of his superiority—he is a

destructive animal after all! I must get on with my fishing.

I may so far localise the part of the Itchen to which destiny and the South-Western Railway brought Piscator Major and me on Friday (17th May) as to say that it lies between Alresford on the one hand and Winchester on the other.

We are here in very comfortable "diggings," which, for want of other distinction, I have called the "House that Jack built." On the Saturday morning before Whit Sunday we found that Jack Frost, in the garden of this picturesque old house, had destroyed the gushing hopes of many a young potato by nipping it in the bud. This morning the wind has fixed itself, as usual, in the north-east.

"——Ah, bitter cold it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold."

Old anglers tell us, now we have arrived here, to pack up at once and go home by first train, and come again in better weather. That advice does not quite synchronise with our own feelings, so we don't take it. On the contrary, armed as we were at all points, we started—that is, Piscator and I (and the keeper

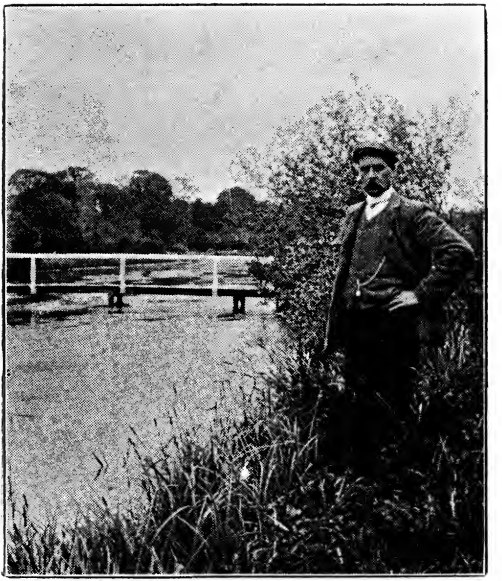
to show us the way)—and woe is me! I had almost omitted to add Piscator's wife, the most important personage of all, and she an old hand with the fly-rod. The keeper comforted us all he could by telling us there was no chance whatever of our catching a single trout in such weather—no fly on the water, no rise, no anything likely to afford us pleasure. He is a very good fellow notwithstanding his forebodings, so I give you his portrait.

There is an old lady of eighty-six here who has tested and proved the truth of the old adage—

> "So many mists in March,
> So many frosts in May";

and he quite believes her.

And yet, when we came to the water, things were not "as they seemed," not half so bad. The first thing that struck us was the convincing proof that trout were there, if not rising (seeing nothing to rise at) they were there in abundance and of all sizes, from six ounces to three pounds, lying on the gravel or poised midway 'twixt wind and gravel on the look-out, or darting away at the reverberation of our footfalls (for if fish cannot hear they can



OUR KEEPER

To face page 62

certainly feel the slightest jar in the water caused by a heavy tread on the bank); and actually, for about two hours in the middle of the day, there came an intermittent rise of a largish yellow-winged fly, not unlike a small May Fly; with it there must have been some other insect invisible to us, at which there came an uncertain rise of trout. Curiously enough, they would rarely look at this big yellow fly, allowing it to float on, but rising at the invisible one.

Acting on Piscator's advice, I began by casting with a "Wickham's Fancy," and I was delighted to find the trout seemed greatly to prefer this fanciful imitation to the real live thing which fluttered on above them. Thus for about two hours, say from one to three, the rise was a fairly good one. During that short time I may say that I experienced what is becoming the fashion to call some "psychic" moments. I had twelve of them in all, besides many minor ones. I hooked and played with twelve fair trout. I lost seven of them, but five found their way into my bag. If you reckon up the time in casting over and over each of those twelve trout, hooking them all and

landing some, to say nothing of the many waifs and strays, it may be imagined that these two hours flew by with frantic speed. Then the rise fell off suddenly, and for hours we watched and watched in vain.

Sunday, 19*th May*.—*Dies non* for fishing. (A beautiful church close at hand.)

Monday, 20*th May*.—A day in many respects like Saturday, wind always in the same quarter, an occasional shower, an intermittent rise in the morning, improving till one o'clock, continuing till three, and then ceasing altogether, but somehow, cast as we would, change our imitations as we might, we could not get a rise—a perversity which no one can explain. Trout rising all round you, but treating your own lure with absolute indifference. Even Piscator, who is as good a hand as one here and there, did little or nothing that he could boast of. Madame Piscatrix walked and fished and fished and walked for miles, and threw her flies with graceful accuracy—even she, although hooking several, landed none. At the end of this tantalising, aggravating day, all we had to show was a brace or two in Piscator's bag.

Tuesday, 21*st May*, being our last day, we

strained to its utmost capacity, postponing our departure till the last train.

To all appearance, Tuesday promised to be a duplicate of Monday. Wind in the same unhappy quarter, except that now and then it veered round to the north, then it blew straight down the stream with considerable vigour. Dry-fly fishing is then not easy work. The same flies came up at the same hour; we fished with the same imitations, and what did the trout say to us? Why, once again they gave our imitations the preference. Why they should do one thing one day and just the opposite the next day is to my untutored mind rather inexplicable. The end of it was that I rose many, I hooked many, I lost many, and I finished up with a satisfactory residuum in my bag.

There was one trout in particular that afforded me much amusement and considerable trouble. He was close under my bank, in a little cove formed by weeds in a half circle, surrounding him on two sides but leaving an opening towards me, in a space perhaps a foot in diameter. He rose continually at everything that came over that little cove. Being on my own side,

and the wind dead against me, it was no easy matter to get my fly into that little recess without flopping on him, and so putting him down. It seems to me that I must have spent a quarter of an hour in casting over that trout, and at last he took my fly. He seemed quite surprised; he did not like the taste of it; he fought against that thing in his month. He was one of the best fighters I ever had hold of. He jumped, and wriggled, and dashed up and down with astonishing pluck. While I was so pleasantly engaged, there came a combined shout from Piscator and Piscatrix: "Come away; time is up!" I turned round for a second or so, and in that second my line got twisted round the top of my rod, and I could no longer wind up for perhaps ten seconds, and my trout lay panting on a bed of weeds. By the time I had cleared the line he had regained his vigour, and when I gave him a fresh reminder to come my way, he distinctly refused to comply with my request. He made another supreme effort, dashed into the weeds—my line came away, leaving the fly in his cheek. He was a big fellow and a splendid fighter. I wanted that trout badly.

It was that precious shout of "Come away" just at that "psychic" moment that undid me. I am beginning to hate that objectionable word, and if I can remember I will never use it again.

Piscator did very well. He must tell his own story, if he wants to do so. As for Madame, she was certainly unlucky. She hooked a lot of trout, and lost them all unaccountably—and why? When she examined her fly she found she had been fishing all the morning with a broken barb! It was too bad. There only remains one little adventure to tell. The good-natured keeper, in releasing her fly from an overhanging branch, tumbled head over heels into three or four feet of water! He seemed to like the fun, and ran home for a change of garments.

CHAPTER VI

BURNHAM BEECHES

May 1908

The Beeches in spring—Frost and snow—Cuckoo first heard 30th April—Lovely day in May—Burnham Beeches and Burnham Birches in December—Migration of the swallows—Our dog Cæsar—His travels and adventures with me—His misbehaviour—I gave him a thrashing—*Twa* dogs—Pinto, a Chinese terrier, gave much trouble.

"It was in the gay season of spring" that I found myself in the neighbourhood of and within a three-mile walk of Burnham Beeches. The cuckoo is due here about 12th April, but it was not until 30th April that his most cheering note was distinctly heard by me. It is in the midst of woodland scenery, of old hedgerows, and green meadows that he most delights to hear his own voice, and commit little depredations on other birds' nests. Surely it is here that "Summer first unfaulds her leaves," but

IN BURNHAM BEECHES

To face page 68

no sign of Summer, or even of Spring, had yet appeared. Never, in the memory of man, among whom I happen to be one of the oldest, has such an April happened as the one now just closed.

I was curious to see what nature was doing among the old Beeches of Burnham, but wind and weather, frost and snow, sleet, hail, rain, north-easterly gales and blizzards prevented my going there. I wanted to see them in their spring beauty, not in their wintry garb. What cuckoo in his senses would think of rushing into these Arctic regions from his sunny home in the south?—swallows, swifts, and martins had appeared only intermittently.

The land hereabouts is gravelly and absorbent. One gets up in the morning and the fields are covered with one great white sheet of snow two or three inches deep. The young colts and cattle in yonder meadow are dashing about wildly, neighing and lowing, and wanting to know why their food is shut off. Blackbirds, thrushes, chaffinches, tom-tits, sparrows, robins, and starlings are hopping about under the snow-laden bushes seeking food and finding none; they are starving, and, if this continues, will

soon be dead. We throw them out handfuls of crumbs on the soft snow, which they are quickly down upon in a flock, and it is interesting to watch them picking bits out of the snow. Soon after noon the sun bursts forth gloriously for an hour or two; the white sheet disappears as if by magic; the cattle rejoice in green grass; worms lift the mould and put their heads out to get a peep and a little sunshine in the outer world, and at once are pounced on and torn from their stronghold in the earth by blackbird, thrush, or starling, and are greedily gorged or wafted away to feed the starving brood gaping in the nests. The small birds, not quite equal to cope with a worm, find other provender. All have forgotten their troubles of the morning, and now, in spite of north-easterly gales or "an envious, sneaping frost that bites the first-born infants of the spring," a foreboding of troubles yet in store for them, they carol forth their glad songs as if nothing had been the matter with them a few hours ago! This sort of tragi-comedy was being repeatedly performed during the sad and dreary month of April. In spite of wind, in spite of weather, Nature will not stay her hand: nest

building and egg laying are going on. I even saw a young fledged thrush hopping about in the snow.

Burnham Beeches were unapproachable: one day, indeed, the best of a long series of very bad ones, I got as far as the edge of the Common and had a peep at the Beeches in the gloomy distance; heavy rain came on, and I ventured no farther. The Common was brown with last year's dead bracken, and the woods on the far side were brown and leafless. I trudged back in drizzle and mud. I said I will *not* see the Beeches till I can catch them in spring glory and decent apparel.

And so we got through April and entered on the merry month of May, but it was not till many days had slipped by—some merry and bright, but mostly gloomy and sad—that I found myself once more on my way to Burnham Beeches.

Monday, 11*th May* 1908, is a day of the month and of the year that I want to mark with a red letter; a day "so cool, so calm, so bright" is very rare, even in my long experience. Even the grey, dead Common of a week or two ago is now ablaze here and

there with golden gorse and alive with springing heather. "Now is the winter of my discontent made glorious summer," and all the snow and sludge in the deep bosom of the ocean buried and forgotten. I am in fairyland, seated on a great bulbous root of a venerable giant beech tree, one of those whose heads were lopped off in the vigour of youth by Oliver Cromwell before the battle of Brentford. Hundreds of the ancient brotherhood stand around, bearing enormous trees on their stunted, cracked and distorted old trunks. The scene is glorious, well worth crossing the broad Atlantic to view it as I do now. I am monarch of all I survey on this fine May morning. Not a solitary individual have I met in my rambles all through these woods. Burnham Beeches are too near to London to be known or properly appreciated by Londoners. If they were a thousand miles away, these lovely, solitary woods would be alive with tourists and excursionists from the great city.

I am not particularly wishful to see this great temple of gaunt and hoary giants peopled by throngs of noisy citizens. Its great charm is its solitude, its silence, its perfect peace, and yet one could wish that every individual of

that great crowd who has eyes to see, and a heart in sympathy with Nature, could be brought here to sit alone, as I am sitting now, on a lovely spring morning. That, of course, is an impossible wish; it is only accidentally that I am alone, and to me it is surprising, remembering that these grotesque, ghost-haunted, weird old trunks, with their wide-spreading leafy branches, are within a short railway journey (by Great Western Railway) from Paddington, and from Slough and Windsor by motor omnibuses.

The younger beeches and the graceful silver birches are now in their first freshness of delicate green mantles—but the young buds of many of the spreading branches of the patriarchs are still unfolded; and the grand old oaks—some of them probably a thousand years old, and of enormous circumference—have still to put forth their foliage. The bracken is only just forcing itself upwards through the old brown and dead remains of last year's glory. The soft moss is tender and pleasant to a footsore pedestrian. I do not wish to gush or to be sentimental, but I do say that I find it pleasant to be here, alone

in the midst of this very beautiful scenery. May a like treat befall many of my readers.

The woods are silent on this cheerful day, and the silence is only broken now and then by the songs of blackbirds and thrushes, and the piping of smaller birds, and now and then by the harsh cry of the great spotted woodpecker.

Rambling Notes

swallows and a dog

November 1909.—I am sure that it is here in Buckinghamshire, and not near "the Castle of Montgomerie," that "Summer first unfaulds her leaves, and here they langest tarrie." It is now nearly the end of November, and I am told that in other parts the trees have long since put off their summer clothing and clad themselves in nakedness for the coming winter. Here the oaks still retain their foliage, but the leaves are brown, whilst the elms in many places are still green. The brown and shrivelled leaves still cleave to the old Burnham Beeches, but Burnham Birches are bare; the graceful "Lady of the Woods" has shed almost her last vestige of clothing. Swallows belonging to this district took their departure some

weeks ago. On 16th October I saw them go; hundreds of them sat all in a row on the railings. After several false starts, they all simultaneously lifted themselves high up in the air, and, to my surprise, they took a northward course, as if they expected to find summer at the North Pole; but away off in the distance, as far as I could see, they seemed to wheel round, and then they travelled out of sight in a southerly direction. Only a week before this migration I observed a pair of swallows flying in and out of our old barn—always with food in their mouths. The way they dodged me was curious enough; the moment they caught sight of me under a tree looking out for them, instead of going in through the shutter opening they would fly over the barn and wheel round and round, and only slip in when my head was turned away. I thought it was late in the season for these birds to be feeding young ones, just on the eve of their departure. I concealed myself in the barn and looked round, but I could see no nests. Presently I heard a little twitter, and away up on a rafter I saw four or five little white breasts sitting all in

a row waiting to be fed by the old ones. Then these young ones would fly about from beam to beam—evidently practising the art of "aviation"—and in two or three days, and just before the general migration, they were gone. I wondered how these young things would stand that long flight. Probably they would be among those hundreds that were found dead on our southern coasts. It was unusually late even for a second brood. I was reading Pepys' *Diary* the other day and came upon the following remark about swallows: "Swallows are often brought up in their nets out of the mudd from under water, hanging together to some twigg or other, dead in ropes, and brought to the fire will come to life" (Pepys' *Diary*, December 11, 1663).

Izaak Walton says: "It is well known that swallows, and bats, and wagtails, which are called half-year birds . . . about Michaelmas leave us for a hotter climate. Yet some of them that have been left behind their fellows, have been found many thousands at a time, in hollow trees, or clay caves, where they have been observed to live and sleep out the whole winter without meat."

Gilbert White, a hundred years later than Walton, believed that many swifts, swallows, and martins hybernated in holes and the banks of rivers, under the water, or elsewhere. I am not aware of any hybernated swallows having been actually discovered in recent years. I may say that on a hot day early in April this year, 1911, I saw a solitary swift and a pair of swallows, long before the bulk of them were due from the South, and I am quite of opinion that these birds must have been aroused by the hot sun out of a long winter's sleep in the neighbourhood, but hardly from "mudd" under water—more likely from hollow trees or "clay caves."

CÆSAR

Whene'er I take my walks abroad I am, as a rule, accompanied by a dog; his name is Cæsar. Talk about reasoning in animals—why, Cæsar has as much knowledge and observation crammed into his solitary eye as many an unfeathered biped has in his whole carcase. The only thing he can *not* do is to talk English—he understands it thoroughly. He is what is called a Dachshund. His coat

is smooth and brown; he is about 30 in. in length from tip of nose to end of tail; his height is about 7 in. from foot to shoulder; his belly 2 in. from the ground; and he has only one eye. He has a most powerful tail; it serves as a rudder and propeller. Of course, when he goes with me I look upon myself as his master, but he thinks very differently; he regards me as an inferior being. He patronises me. "Good morning," he says, "going for a walk? I'll go with you." Off he goes, his propeller wagging from side to side, his front toes turned out, and his head erect. He keeps about a hundred yards ahead of me, and every now and then he turns round and says, "Now do come along; how slow you are!" Then he wags on till he comes to a turning; he looks round again and says, "Which way now?" A nod and a gesture to right or left is quite sufficient for him. Our walks are long and varied. Sometimes he behaves very well and sometimes quite the reverse. When, on returning, we get within a quarter of a mile of home, he suddenly stops and waits till I get up to him. Then he makes me a little speech: "Now, old man, I've brought you safely to this

point. You can take care of yourself now; I'm hungry, and it's long past my dinner hour. Bye-bye!"—and off he goes at a sharp trot. One day he behaved atrociously. We had reached the top of the hill together, and I said to him, "Now, Cæsar, you must go home. I want to walk through the wood, and dogs are not allowed there; so go back home like a good dog." He gave me a comical wink with that one eye of his, and off he trotted towards home. I watched him till he was out of sight, and I started off into the wood. I had a general permission from the owner to ramble where I liked, provided I took no dog with me. I had got into the middle of the wood, when suddenly, at some distance off, a cock pheasant fluttered up, which surprised me, and there was Cæsar close at my heels. When he had got round the corner out of my sight he dashed into the wood, roused up that cock pheasant, and then I found him innocently creeping behind me. I seized him by the collar, and gave him a good thrashing; he was very penitent, said he would never do it again, and for a time he kept his promise, but he soon forgot and was off again. Fortunately for him

he was back to heel in time, for a little farther along we met the keeper, and as we were on a public footpath and Cæsar was walking innocently behind me, nothing was said, but he looked viciously at Cæsar, as much as to say, "I shall have to put a few shot into you, old chap, some day."

Twa Dogs

Two years have passed away, and Cæsar is growing old and rather lazy. He has now a young and lively companion, who leads him a terrible life. He is a small pedigree Chinese terrier, brother to a champion prize taker. His hair is very long, of a darkish brown on the back and lighter underneath. His fluffy tail curls right over his back; he could not bring it back between his hind legs—as some cowardly dogs do—even if he would, but his pride and arrogance would under no circumstances allow him to do that. Notwithstanding this, he is an arrant little coward. He will growl and bark savagely at a dog three times his size that smiles disdainfully at him; but if a dog of his own size comes along and shows the least sign of fight, he bolts away igno-

miniously. On the other hand, if he sees a motor coming along at full speed, nothing pleases him better than to dash right in front of it. Many and many a car has he thus stopped in the middle of the road, earning for himself and me very bad language indeed. Of course I am fully aware that he will do this once too often; some day his mangled remains will be carried home, and there will be scolding and mourning and woe, and I shall have to bear the brunt of it. I shall be told that I ought always to lead him with a strap in the public roads; but that is a thing I never did yet, and never will do. Still, he is a most loving little pet, admired by every one. Ladies will pick him up in the road and kiss and fondle him. He has very beautiful round, black, shining eyes; the lower part of his face is black, all but the point of his little pug nose. It unluckily happens that the point of that nose is almost white. If it were black, now, like his brother's nose, he would be a perfect little show lap-dog and prize-winner. Certainly I don't like or want the responsibility of his company, but he has cunning enough to hide away somewhere till I and Cæsar have started,

and then he comes helter-skelter after us, and neither threats nor coaxing will induce him to go back. He will dance round and laugh at me, always just out of my reach. Cæsar treats him in a very fatherly way, and *Pinto* (that is not his real name) delights in tormenting him. He leaves home a very clean little dog fresh from his bath, and if there is any mud or puddle or running water to be found, nothing pleases him better than to dash into it, and so he frequently presents himself at home all besplashed and disreputable; and his nurse—for he has a special nurse—calls him a very naughty little doggy-poggy, and looks daggers at me. One day he came upon a hen and chickens in the road. Of course he dashed at the chickens, but the mother hen made a furious dash at him, scratched his nose and sent him away howling. A few days afterwards he found the same chickens in the road without the mother. By way of revenge, he went at them, and had nearly killed them before I could get hold of him. He must be chained up in future when I go for a walk. I don't want to be sued for damages!

CHAPTER VII

IN THE DAYS OF MY YOUTH[1]

1904

Early days — Country life—What I might have been—Various incidents—Peacock going to roost—Nature has played pranks with me—I become a publisher!

I WAS born in the country, in the beautiful county of Salop, not far away from the picturesque old town of Ludlow, in the second month of the year 1825, that notable year of bubble companies and commercial disasters in the great cities, and, if I mistake not, a time of rick-burning and thrashing-machine destroying riots in the country. But with all that I had nothing to do. Nature, that kindly mother, meant, I am sure, that I should become a country gentleman, like one "all of the olden time," farming my own estate

[1] Reprinted from *M.A.P.* by kind permission.

with, let me modestly say, an income of a few thousands a year. I confess at once there was nothing in my birth to justify such a well-meaning delusion on the part of mother nature. Still, I really think that had such imaginary circumstances been real I could have lived a happy and contented life. A hunter or two in my stables, a lovely trout stream meandering through my estate, my woods well stocked with game, feathered and furred—hunting, shooting, and fishing would have pleasantly occupied leisure time, and diversified the monotony of the more serious duties appertaining to such a life. The study of agriculture, of horses, of oxen, of sheep and of pigs, the habits and customs of birds in the woods and fish in the rivers—all these things would have been congenial to my nature, but as—I think it was Lord Byron who sang or said—

> "I am not what I might have been,
> So let it pass."

The fates, always at deadly enmity with benignant mother nature, maliciously determined that I should possess none of these joys of life; on the contrary, they decided that I should, of all things in the world,

become a publisher, and be shut up all my days within the brick walls of the greatest city in the universe. Now, I say it without compunction, my chief joy has always been when I have been able at uncertain intervals to break away from this slavery, and be off to the woods, and the fields, and the riverside.

. . . . .

But it is not of the joys and the sorrows of a publisher's life that I am asked to descant. I must go back; if I am to talk of the days of my youth, it means that I must hark back for seventy years and more. The task is not quite so formidable as it looks, seeing that the scenes and incidents of my boyish days are far more vividly depicted on the tablets of my memory than more important scenes of later years. I suppose it is true that one's memory has not retained whatever there may have been of sorrow or sadness in those ancient days, and certain it is that the impression now remaining on my mind is that my young days were a continuous succession of boyish delights. It can hardly be disputed that the country presents infinitely more attractions for a boy, and these far more conducive to a healthy and vigorous

development, than the delicate and effeminate attractions of the town.

My boyhood was spent in an old farmhouse, and I am sure that no boy has led a happier life, or had more really pleasant surroundings than I had for the first fifteen years of my life. My lot was cast in a pleasant place, amid woodland scenery, green meadows, and near by, a lovely trout stream:

> "Fair scenes of childhood's opening bloom,
> For sportive youth to stray in;
> For manhood to enjoy his strength,
> And age to wear away in!

I was in sympathy and harmony with all my surroundings. I knew every bird that haunted the buildings, the hedgerows, and the surrounding woods. I knew all about their nests and eggs; and their colour, their markings, and their size disclosed to me their parentage.

I have, years ago, told in print many of the incidents that memory has brought back to me; and I may as well tell over again one or two of the small comedies and tragedies in real life which befell me as a little boy.[1]

[1] See *Fresh Woods and Pastures New*, published in 1887.

One of the most curious and comic scenes that I can remember was one probably very rarely witnessed even by dwellers in the country. It was a battle-royal between two flocks of turkeys.

I was loitering about the orchard watching the doings of our flock, about a score, industriously at work under the apple trees. The Sultan of our Turks was strutting about in an unusually excited manner, and working himself up into a great passion. He was animated on this occasion, not by the mere vanity of displaying himself to the admiring gaze of his family, but by a wrathful feeling of insulted dignity. His long cockscomb (or whatever else it is called) and his scarlet wattles hung down over his beak and over his cheeks like flaming flags of wrath. He stamped about with his feet, and trailed the points of his down-stretched wings along the ground; he was in a rage.

. . . . .

Looking over into the adjoining field I saw our neighbour's flock, and the Sultan thereof was strutting about in the same preposterous way, now and again uttering a loud note of

defiance, which sounded more like *bother-other-otheration* than anything else. Presently a hen turkey made her way through a gap in the hedge, and began pecking about in our orchard in a make-believe unconscious way, as though she had a perfect right to be there, but knowing all the time that she was a thief and an intruder. She was immediately followed one by one by the whole family, last of all by the commander-in-chief himself, and they spread out in skirmishing order, pretending to be picking up worms. This was altogether too much for our already-excited Sultan; it was aggravating enough to have defiance hurled at him over the hedge, but to have his own territory invaded in this impudent way was altogether beyond his Turkish endurance. Foaming with indignation, he shouted his war-cry, and set his army in battle array. He did not form a square, in accordance with the warlike method of his adopted country—he preferred the plan of his native land. He disposed his troops in a long single line, and then in a trumpet-like voice: "Show me," said he, "whose men you be, that hunt so boldly here?"

Meanwhile the wily chief of the opposing

forces had not been idle; he, too, had marshalled his men, and he hurled back his defiant reply:

> "We list not to declare, said he,
> Nor show whose men we be;
> Yet will we spend our dearest blood,
> Thy chieftest hens to slay."

Our Sultan swore a solemn oath and thus in rage did say:

> "Ere thus I will outbraved be,
> One of us two shall die;
> Let thou and I the battle try,
> And set our men aside."

But the young cocks, and hens, too, were as eager for battle as their chiefs, and wouldn't listen to a single-handed combat; so at it they went, not by any means in a helter-skelter sort of way, as one might have expected from these hot-headed, hare-brained birds. They marched straight up in single line, the two chiefs at the head of their respective columns, until they came within a yard or two of each other, face to face; then our chief gobbled something which sounded like:

> . . . come on, Macduff,
> And cursed be he that first cries, "Hold, enough!"

And so they strutted, and swore, and spat at each other, and the battle began, but in a wary, deliberate fashion. I was amused to see them bowing to each other in what seemed a polite, gentlemanly way; but really they were only manœuvring. It was curious to see their heads bobbing up and down; I wondered when they were going to begin. But turkeys don't fight in a vulgar way, with their whole bodies, beaks, spurs, wings, and legs, like "tame villatic fowls." These birds fought on scientific principles, and only with their beaks. I soon discovered that their method was to try to get hold of each other's lower jaw, and the moment one opened his beak, his opponent would dart at him with incredible swiftness and endeavour to seize that jaw in his mouth.

They were equally matched as to numbers, and the battle raged long and furiously; nearly every bird got hooked by the jaw in this way, and the great struggle was to tug themselves free. So far as I could see they used no other weapon. They made no attempt to strike with their wings or their legs. "When Turk meets Turk, then comes the tug of war." For a

long time victory hung in an equal balance; when all of a sudden the invaders threw up the sponge, turned tail, and beat a dignified retreat.

The conquerors had seemingly had enough of it, for they did not pursue the vanquished; they allowed them, "bag and baggage," to pass in single file through the gap by which they had entered. I don't suppose they would care soon to return.

Izaak Walton, quoting Sir Richard Baker, says:

> "Hops and turkeys, carps and beer,
> Came into England all in one year."

But I believe it is a delusion to suppose that the turkey came first from Turkey, and was therefore so named; he is really a native of America, and no doubt came over with tobacco and other good things.

Did you ever watch a peacock going to roost? If not, my little note of boyish observation may interest you. You remember how Wordsworth described him on his roost:

> "The peacock in the broad ash tree
> Aloft is roosted for the night."

But I have seen him in a less dignified and less

comfortable state of mind. I have watched him going to roost. Then does he present a most comical combination of wounded pride, vanity, humiliation, imbecility, and indecision. I think it is just one of those rare occasions when he hates to be looked at; he seems to know he is going to make a fool of himself. He is far too proud to take up his lodging on the cold ground, or upon a gate, upon the rafters, or top of a shed; nothing less than a strong branch away up in some tall tree for a roost will suit his dignity and self-importance, and I fancy the great trial of his life is that nightly ascent which he seems bound to make, while always in dread of some great disaster either to his neck or big, precious tail. It is laughable to see him peck round as he gradually nears the tree, now and again glancing up, then pecking round, then making believe that he is going to start, and, while he is "hesitating 'twixt the will and the deed," madame, his wife, comes along, and, without any fuss, "takes the leap at her full speed" and reaches the branch. But still he exhibits the most ludicrous indecision. Pecking, or pretending to peck round about, he makes endless at-

tempts to start; he half-opens his wings, and then thinks better of it. Thus have I watched him—

> "Letting I dare not wait upon I would,
> Like the poor cat i' the adage"—

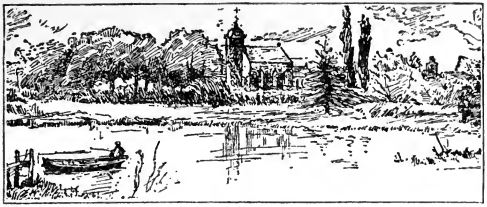
for more than half-an-hour at a time. His courage is at length screwed up; he seems to think it *must* be done, but he cannot venture to make a start from level ground. Like Peter Wilkins's "Flying Woman," he always selects a tree near a steep bank, off whose edge he can launch himself with the least chance of danger to his tail, and so, in the uncertain hope of going up, but always with the accompanying fear that he may go down, away he goes, and really as he flies upwards he has nothing to be ashamed of, for his floating, rather than flying (when he once gets off the ground), with his tail partly spread out like a sail, is most graceful.

If he and his wife happen to be on a friendly footing, he condescends to land himself beside her on the same branch; but if there has been a tiff between them, as frequently happens, he seeks another and a higher branch and roosts by himself. I have never seen him come

down from his perch; he gets up, or, rather, comes down, much too early in the morning.

. . . . . .

I have observed that most of those who have told the story of their youth in your interesting columns have done so to show the truth of Wordsworth's axiom, "The child is the father of the man," and they have grown up to be what Nature intended them to be: the child artist has developed into the celebrated painter; the child actor into the great tragedian; the child singer into the *prima donna*. But with the unimportant individual who tells this story Nature has played pranks. The boy who loved the woods and the green fields, the birds and the beasts, and whom Nature intended to grow up into something higher and better, at length developed into a mere publisher!



CHAPTER VIII

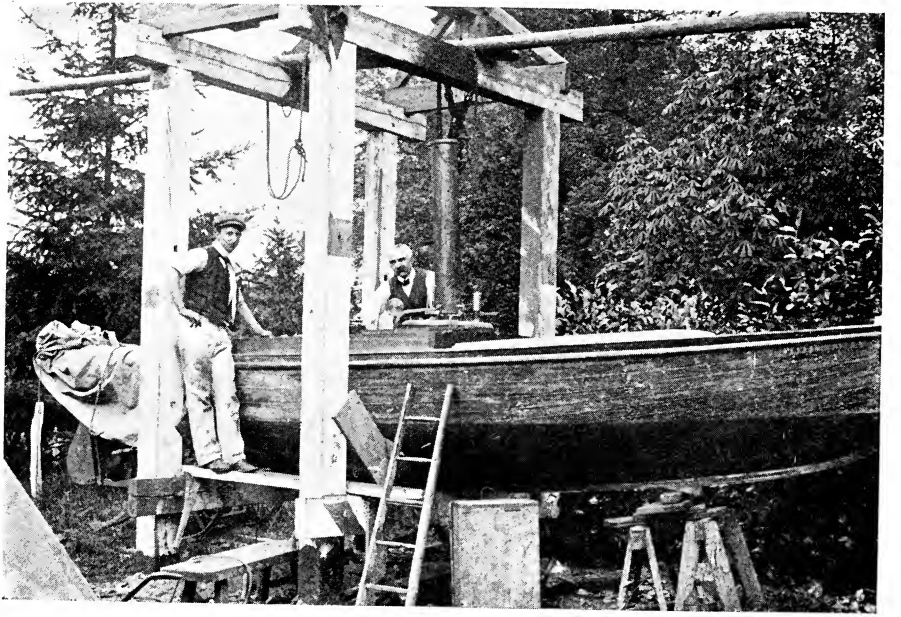
HOW WE LAUNCHED THE *COLUMBIA*

The building of the launch—Transport across country five miles to the river—Will she float?—Various pessimistic opinions—Triumphant success.

I ALWAYS like to begin my story at the beginning, so I will say first of all that my second son in his time has ridden many hobby-horses as well as horses of flesh and blood. In his boyhood he would be a sailor, so he went aboard the *Worcester* training-ship for a time, where one of his contemporaries was the present famous Japanese Admiral Togo; then at the age of about fourteen he took his first voyage to Sydney. He came home—that voyage cured him of his first hobby. Then he must be a farmer. He went to learn farming on a large farm in Shropshire. Then nothing would do

for him but sheep-farming in Queensland; there he spent much time and money and became a first-rate rider of buck-jumpers. Then he came home, married, and set about farming in earnest. His last hobby has been model yacht building, and having, with yachts of his own building, won several prizes and the silver cup for sailing his own yacht on the Round Pond, Kensington Gardens, his ambition grew by what it fed upon. Some time ago he set about the construction of a real steam launch. I know not the exact capacity, but weighing, when afloat, about 30 cwt., with engine and boiler complete, and capable of carrying six people in the bows and six abaft the funnel when well packed in—at all events, easily accommodating six or eight people.

Without any practical knowledge whatever beyond what he had gained in building his little model yachts, he set about the job with his usual enthusiasm. Basing his work on the lines of the most up-to-date models, he enlarged his plans geometrically to the proposed size of his launch. He obtained the proper lengths of teak timber, sawed them into planks for the sides, and other timbers for the framework and



LIFTING THE "COLUMBIA"

To face page 96

keel. Having completed the shell of the boat, he bought a boiler and engine, and with the help of a very good friend of his, who happened to be a practical engineer, the machinery was properly fixed in the launch. Then he finished the work by painting and varnishing and decorating. The *Columbia* was now complete and ready for sea, or, rather, for the river. But (and there is always a troublesome *but*) she was five miles away from the river. During all these long and weary but exciting months he had laboured early and late as no man would have worked for mere pay. Every plank in her was sawn and hewn and bent, every bit of timber, the fixing of every screw, nail, and rivet were the work of his own hands, and not on a slip on the river's bank where she could, by the touch of a button, have gracefully slidden into the water, but, as I have said, five miles away. Our amateur yacht builder was much in the position of Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday. There was the boat, and yonder was the river—five miles away. How was she to be got there?

At last the day came when she was to leave her native home and go to her natural element. The day fixed on was Wednesday, 25th May—

memorable day! I was, of course, invited to witness the grand event. I went down to my son's home the day before. I arrived on a gloomy, cold, disagreeable afternoon in a constant drizzle of rain. Everything looked dreary and disconsolate. There I found my son, his two sons, and a nephew—all three my grandsons—all working away to complete this precious boat. A trolly was in waiting on which she was to be mounted next morning. She had been got out of the shed—heaven knows how—and was there in the open, but under an awning. To accomplish the work of getting the boat on the trolly they had to erect four big eight-inch square posts twelve feet high, the two forming the sides ten feet apart, and these were in width about seven feet apart. Between these posts the boat was fixed on blocks. Overhead were cross-trees for suspending that wonderful bit of engineering ingenuity, differential, or what engineers call chain-blocks, by the use of which one man can easily lift a ton weight. Over and above these posts was a framework, over which the green tarpauling was spread. It was under this tarpauling, the rain dripping down the sides and making pools of mud and sludge all round

the boat, that I found these four enthusiasts at work. The three boys were home for a few days' holiday on account of this wonderful launch. They are famous workers, each being possessed of considerable mechanical skill and knowledge.

Well, they all worked till daylight disappeared; and next morning—the grand morning—they were all up at five o'clock and working away at the final titivation of the launch. And now came the great tug of war. How was that ton-and-a-half launch to be got on the trolly? It was accomplished at last, by infinite labour and the use of the afore-mentioned chain-blocks. It must be remembered that the master was jealous of any outside labour, and would accept of no help whatever, except from those of his own flesh and blood.

The youngest of them, being like his father of a roving disposition, having learnt all there is to be learnt of farming at home—at least, he thinks so—and impelled by

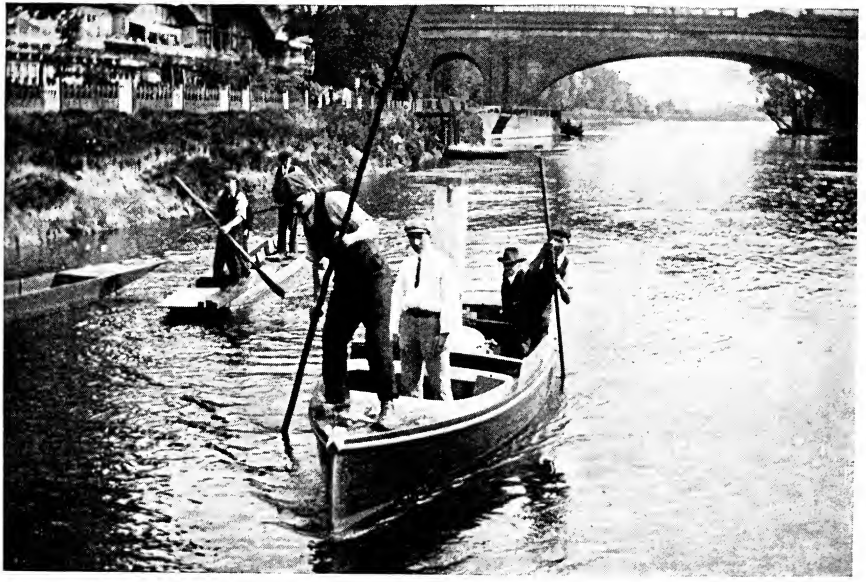
> "Such wind as scatters young men thro' the world
> To seek their fortune further than at home,"

he has made up his mind to seek his fortune in British Columbia. He is now *en route* for that

far-distant territory. It was in order that he may be present at the launching that the day for it was fixed earlier than it otherwise would have been.

When the launch was at last firmly fixed on the trolly, it was necessary to drag the whole thing backwards for about twenty yards over soft gravel saturated with the rain, into which the trolly wheels sank, before, owing to trees and shrubs in the way, it was possible to attach the horses. This hauling had to be done by these young athletes, and manfully they set to work. The chain-blocks were made use of; with these and a long cable fixed round a tree, they pulled away, moving the trolly inch by inch. The chains trailing through the mud, it was necessary to pour a continuous stream of water over them to keep them free. It took these boys two hours to get the trolly and its heavy load over that short twenty yards on to the hard road where the horses could be brought into action.

Kathleen, with her Kodak, and I were amused spectators of the novel and curious scene. The two cart-horses walked off easily with their grotesque load, and the boys followed after



GETTING THE "COLUMBIA" AFLOAT

To face page 100

afoot, chief mourners, as one of them said, following the launch to her watery grave. In about two hours the trolly with its load was triumphantly deposited at Bond's Wharf, Taplow. It was one o'clock by this time, and Mr. Bond's workmen were at dinner. K. and I had followed the launch in our pony-trap, and we arrived at the same time.

Many different opinions were propounded as to how our boat would behave herself in the water. One expressed the opinion that she would certainly dip her bows into the water with her stern in the air; another thought she would dip her stern and lift her bows to the sky; more than one seemed to think she was lopsided and must certainly capsize; another, again, was sure, and I confess I was of the same pessimistic way of feeling, that she would most probably go right down to the bottom and be no more seen.

When Mr. Bond, son of the great boat and yacht builder, came down, he examined our amateur performance with a professional and critical eye, and he said quietly:

"I think she will do."

The master amateur builder put on an air of

nonchalance as much as to say, "Oh, I know she's all right," but I am sure with many an inward qualm and misgiving that possibly, after all his toil, she may be all wrong.

She was now delivered over into Mr. Bond's hands, and her owner became a mere spectator. Ten men were set to work to get the launch off the trolly, and put her on to their own slip trolly, which was to carry her down into the river.

What with shouting and hauling and blocking and rolling, and lifting up and holding on and letting her down, shoving her sideways ahead and sideways astern, it took those ten men nearly an hour to get the launch on the slip.

Our boys are what may be called natural total abstainers, but our friendly engineer had provided a bottle of champagne which we, the elder ones, drank to the success of the *Columbia*. It was intended that K. should baptize the yacht by breaking the bottle against her sides, but somehow the ceremony was overlooked.

At last the time came when the blocks were removed, and the slip trolly, with her precious burden, glided slowly and steadily down the incline into deep water, and when the trolly and blocks were free of her—hurrah! There she

sat straight and upright, like a duck on the water, and just as if she had been used to it all her life.

"Look," cried the master, "she's exactly down to the water-line all round. I knew she'd be all right." And the practical yacht builder said quietly:

"She'll do."

Now has come the time for getting up steam. The coal bunks had to be filled with coals and the boiler with water and the fire lighted. It was nearly an hour before any steam could be got up. At last it came. Our friendly engineer, who acted as stoker, gave a shrill whistle, and shouted, "Let her go," and off she went down stream. Our professional builder cried:

"Try her up stream." Round she came, and off up stream she went for a hundred yards or so, and the practical man said, "Yes, I think she'll do."

Then the yacht came alongside, took on board the master and the three boys, and off they went down stream for Datchet, about twelve miles down. They arrived there all right. K. and her friends had taken many photographs of the various scenes. There was

no overwhelming crowd to witness this wonderful event; there may have been one or two listless idlers about to whom our yacht presented not the least possible attraction—why should it? Boats of vastly more importance are slipped from that wharf every day.

K. and I drove our pony quietly back through the lovely scenery near Burnham Beeches, through Farnham Royal, and so home.

The amateur yachtsmen left their yacht at Datchet, and they had a four-mile walk home, where they arrived about nine o'clock, well tired, for had they not been incessantly at work on the boat since five o'clock in the morning? But the enthusiasm of amateur boat-builders is unbounded. Early next morning found them again at Datchet to paint and polish and practise yachtsmanship on their new toy, and I took train at Slough for London.

I may say that in the eyes of an amateur at least our launch looked as graceful, as pretty, as jaunty, and up to date as if she had sprung into being from the hands of a professional craftsman.

CHAPTER IX

THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD'S REEL

An account of the reel once used by James Hogg—Sundry adventures in connection with it—A bet of a rump and Dozen—B. with spinning minnow and Cyril with Phin's Delight.

THE Ettrick Shepherd's Reel! Everybody knows that James Hogg was an angler, and doubtless most people have read those most delightful essays, entitled "Noctes Ambrosianæ," which first charmed the readers of *Blackwood's Magazine*, and ran through about forty volumes of it during twenty years of the first half of the last century; of course, those essays have long since been gathered and preserved in a handsome volume. Christopher North, the author of these "Noctes" (Professor John Wilson), was also an enthusiast with the rod, and the humour of these essays is never more exquisite than when the subject of fishing is introduced into them.

It is an interesting circumstance that almost accidentally the actual reel (or "pirn," as he called it) used by the Ettrick Shepherd has fallen into our hands. The reel itself has nothing of special character about it, but the simple fact that it is the identical reel once used by "The Shepherd," and was talked about in that wonderful comedy of the "Noctes," throws a real halo of romance about it. Its story is well authenticated, as I shall show.

The Story of the Shepherd's Slate

But before giving the story of the reel I must give the story of the Ettrick Shepherd's slate, as that leads up to it:—

An angler had recommended the present owner of the fishing reel used by James Hogg to communicate with the editor of the *Fishing Gazette* about it, and, needless to say, he was delighted to have an opportunity of seeing the very reel that was used by the hand which wrote so many charming songs and ballads. The present owner, who received it from his uncle, in sending the reel sent with it an old manuscript which he found among his uncle's papers referring to it, and also to the famous

slate on which the shepherd put down the first drafts of his verses, afterwards, of course, transferring them to paper.

What ultimately became of this slate was known probably only to the writer of this account, the late Mr. A. H. Boyd, from which I quote:

"Its end was a sad one, and, for the fun of the thing, I proceed now to give a little account of it as told me by my father long ago. He and my grandfather had driven over one day from Innerleithen to Altrive to spend the day with Mr. Hogg, and a merry and delightful day they had with him. The shepherd was in fine fettle—in great spirits, and delighted them exceedingly by his singing of 'Come all ye jolly shepherds,' and a host more of his fine songs. But 'a' gude things maun hae an end,' and, the shades of evening beginning to descend, my father and grandfather began to think of home and the long drive before them of some sixteen miles or so. Ere they took their departure, however, Mr. Hogg insisted that, as a little souvenir of the happy day they had all had together, my father would accept of this slate—which, as you may be sure, he

was only too delighted to do. But as they were not going just yet, the slate was set up on the mantelpiece to be ready for the lifting when they were to set off. This they did some little while afterwards amid many hearty leave-takings and reciprocal good wishes; and they had driven a couple of miles or so, when in an instant it flashed across my father's mind that they had come away without the slate! In the excitement of leave-taking it had been forgotten. How very provoking! And strongly inclined were they to drive back again for it, but did not do so, contenting themselves with thinking that they would just get it some other time. So on the shepherd's mantelpiece it was left standing—and left standing very unfortunately; for the next morning, on the servant coming in to 'do out' the room, and tidying about the mantelpiece, she somehow or other accidentally knocked the slate down, when, hitting the fender or hearthstone, it was shivered into fifty bits! So that was the end of the famous slate, and an ill end truly."

Then follows an account of the shepherd's fishing rod and the old reel or "pirn," which doubtless was familiar to Sir Walter Scott,

Allan Cunningham, Professor Wilson, and others who spent at Tibbie Shiels those ambrosial nights made famous by "Christopher North."

The Story of the Reel

After describing the loss of the slate, Mr. A. H. Boyd goes on:—

"When Mr. Hogg died my father, as a keepsake, got his fishing rod; and am not sure but there were some other little things. The rod was a trout one, with nothing very particular about it. Was of a reddish colour with a sort of black marking, more or less distinct, all over it, and the butt half hollow for the reception of the top joints. It was Charles's rod when we were at Innerleithen, after that I do not know what became of it—it was pretty well worn, though it should have been carefully preserved.

"The reel or 'pirn' belonging to it I always used on my own rod during later years up to the last times of my being at Innerleithen, when we were at Portobello, in Vallance's time. And, with my rods, and the valuable 'spinning machine' *ought* to be there yet. I often think of them and am much concerned about them

all. The Hogg reel was a little old brass thing, and as *plain* as plain could be; but *greatly I prized it*, but never told anybody whose it had been (though perhaps Vallance knew) in case it should be stolen. The spinning machine am very anxious about.

A. H. B."

I have given "A. H. B.'s" phraseology just as he wrote it. He died in 1903, and must have made the notes about the reel and slate a good many years ago.

As a great admirer of "crusty, musty Christopher," as Tennyson once dubbed him in return for being snubbed by Wilson, I give the following extract from the "Noctes," chiefly because it mentions the unusual word *pirn*.

The First of June

"The first of June.—It was on the first of June that Cyril Thornton and Alex. Ballantyne proceeded to Peebles to decide a bet of a rump and Dozen—B. with the spinning minnow, and Cyril with Phin's Delight.

"*Shepherd:* 'Watty Ritchie 'll beat you baith with the May Fly if it be on, or ony length aneath the stones.'

"*North:* 'You will all be sorry to hear that our worthy friend Watty is laid up with a bad rheumatism, and can no longer fish the Megget water and the lochs and return to Peebles in the same day.'

"*Shepherd:* 'That's what a' your waders come to at last. Had it not been, Mr. North, for your plowterin in a' the rivers and lochs of Scotland, baith saut water and fresh, like a Newfoundland dog, or, rather, a seal or an otter, you needna had that crutch aneath your oxter. Cornnall Cyril, saw ye him ever a-fishin'?'

"*Thornton:* 'Never but once, for want of better ground, in the Crinan Canal, out of a coal barge for braisies, when I was a red-gowned student at Glasgow.'

"*Shepherd:* 'Oh! but you should hae seen him in Loch Owe, or the Spey. In he used to gang, out, out, and ever so far out frae the pint o' a promontory, sinkin', aye furder and furder down, fust to the waistband o' his breeks, then up to the middle button o' his waistcoat, then to the verra breast, then to the oxters, then to the neck, then to the verra chin o' him; sae that you wannered how he could

fling the flee, till last o' a' he would plump richt out o' sicht, till the Highlander o' Ben Cruachan thocht him drooned; but he was na born to be drooned—no he—indeed. Sae, he taks to the soomin', and strikes awa' wi' one arm like yoursel', sir, for the tother had haud o' the rod—and, could ye believe't, though it's as true as scriptur', fishin' a' the time . . . and gettin' footin' on the yellow sand, he but gies himsel' a shake, and ere the sun looks out o' the clud has hyucket a four-pounder, whom in four minutes (for it's *a multiplying pirn the cratur uses*) he lands gasping through the giant gills, and glitterin' wi' a thousand spots, streaks and stars, on the shore. That's a pictur' o' North's fishin' in days o' yore. But look at him noo—look at him noo!—wi' that auld farrant face o' his, no unlike a pike's, crunkled up in his chair . . . the hauns o' him a' covered wi' chalk stanes, his legs like winnlestraes, and his knees but knobs. "Vanity o' vanities! all is vanity."'

"*North:* 'By the by, James, who won the salmon medal this season on the Tweed?'

"*Shepherd:* 'Wha, think ye, could it be, ye coof, but mysel'? I beat them a' by two stane

wecht. Oh, Mr. North, but it wad hae done your heart gude to hae daundered along the banks wi' me on the 25th and seen the slauchter. At the third thraw the snout o' a famous fish sookit in ma flee, and for some seconds keepit stedfast in a sort o' eddy that gaed sullenly swirlin' at the tail o' yon pool—I needna name't. The flee began to bite him on the tongue, for by a jerk o' the wrist I had slightly gien him the butt—an' sunbeam never swifter shot frae heaven, than shot that saumon beam down intil an' out i' the pool below, and along the saugh-shallows or you come to Jumper Bank. Clap—clap—clap—at the same instant played a couple o' cushets frae an aik aboon my head, a the *purr o' the pirn*, that let out in a twinkling a hunner yards of Mr. Phin's best; strang aneuch to haud a cill or a rhinoceros.'"

James Hogg was born in 1772 and died in 1835.

CHAPTER X

FERGY THE GUIDE, AND HIS MORAL AND INSTRUCTIVE LIES ABOUT BEASTS, BIRDS, AND FISHES.[1]

It is a fact too well known to be disputed that all anglers are so honest and so truthful in all the stories they have to tell about their fishing exploits that I am sure they will understand and appreciate the yarns, bits of which I propose to quote for their edification, from this remarkable book. Ferguson the guide, called Fergy for short, was squat, muscular and brown, with small dark eyes peering from under a drooping brim. His language was simple and direct, unadorned with the graces of rhetoric, and unmarred by the crimpings of grammar. He knew all there is to be known about the beasts, birds, and fishes, and the trees and herbs of the great

[1] By H. S. Canfield. David Nutt. London, 1905.

forests and lakes to be found from the Mississippi River to Hudson's Bay. His business in life was to act as a guide for sportsmen, particularly fishermen, naturalists, and those enthusiasts who think it a fine thing to get away from the "madding crowd" of the cities and business and off for camping out in the woods. Fergy was the very man to take them anywhere and instruct them in all the mysteries of the woods, and explain to them the habits and manners and customs of the inhabitants thereof. In all these things Fergy was a truthful adept; but, beyond and above all, Fergy was a marvellous spinner of yarns. Not the least remarkable thing about him was the cool, calm, matter-of-fact way in which he would pour forth the most astounding lies for the instruction of the "city fellers." The book is mostly made up of Fergy's yarns. Although, as I have said, anglers are naturally the most truthful of the human race, I am sure that if surprised they will not be shocked at the droll exaggerations they will find in this volume. The stories are all too long to quote any one of them at full length, as I should like to do, but I will give a few specimens to give an idea of Fergy's humour.

"Talkin' about fishin'," said Fergy, "the other man," not having spoken for half-an-hour, "talkin' about fishin' and th' funny things a man sees sometimes when his eyes ain't shut, reminds me o' a time when I got tired loafin' round Boyd's Hotel and wanted to do a do on m' own reel. I go down to Long Lake an' dump m'se'f inter a piroog, an' I go across an' pike along out inter th' woods. I pike for 550 yards straight as a teal flies when it means buisness, an' I run bang against a little lake I never seen before in my life . . . an' I wanter say as it were broke from end to end with ripples made by the small-mouth bass. They was two million of 'em, or mebbe they was three million. . . . I didn't have no more bait as would catch a starvin' minner in a washbowl. I thought hard for three an' a quarter minits, an' then I out wi' th' tail of me red flannel shirt and tore ofi a hunk big enough to wrap a penknife in. . . . Now a little piece o' red flannel ain't the most eatful thing in th' worl', but, say, them fish was crazy f'r it. It hadn' touched the water when twenty-three of em made a dash f'r it, an' one of 'em that weighed $4\frac{1}{4}$ lb. got it right in the left gill. Then begun the dadbingedest hurroosh whatever. . . .

I ketched sixty-one red-eyed bass in sixty minits flat. That catch weighed 152 lb. 11 oz., an' they wa'nt a 'big mouth' in the bunch."

Fergy backs his statement with such a wealth of small details that the listener is forced into mute acquiescence, if not into outspoken belief. He had a way of measuring up the other guides as well as the "city fellers."

"Jawy fellers f'm Noo Yawk comes out in the summer an' worrits us some, but by the time they gits ready to go home we got 'em tamed so's they's willin' to set still and let a man talk w'at knows how to talk. Guidin' suits me. I gits $2 a day an' board, an' I can stan' a lot o' lip f'r that much money.

"The meanes' guide I ever bumped agin were Alek Hume. He were a Scotchmun, with French blood in him and a dash of Leech Lake Indian. I don't know where you'd go to find a meaner cross than that. . . . He smoked my tobacker an' broke my pipe, an' tol the guests at the hotel that I war'n't no good. . . . A tree, 110 ft. high and 6 ft. 2 in. thick, fell on him las' winter up in Rube Smith's camp, and mashed him flatter 'n a ladybug, but that don't gimme back my tobacker."

The story of the old maskallonge of the Bend is amusing, but too long to quote sufficiently to give a fair idea of the fight.

"'The other man' picks out a saplin' 22 ft. high, an' he says to me to trim the limbs off'n it clear to top; I done it. 'Now,' he says, 'get as high as you kin an' bend it down to the ground.' I swung down th' top. It were a hickory saplin', an' tough as a boardin'-house steak. He fastened on the end o' the chain to it, an' then we let it fly back straight. That left 75 ft. o' chain, or mebbe 76 ft. . . . He baited the big hook with a bull frog that mus' a bin a foot an' a arf long from nose to hind-leg tip, an' he mus' a weighed 2 lb. 10 oz., or mebbe 11. He dropped the frog inter the water an' hustled for shore.

"We sit down on th' bank and waited. The musky wasn't at home, but in half-an-hour we saw that float go under in a flash. Then begin the durndest circus you ever see. They was a swirl in the water like a whirlpool was there, an' a fish come up two yard above th' top o' it, and went back with a kerflummux that sent little waves over the lilypads five hundred yards in every direction. . . . Fust he'd go down

head foremost, then tail foremost. Then he'd hit the river with the broad o' his side, an' it sounded like a gun had went off. An' whenever he was up his head was shakin' to an' fro, an' his bulldog jaws was snappin', an' his little eyes was like the eyes o' a crazy man. . . . Then he began to swim roun' in little circles. Then he stopped still, and five minutes afterwards we could see the whitey-yellow o' his belly showin' in the roiled stream. We went out an' towed him ashore. . . . He was the only musky I ever see die o' plain worry. I guess it was shame as killed him. On the scales he run up just 110 lb. 13 oz. before he was dressed. He measured 6 ft. 1½ in. from his front teeth to his tail fork.

Fergy has a good deal to say about *skunks* and their dominant intellects.

"A skunk," said Fergy, "may be close by, ur he may be a mile away. Th' smell bein' here ain' no sign that the smell-maker's here. . . . I killed one onct, an' he fell on a flat rock out'n th' woods. I went by that way a week atter, an' the rock smelt just as strong as it did five minits atter I done the killin'; a month later an' it still smelt—nex spring an' it smelt yet."

This chapter about skunks is very amusing. Fergy says:—

"Skunks is mos' s'prisin' things. Skunks is got sense like a lead horse. They c'n tell four hundred yards off in thick woods whether or not you got a gun. Ef you got a gun you don' see no skunk. Ef you ain't got a gun the skunk gits right in your path and stays there.

"The neares' you get to him the more he humps his back. He just waits f'r you. He knows in reason that you cain't come much closer. What's the end o' that? You gotten to git out'n the way. It do make a man mad to have to dodge an' creep through the brush, giving the road to a measly thing like a skunk, but you gotter sneak roun'. Cose some skunks is got more sense as other skunks, but they all got sense. I knowed a skunk onct——"

But I must not tell that story, it is too long and too good. He tells the story of the pink-bellied frog of Swamp Lake.

"Frogs," says Fergy, "is funny things. They differs. Some o' 'em ain't got no more knowhow as a' arf-Injun Frenchmun full o' Norwegian beer, an' some o' 'em could len' you sense and never miss it. Frogs in ginrul is

near human. They'll snigger ef you tickle 'em, they'll cry ef you hol' 'em and hurt 'em bad. They plays jokes on one 'nuther arter dark, an' laughs fit to shake they upper tooths out. One mornin' I goes over t' Swamp Lake t' git frogs f'r bait——"

Then comes an astounding yarn. "Forty millyun billyun frogs was trying to outdo one 'nuther," and among 'em was the big pink-bellied frog. The story occupies many pages, and it is a yarn! I shall close up this story with Fergy's description of two of those city fellers whom Fergy generally calls "the other man."

"One time a young nat'ralis' feller come here lookin' f'r mateeryul out'n which he were goin' t' get rich, offered me $5 apiece for woodcock aigs. I worked a week an' foun' four aigs an' took 'em to him, an' says I, 'Money in the han' an' licker in the glass.' 'Them's jay-birds' aigs,' says he, an' went inside the hotel. I'd a got him by the leg an' swinged him roun' an roun' ef he'd a come out, but he wouldn't come."

"In Augus' a chap blowed in with a liv'ry waggin all to hisself. They was th' driver an'

him an' jus' boxes. I thinks to myse'f, here's a shoregood feller to get into th' woods with, f'r he's got things to eat f'm alfybet to izzard. He hops down f'm th' waggin-seat an' he says, 'Is Fergy the guide here?' says he, an' I says, 'I be.' He says, 'I heard o' you a many times,' says he. 'They tells me,' says he, 'that you're a good, careful, sober, truthful man,' he says, an' I says, 'I be.' He says, 'I need you f'r thirty days. Just pick out a camp an' take my things to it, an' you'll have the happies' mont' o' your life,' he says. I looked at th' boxes, an' I smiles. . . . This feller, he broke open his boxes that night, an' I stood roun' waiting to stick a tooth inter som'p'n' worth rememberin'. Well, sir, he had butterfly nets, an' nets weaved like spider webs, an' books with funny names, an' the Jim Hill knows what he didn' have, 'cep' som'p'n to eat. . . . He were a pale feller, with his breas' sunk in. He had a long face, an' his forrid stuck out so's it made his head look like a lobsided shack. He says to me nex mornin', chewin' ham, 'This is glorious. The doctor ordered me to come out here 'cos I bin studyin' too hard. I been writin' a book called Esoteric Entomology ur the Divine Thisness o'

th' Other in eight vollums. I got the first one nearly begun,' he says. 'I'm f'om Bosting,' says he, ''and we eats on'y black beans f'r thirty days,' says he. This feller's name was Wentworth Emerson Boggs."

"I notice that city folks knows lots we don' know, an' yet they ain' got horse sense. Ef I tell 'em th' planes' things they don' believe 'em, an' ef s'm other guide tells 'em a lie they swaller it like it was Canuck wusky 150 proof. Things happen in these woods—lots of 'em—that a man has to have horse sense to un'erstan' an' believe."

CHAPTER XI

ON THE SHELF, 1907

How it Feels to be "Retired"

Reprinted from the *Daily Chronicle* by permission

On the shelf—How does it feel to be "retired"?—Nothing to do—Some other old boys—Shall I shave for the remainder of my days?—A long white beard—Firm resolution.

How does it feel to be retired? How does it feel to have nothing to do? This question is quite new to me; this is my first "retired" morning; for, although I began to retire a fortnight ago, it has taken me all that time to settle seriously down to the new occupation of having nothing to do. Now, at length, everything is settled, and here I am in my arm-chair, asking myself for a job. Retirement doesn't mean relapse into idleness and vacuity; rather than

this I would prefer to stick to my post till death releases me. It only means freedom and change of occupation.

That respectable old humbug, as he called himself, Barnum, the great showman, once told me that he retired from business for a short time, and he began to feel ill; he sent for his doctor. The doctor said, "There's nothing the matter with you. Go back to business at once, or you'll die of that dire disease called 'Nothing to do'!" He went back to business, and lived ten years afterwards. Well, I cannot go back to business. My friends tell me I am too old and imbecile; they want young blood in business, to stir it up, and make it rush and boom; some of them even favour the notion, held by certain wild and savage nations in remote corners of the globe, that old men are useless encumberers of the ground and ought to be tomahawked, or shot, or electrocuted, to make room for the rising generation. I disagree with them, *toto cælo!*

As I have no desire to lapse into idleness, I must begin to regulate my doings by certain fixed rules of conduct. There are two points which strike me that I must consider at once

and decide on promptly; the first is about getting up in the morning, and the other whether I shall shave or not shave for the rest of my days.

In the days of my slavery, which already seem to be away back in the past, it had been my custom and compulsory habit for some scores (yes, scores!) of years to eat my porridge at 7.30 A.M. Shall it be 8, or 8.30, or say 9 o'clock in the future? Why not? There is no compulsion now. "You can do as you like, you are your own master"—so says the tempter; "why make a fuss about lying a-bed for an extra hour or two. It will do you good; you are old and need it." I have hitherto resisted this insinuating tempter, and, through much tribulation and exercise of conscience—I loathe the idea of such self-indulgence—I have hitherto come off conqueror. It has been settled that I must get up at my usual hour.

After breakfast, on this my first morning of freedom, instead of sallying forth to my old work I sat me down in my arm-chair, and I began to think profoundly—so profoundly that in a short time I fell asleep, and there for an hour and a half I enjoyed that delicious, balmy,

childlike slumber against which I had been so vigorously contending while I lay abed. I began to wonder whether my daily sitting down in my arm-chair in order to think profoundly would always and naturally induce an hour or two of refreshing sleep. "If so," says the tempter, "why the deuce may you not just as well, or indeed a good deal better, take it out in bed?"

I am but a young beginner in this retirement business; there is, however, one obvious thing that has to be done. I must take my daily constitutional; every retired old boy does that; they swarm about here; one meets them everywhere; in all stages of decline towards the setting sun; now a decrepit old fellow toddling wearily along, with a little dog at his heels; now a younger example, like the "Justice"—

> "In fair round belly with good capon lined,
> Full of wise saws and modern instances."

I met him yesterday; he buttonholed me. He would talk politics, said it was his favourite subject. He told me that the country was going rapidly to the dogs, and that the present Prime Minister dared not wag his own tail—his followers did that for him. With that modern instance of a "wise saw," I managed

to get away. And so for the future I am to be one of these old boys! I foresee that in taking my walks abroad one of the objects I shall have to keep steadily in view will be to dodge the "round-bellied Justice." I have a little dog already.

Now let me revert to the second point I proposed to consider, namely, "Shall I shave or shall I not shave for the remainder of my days?" The question naturally arises out of the one I have already decided, about getting up in the morning. If I don't shave of a morning can I, in view of the decision already arrived at, lie abed a quarter of an hour longer? It is a subtle one; it savours somewhat of sophistry; let me think it out: I am bound to confess, now I come to think about it, though it had never occurred to me before, I don't much like the operation of shaving. It is tedious now, and, of course, as I grow older and more shaky the more certain shall I be to cut myself now and then, and perhaps some day or other very severely. What then are the advantages of not shaving? In the first place I relieve myself of an irksome task, and I hate being shaved by a barber. When undergoing that

operation I not unfrequently figure to myself the possibility that I may be in the hands of a maniac, who may take a sudden fancy to cut my throat. See what an opportunity he has! There am I with my hands and arms bound round with a napkin, my chin upraised, my nose seized by the left hand of a ruthless savage, my throat temptingly exposed, and with a razor wielded in his right hand the temptation to dash it through my windpipe must be quite irresistible!—I don't like the idea at all.

Again, if I don't shave, what a hope springs up in my bosom that some day I may present myself to my friends with a long white beard flowing like Aaron's down my breast. What dignity, what wisdom is there not conveyed by a flowing white beard!

I have been an unwilling shaver for more than sixty years; for about forty of these years I shaved both sides of my face (barring side whiskers) with my right hand, whilst my left hand knew nothing of what his brother was doing. Then one morning I stumbled across the word ambidexterity; I said to myself, "Why not apply it to thy chin?" I tried it at once, and to my delight I found that my left hand

was quite as good an operator on the left side of my face as was my right hand on the right side. Through all the generations of humanity the right hand has always been regarded as superior to the left: whereas, as a matter of fact, the sinister palm is equal in every respect to the dexter. You see it at once when you set the dexter to do the sinister's work, *e.g.* to shave your left cheek. This, however, is all by the way.

The question of shaving or not shaving has more in it than is at first apparent: (1) If I continue to shave as hitherto the excuse for infringing on rule one is exploded; (2) If I don't shave what good do I do? I save myself from a daily irksome task. I gain a quarter of an hour (whether for bed or work), and best of all I gain a long, flowing, venerable white beard! These considerations, *prima facie*, should decide the question: but let us go a little deeper.

I am blessed with a large family of grandchildren, several of them approaching womanhood, and nice girls they are, though I say it. It has been their invariable practice from their very earliest childhood to give me sweet kisses

at least twice a day—morning at their uprising and evening at bedtime. Well! I tried an experiment — one day I purposely did not shave, and when they came one after the other to give me their morning salutation every one of them cried out, "Oh! grandpa, that's too bad!" and that was because I had given each of them a little twitch of my rough chin! "If," said I to myself, "such things happen in the green tree, what will happen in the dry? What will happen in a week's time," when, to slightly misquote Shakespeare:—

> "My chin new reap'd
> Shows like a stubble land at harvest home."

I am sure they won't kiss me any more! Am I then to deprive myself of these daily sweet kisses for evermore? These sweet osculatory operations which have been the solace and pleasure of my old age for many a day? No, I won't. That settles the question. Shaving will go on as heretofore.

CHAPTER XII

COUNTRY RAMBLES, 1909–1911

Country rambles—A beautiful toad—A stag-beetle—A seven-mile walk—In the woods—The angler and weasels—The fool and the fly—Life and adventures of a yellow-hammer—An urchin would a-wooing go.

A BEAUTIFUL toad—"ugly and venomous" he may be, yet he looked quite beautiful, with a whole Chinese alphabet scored on his back—was sitting squat on his haunches beside his hole, basking in the summer sun like an alderman after a substantial lunch, philosophically contemplating the pleasant scenery surrounding him. His serenity was rudely disturbed. Suddenly a great stag-beetle dropped from somewhere and sat down beside him, and fixed him with his glittering eyes. You would think that he had never, in his walks abroad, met

with a stag-beetle before. He was perfectly terrified. That alderman with a highwayman's pistol—"Stand and deliver!"—at his head could not have been more astonished or frightened. The way he turned his head and glanced round to get one look at his enemy, and then precipitately dropped into his hole, presented a truly comical scene. The fierce look and ugly claws of that beetle made him think, perhaps, of the "precious jewel" that he carried in his head, and that the beetle wanted it, and so he discreetly disappeared. Let me say a good word for toads in general; they have always suffered from misrepresentation and persecution. In the old days they were associated with witches and sorcerers, and have been condemned as disgusting, odious, venomous creatures—the truth being that they are not venomous. Gilbert White has not much to say about toads, but he says, "The venom of toads has not yet been proved." There seems now to be no doubt the toad does produce a highly-nauseous secretion from its skin, which is most unpleasant to other animals, but it is not venomous. Notwithstanding his reputation for evil-doing, the toad

may be said to be a highly useful, perfectly harmless, inoffensive, and very timid creature.

. . . . . .

I started off this morning for a six or seven mile ramble along turnpike roads, green lanes, and through shady woods, and I never saw a human being on his feet—the art of walking is gradually dying out. I saw, perhaps, scores of people on "bikes," or on those bumping noisy things called motor-bikes; children going to school on bikes, milkmaids going to milk or to the village post on bikes. No one in these parts ever thinks of using his legs if he wants to go a quarter of a mile from home. Bikes, motor-bikes, motor-cars, motor-'buses—all dashing along at the rate of forty miles an hour (in spite of the law), as if, like Tam o' Shanter's mare, they were being pursued by some unearthly demons—rolling along on clouds of dust, poisoning themselves by the suffocating smells of their predecessors, and poisoning me—a solitary pedestrian—by the noxious fumes they leave behind them. All this is done "in the pursuit of pleasure"—it is difficult to see where the pleasure comes in! Bah! I am glad at last to have reached the

gate that leads into the wood, and glad am I to sit on that gate awhile and think of the follies and vanities of human beings.

> "Shall we their fond pageant see?
> Lord, what fools these mortals be!"

Now in my old age I am beginning to take the Darwinian view of things. Darwin was but a small boy when I was launched upon this vale of tears, within a few bow shots of his birthplace, so I seem to have some natural affinity with him. Human beings seem to me to be just now in a kind of transition state—they are not exactly what they were in our early days, and they are not precisely what they will be. They dropped their tails "in the days that were earlier," and may it not be safely assumed that before many centuries are passed they will drop their legs, and be born with wheels under them instead of legs—such is the present tendency. "Coming events cast their shadows before."

Now let me get along into these woods, where I expect to find peace and tranquillity We can take things leisurely and look about us; we need not be in a hurry, there is no one to worry us. We have this vast expanse of

woodland all to ourselves. My chief companions hitherto have been the flies. There has been a never-ending supply of them, and one wonders where they come from. Do the same flies gang all the way with us? Or do they change unperceived and gradually? I wonder if they accompany motor-cars at fifty miles an hour?—or perhaps it is one of the small blessings of motor-cars that flies cannot catch or keep up with them. Anyway, they are a persistent and perpetual nuisance, buzzing and tickling one on nose and chin and neck and hands; now and then getting under one's spectacles, and making a great fizzle and fuss to get out again.

In the solemn, silent, solitary woods I knew I should be free of cycles and motors and clouds of dust, but the lively flies followed and bothered me more than ever. When I passed through this wood four or five weeks ago, the bracken was just beginning to peep through the dead remains of other years, and blue-bells and wood-anemones and primroses were in full bloom. Now they have disappeared, and the fern is in full feathery leaf, six feet high, and adds a beauty of its own to the woodland

glades. I became my own footometer and counted my steps. Fifteen hundred steps I counted, and then it seemed to me that, although I was following a well-worn footpath, it was leading me in the wrong direction. The wood in most parts is composed of young trees in full vigour of growth, having their origin and roots in the very heart of old stumps which must have seen many a similar crop growing up from their vitals since they themselves were young. In Burnham Beeches, close at hand, the trees were pollarded once for all in Cromwell's time at about ten feet from the ground. Here the custom seems to have been to cut the original trees close to the ground, leaving the old roots to supply new vigour to an ever-recurring growth.

There is roomy space between each tree, the ground being now covered by the leafy accumulations of many generations, thus forming soft but very treacherous walking, as I soon found; for, thinking I could save a mile or two, I left the beaten track and made a dash into the unknown.

I got along bravely for a time, in what I guessed to be a south-westerly direction, but I

soon came to a barrier of brushwood undergrowth, composed of ferns above my head interlaced with the long straggling arms of blackberry briars, pitfalls hidden by leaves, and all sorts of impenetrable impediments. I had literally to force my way, like Bottom the weaver—

> "Through bog, through bush, through brake, through briar."

I was doomed to struggle on for two weary hours, at length finding myself close to the turnpike road, where the footpath, if I had stuck to it, would have safely delivered me in a few minutes. Even now I could not get into the road, for although there are many gaps in the hedgerow they were all fenced with barbed wire. At last I found a hole through which I could crawl on hands and knees. I did get partly through, but to my sorrow I found that what I took to be innocent young oak branches were simply a natural covering for barbed wire, which held me tight by coat and trousers. Thus I found myself suspended on a high bank, six feet above the road, and struggling to get free. I trembled lest any one should see the plight I was in. A tall parson and his son, on bikes, saw me, I am sure, but, like proud Pharisees

as they were, they dashed by me on the other side; and I was really very glad, for I didn't need their help, and should have shuddered at their sympathy. I freed myself at last, and descended into the road. I reached home two hours after lunch time—and was happy.

Even walking on turnpike roads and in green lanes, and rambling in woods, is not such a pure, unmixed delight as "beer and skittles" after all; but it has its compensations. Our eyes are charmed and rested by an infinite variety of rural scenery, our ears are delighted by the songs of birds, and our senses are soothed by the gentle soughing of the wind in the tree-tops. I envy not your "White Cities" and "Madding Crowds" and Olympian Games.

"'Mid pleasures and *tournaments* you are welcome to roam;
But for me, let me say, there's no place like home!"

Angler and Weasels

By chance I recently came across the following yarn in the *Sporting Magazine*, vol. v., 1820:—

"Returning from angling in the Lune, near Kirby Lonsdale, he saw a weasel near the river side busily employed among grass. He gave it

a stroke with his rod, upon which it raised a violent outcry and made off towards a wall. On his approaching a stile over which he had to pass, a great number of the animals came chattering out of the wall to meet him and offered an attack. He first made a hasty retreat, but on further consideration he determined to oppose them. He met with a very warm reception; the first assailants made an intrepid charge upon him, striking their puny claws into his trousers, through which they slightly wounded him in the front of his thighs. Numerous attempts were made all round him to get up to his head. The attacks were made by about twenty weasels, independent of a number stationed on the old wall. Such was the violence and perseverance of the ferocious animals that had the object been a timid female they would certainly have destroyed their victim."

I never heard of a similar attack, nor, of course, can I vouch for the truth of this story; it is an angler's yarn, *ergo*, presumably true.

The Fool and the Fly

I by chance was reading, a night or two ago, one of those charming little pocket volumes of

"The World's Classics," published by Mr. Henry Frowde. The volume was Leigh Hunt's *Essays and Sketches*. The essay to which I would ask my readers' attention for a moment is the one on "Izaak Walton." I was delighted to find in the opening paragraph this sentence;—

"The anglers are a race of men who puzzle us. We do not mean for their patience, which is laudable; nor for the infinite non-success of some of them, which is desirable. Neither do we agree with the good joke attributed to *Swift*, that *angling is always to be considered as a stick and a string, with a fly at one end, a fool at the other.*"

I never saw this libel on anglers attributed to *Swift* before, but that is because I had never before read Leigh Hunt's essay. I am glad to find it is so attributed, rather than to Dr. Samuel Johnson, who has hitherto, in the minds of many writers and readers, borne the stigma of it. It has been proved before in the *Fishing Gazette* that Dr. Johnson could not have been the author of it, because he was a friend to all anglers, and a special admirer of good old Izaak Walton. The sting of the joke is quite in the

Swift vein; so, in future, I hope all anglers will shift the joke to his shoulders.

The rest of Hunt's essay is not flattering to Izaak Walton or to anglers in general. This is the way he speaks of Walton:—

"A friend of ours, who is an admirer of Walton, was struck, just as we were, with the likeness of the old angler's face to a fish. It is hard, angular, and of no expression. It seems to have been 'subdued to what it worked in,' to have become native to the watery element. One might have said of Walton, 'O flesh, how art thou fishified!' He looks like a pike dressed in broadcloth instead of butter."

I remember Leigh Hunt very well: his slender, upright figure and long white hair made him conspicuous and notable as he strolled along Fleet Street; in his writings he has left behind him much that is delightful to read both in prose and verse. He has been dead now nearly fifty years, and of the dead nothing but good should be said; but one might have asked him, or his ghost, if one met it in Fleet Street, how it has happened that this old Izaak Walton, whom he despised, who was born more than 300 years ago, still lives in the hearts of all good

people, more honoured and more valued as time goes on, whilst Leigh Hunt is already almost forgotten, or only remembered in the narrow circles of *dilettante* literature.

The Life and Adventures of a Yellow-Hammer

I told the following story in the *Spectator* some time ago, and I think it is of sufficient interest to include in this chapter of miscellanies :—

Everybody knows the yellow-hammer. One cannot walk along a turnpike road, or on a common among gorse-bushes, or through narrow lanes without being reminded that if we behave ourselves we shall be rewarded with

> "A little bit o' bread and *no* cheese,"

or, as the Scotch boys have it,

> "Whetel-te, whetel-te whee!
> Harry my nest, and the de'il tak' ye."

They call him, also, the *Devil bird*, for the Devil is said to supply him with three drops of his blood every May morning :—

> "Half a puddock, half a toad,
> Half a yellow yorling,
> Drinks a drap o' the de'il's bluid
> Every May morning."

He is called *L'écrivain* in France, and in Shropshire the *writing-master*, on account of the irregular lines on the eggs. The general character of the yellow-hammer may be summed up in a few lines. He is cheerful and sociable, and will follow you from bush to bush, particularly if he is conscious that you are watching him, and admiring his pretty person and monotonous little song. He mingles freely with other birds, especially in the winter. He is quarrelsome and pugnacious. His sociability (as well as his quarrelsomeness) is well illustrated in the following incident in the life of one of these adventurous little birds which came under my own observation. Walking across the common not long ago, one of us picked up a crippled yellow-hammer. We thought at first that his wing was broken, but it proved to be not so bad as that. It was so injured, however, that he could not fly. We put him into a cage and fed him on canary-seed. When the wing was strong enough he was placed in an outdoor aviary with a number of canaries; but as the birds had started housekeeping, and the yellow-hammer was still awkward in his flight, he sometimes,

perhaps unintentionally, flopped down on one or other of the nests, to the great trouble of the inmates; so we thought we were doing him a kindness by setting him free. The aviary door was of wire, and although it could not be opened from the inside, it was an easy matter to push it open about an inch from the outside. The yellow-hammer had found his new quarters very smooth and pleasant, with a good supply of food without the necessity of working for it. He did not care a fig for liberty, he preferred the pleasant prison-house; so when all was quiet he returned to the aviary and managed to push his way into it. The next day fresh havoc was worked in the bird home, and several young and innocent canaries were flung from their nests; so again he was turned out, and again he returned, with the same deplorable results. Lamentable to relate, on his third expulsion this heroic little bird was caught on the lawn (doubtless planning a fourth entry) by a naughty little dog, and killed like a malefactor in front of the aviary where he had been the cause of so much pain and unhappiness.

"An Urchin would A-wooing Go"

Bucks, *July* 12, 1911.

"A day or two ago I was rambling round one of our meadows just before sunset after a scorching day. I came upon a singular sight. About a hundred yards in front of me, and coming straight towards me through the long grass, was what I for a moment took to be a young rabbit, although its motion was certainly not that of a rabbit. I stood quite still. I could only see the top of its brown back, and I said it must be an enormous rat. No, a rat would have seen me before I saw it, and been off like a shot. On it came slowly but steadily; presently I saw a quaint little nose pointed upwards and sniffing around. I said to myself, what on earth little creature can it be? I did not wish I had a gun to shoot it—I would not have done that for the world—but I did wish for a 'Kodak' to snapshoot it.

"On and on it came to within two or three yards of my feet. Then it stood, looking up and taking stock of me, not showing the least fear, but evidently wondering what sort of a two-legged animal it was that stood in its way;

and so we surveyed each other for a short time. Its little eyes were bright; its snout like that of a little baby pig; its small ears erect and alert; its shape quite elegant and graceful, of an oblong form, somewhat rounded off towards the tail, which was only an apology for a tail; its brown back was smooth and glossy, the hair, or what looked like hair, lying flat on the skin.

"Altogether it struck me as being a very pretty, innocent little creature. It was evidently young, and quite unacquainted with the wicked ways of the world. It looked up to me, as if to say, 'Well! are you going to get out of my way, or must I get out of yours?' We were at a standstill. After waiting and looking at each other for a minute or two, I was the first to make a move; I just touched the end of its funny little nose with the point of my walking-stick, when, *presto!* my pretty little animal had disappeared, and in its place was a round ball, its covering no longer smooth and flat, but prickled all over with short spines, like 'quills upon the fretful porcupine,' and I knew it was *Erinaceus Europæus,* sometimes called a *hedgehog,* and sometimes an *urchin.*

I was very glad that neither Cæsar nor Pinto were there with me—they would soon have spoilt the romance of the whole thing.

"It is a curious fact that although I have, in my time, seen scores of hedgehogs, it has always been when they had been routed out of a ditch by some dog, and they had curled themselves up and put their defensive armour on. Never before have I met one taking his walks abroad in the cool of the evening, bright and chirpy-looking, 'drest in his best,' as if he was going 'a-wooing.' I was sorry I had touched him, for I should have been glad of a little more chat with him; but once rolled up, he was dead and motionless.

"I believe it is a very uncommon thing to see an urchin going about by daylight. He is a prowler by night, and said to be insectivorous. I should call him omnivorous—for I have heard of him milking a cow, and eating mice, frogs, and toads, young plants and fruit, sucking eggs, and he has been known to make away with a young chicken. He makes for himself a nest of dried leaves, hibernates during the winter, and only wakes up when the sun shines. His

character is not immaculate, but I have not the least doubt that in the long run he does far more good than harm. I shall always respect him now that I have seen him in a state of natural innocency."

CHAPTER XIII

BONAPARTE ON THE *NORTHUMBERLAND*

From *Notes and Queries*, by permission

THE story of the great Napoleon's voyage to St. Helena has been told in various ways and by different people, but never more intimately than by the English surgeon on board the *Northumberland*. Mr. William Warden kept a record of the various conversations he had with Napoleon and his principal attendants, and of anecdotes connected with them: these he at once committed to a journal, and it was from its pages that the letters were composed which he wrote to a friend at home, evidently of his own profession. These letters were not written with a view to publication, but, yielding to the urgency of his friends, the author printed them about 1816.

The work was well known at that period, but

NAPOLEON ON BOARD THE "NORTHUMBERLAND"

To face page 150

has long since been forgotten. It has sometimes been mentioned by Napoleonic writers, but never, so far as the present writer is aware, in any detail. It may therefore he safely assumed that if now known at all, it can only be to a very limited number of Napoleonic students.

The letters are mostly headed "At Sea" or "At St. Helena," but they bear no date. In the first letter the writer describes the great public excitement caused by the transfer of Napoleon from the *Bellerophon* to the *Northumberland* in Torbay, 5th August 1815:—

"There was a daily crowd of boats and other vessels filled with curious spectators (some of whom, it is confidently said, have come on purpose from remote parts of the country, and even from London) to snatch such a glimpse of him as could be caught at the distance they were obliged to keep from the *Bellerophon*, on whose gangway he occasionally stood."

On 3rd August 1815 the *Northumberland* arrived off Berry Head, Torbay. She was there joined by the *Tonnant*, accompanied by the *Bellerophon*, which had on board Napoleon Bonaparte. Count de las Cases, chamberlain to

the ex-Emperor, came on board to arrange the requisite accommodation for his master. "The Count," says Mr. Warden, "does not exceed five feet and an inch in height, and appears to be fifty years of age, of a meagre form and wrinkled forehead." His diminutive appearance did not fail to invite observation from various beholders. The barge which conveyed Napoleon from the *Bellerophon* contained Lord Keith, Sir George Cockburn, and Marshal Bertrand, who had shared in all his Imperial master's fortunes, and Generals Montholm and Gourgon, who had been, and still retained the titles of, his aides-de-camp. As the boat approached, the figure of Napoleon was readily distinguished from his resemblance to the various prints displayed in the windows of shops.

"With a slow step Bonaparte mounted the gangway, and on feeling himself firm on the quarter-deck, he raised his hat when the guard presented arms and the drum rolled. The officers of the *Northumberland*, who were uncovered, stood considerably in advance. These he approached and saluted with an air of the most affable politeness. . . . His dress was that of a general of French infantry. . . . His face

was pale, and his beard of an unshaven appearance. His forehead is thinly covered with dark hair, as well as the top of his head, which is large, and has a singular flatness; what hair he has behind is bushy, and I could not discern the slightest mixture of white in it. His eyes, which are grey, are in continual motion, and hurry rapidly to the various objects around him. His teeth are regular and good; his neck is short, but his shoulders of the finest proportion the rest of his figure, though a little blended with Dutch fatness, is of very handsome form."

On returning on deck the Emperor engaged in conversation with Lord Lowther, Mr. Lyttelton, and Sir George Bingham for an hour before dinner. He complained of the severity with which he was treated in being consigned to pass his days on the rock of St. Helena. In a conversation the author had with Count Bertrand, the latter complained in very forcible terms of the needless cruelty of sending them to such a place; he said that the Emperor had thrown himself on the mercy of England from a full and consoling confidence that he should there find a place of refuge:—

"It would have been no disgrace to England

to have acknowledged Napoleon Bonaparte as a citizen. It might rather have been a subject of pride to England that the conqueror of almost all Europe but herself, sought, in his adverse fortune, to pass the remainder of a life which forms so splendid an epocha in the history of our age, in any retired spot of her domains which she might have allotted him."

In the next chapter we are told that their illustrious guest displayed rather an eager appetite: he made a very hearty dinner, which he moistened with claret; he was observed to select a mutton chop, which he contrived to dispose of without the aid of either knife or fork. He passed the evening on the quarter-deck, and chatted with easy pleasantry with those near him. He never moved his hands from their habitual places in his dress, except to apply them to a snuff-box; but he never offered a pinch to any one with whom he was conversing. He played at cards during the evening. He never omitted an opportunity of asking questions. On one occasion he inquired about a religious community in Scotland called Johnsonians!—a question which no one could answer; the only probable solution being that

when he contemplated invading England he had the Hebrides in mind, and Johnson's *Tour to the Hebrides* got mixed up in his mind as having relation to some religious community or other.

As for Napoleon's invasion of England, our surgeon says that according to his recollection it was not generally considered practicable, but he gives his authority for the actual intention of carrying it out:—

"Bonaparte positively avers it. He says that he had 200,000 men on the coast of France opposite to England; and that it was his determination to head them in person. The attempt he acknowledged to be very hazardous, and the issue equally doubtful. His mind, however, was bent on the enterprise, and every possible arrangement was made to give effect to its operations. It was hinted to him, however, that his flotilla was altogether insufficient, and that such a ship as the *Northumberland* would run down fifty of them . . . but he stated that his plan was to rid the Channel of English men-of-war, and for that purpose he had directed Admiral Villeneuve, with the combined fleets of France and Spain, to sail apparently for Martinique, for the express purpose of distract-

ing our naval force, by drawing after him a large portion of, if not all, our best ships. Other squadrons of observation would follow, and England might by these manœuvres be left sufficiently defenceless for his purpose. Admiral Villeneuve was directed, on gaining a certain latitude, to take a baffling course back to Europe, and, having eluded the vigilance of Nelson, to enter the English Channel. The flotilla would then have sailed forth from Ostend, Dunkirk, Boulogne, and the adjoining ports. . . . But Villeneuve was met on his return by Sir Robert Calder, and, having suffered a defeat, took refuge in Ferrol. From that harbour he was peremptorily ordered to sea, according to his original instructions; but contrary to their most imperative and explicit intent, he steered his course for Cadiz. 'He might as well,' exclaimed Napoleon, raising his voice, and increasing his impetuosity —'he might as well have gone to the East Indies.' Two days after Villeneuve had quitted his anchorage before Cadiz a naval officer arrived there to supersede him. The glorious victory of Trafalgar soon followed, and the French admiral died a few days after his arrival in France; report says by his own hand."

It had been conjectured by many of the newspapers that Bonaparte, whose personal courage had never been questioned, would play the coward at last, and put an end to his own life rather than suffer the disgrace of being sent a captive to St. Helena. The matter came to his ears, and he said: "No, no; I have not enough of the Roman in me to destroy myself." He reasoned for some time on the subject of suicide, and concluded with this decisive opinion:—

"Suicide is a crime the most revolting to my feelings; nor does any reason present itself to my understanding by which it can be justified. It certainly originates in that species of fear which we denominate cowardice. For what claims can that man have to courage who trembles at the frowns of fortune? True heroism consists in becoming superior to the ills of life in whatever shape they may challenge to the combat."

The great man seldom suffered a day to pass without making particular inquiry respecting the health of the crew and the nature of such diseases as then prevailed among them, with the particular mode of treatment. The com-

plaints, according to our good surgeon, required a free use of the lancet. Napoleon, however, seemed to entertain a very strong prejudice against bleeding, which, remembering the satire of Lesage, he called the Sangrado practice. He urged the propriety of sparing the precious fluid, but the surgeon maintained the doctrine of the good effects of the practice which Bonaparte had so forcibly reprobated and ridiculed. "A Frenchman," the Emperor exclaimed, "would never submit to the discipline of the Spanish doctor"; but he no longer argued against it. On meeting Mr. Warden he would apply his fingers to the bend of the opposite arm, and ask: "Well, how many have you bled to-day?" Nor did he fail to exclaim, when any of his own people were indisposed, "O, bleed him, bleed him! To the powerful lancet with him, that's the infallible remedy."

On the Sabbath day, after the performance of divine service, some conversation on the subject of the Emperor's religious faith had taken place with him and some of the principal persons of his suite. It was, however, not deemed necessary to communicate anything further

than that his opinions were generally of the most liberal and tolerant character. He wished it to be stated—

"That his profession of the faith of Mahomet and avowed devotion to the Crescent in Egypt was a mere act of policy, to serve the purpose of the moment. This fact appeared to be asserted with particular energy, from the knowledge possessed by the party communicating it of the abhorrence which Bonaparte's having declared himself a Mussulman excited in England."

It was on a Sunday at the Admiral's table that Bonaparte catechised the chaplain in a curious and unexpected manner. I give some of the Emperor's questions. It is not necessary to quote the answers given by the chaplain, who was well qualified to reply to questions respecting the faith of a far more profound nature.

"How many sacraments does the Church of England acknowledge?"

"Does the Church of England consider marriage as a sacrament?"

"What are the tenets of the Church of England?"

"How often is the sacrament of the Lord's Supper administered?"

"Do all communicants drink out of the same cup?"

"Is the bread made use of in the sacrament common bread?"

"Supposing that wine could not be procured, would any other liquid be allowed as its substitute?"

"Do the bishops frequently preach?"

"Do they wear the mitre?"

"Have not the bishops a seat in the House of Peers?"

There are many more questions of a similar import, but these are sufficient to show the nature of Bonaparte's inquiries.

On another occasion the author gives a further description of the ex-Emperor:—

"He has an uncommon face: large, full, and pale, but not sickly. In conversation the muscles suffer little or no exertion; with the exception of those in the immediate vicinity of the mouth, the whole seems fixed and the forehead perfectly smooth. . . . However earnestly Napoleon may be in conversation, he discovers no distortion of features. . . . He

sometimes smiles, but I believe he never laughs. . . . The interesting children on board, who amuse everybody, do not attract his attention.

"Once indeed, when Bertrand was in conversation with his master, the Count's little girl intruded upon it with a story which all her father's prohibitions could not silence. On this occasion Napoleon took her by the hand, heard out her little tale, and at the conclusion kissed her. But this very uncommon attention was probably paid to the child as the only mode of getting rid of her which might not have been painful to the father."

As for Napoleon at cards and at chess, there is the following :—

"I have observed that at cards our extraordinary man plays rather a careless game, and loses his money with great good humour. Nay, he is frequently inaccurate in reckoning his points, &c., but as often, most assuredly, to his loss as his gain. At chess, indeed, which is a scientific game, independent of fortune, and considered as being connected with a leading branch of military tactics, he may not possess the same indifference. However that may be,

I shrewdly suspect that Montholm, when he plays with him, takes care to be the loser."

The excitement in the interesting little colony of St. Helena on the arrival of their extraordinary guest may be easily imagined. Bonaparte did not leave his cabin for a full hour after the ship had anchored in the bay.

"When the deck became clear he made his appearance and ascended the poop ladder, from which he could see every gun that bristles at the mouth of the James Valley, in the centre of which the town of that name is situate. . . . While he stood there I watched his countenance with the most observant attention, and it betrayed no particular sensation. He looked, as any other man would have looked, at a place which he beheld for the first time."

It may be remarked that in the course of his narrative our worthy surgeon sometimes speaks of Napoleon as the General, sometimes as the ex-Emperor, and occasionally as the Emperor. He did not disembark on the 17th of August till after sunset, much to the chagrin of the expectant inhabitants, who had retired to their homes. His first residence on the island was The Briars, the residence of Mr. Balcombe,

where he remained till Longwood could be completed for him. The worthy doctor had many interesting interviews and conversations with Napoleon on the island before he finally left him.

Napoleon's Arrival at St. Helena

A few days after Napoleon had settled at The Briars, Mr. Warden paid him a complimentary visit, and found him reclining on a sofa, apparently incommoded by the heat; he had been, he said, amusing himself with a walk in the garden, but he found it necessary to shelter himself from the sun. He appeared to be in very good spirits. After some general questions respecting the restrictions on visiting him, he said:—

"'I find there is a considerable force on the island: full as many as the produce of the place is capable of maintaining. What could induce your Government to send out the 53rd Regiment? There was surely a sufficient force before for my security; but this is the way that you English people get rid of your money.' To this I did not hesitate to reply: 'When a measure is once resolved on, you, General, will acknow-

ledge it to be the best policy to employ all the means that may secure its being carried into effect.' You may think that I hazarded his displeasure by my answer, but the manner in which he received it convinced me that he was better pleased with my frankness than if I had hammered out a compliment. . . . I now took my leave and strolled down with Count Bertrand to dinner."

It was some time afterwards that the surgeon paid a second visit to The Briars to dine with Mr. Balcombe. He accidentally took a path which led to the gardens, and at the angle formed by two paths he met Napoleon clattering down among the rocks in his heavy military boots.

"He accosted me with an apparent mixture of satisfaction and surprise, and reproached me in terms of great civility for my long absence. There was a rough deal board placed as a seat between two stones, on which, after having brushed away the dust with his hands, he sat himself down, and desired me to take my place beside him. Las Cases soon joined us. While I was gazing with some astonishment on the barren wonders of the scene around me, 'Well,'

said Napoleon with a smile, 'what say you to it? and can you think that your countrymen have treated me kindly.' I had but one answer to such a question, and that was by giving no answer at all. . . . His conversation was on this occasion, as on all others when I have been with him, easy, good-humoured, and familiar, without the least taint of his former greatness. . . . On my mentioning the activity of the Admiral in superintending the repairs at Longwood, he replied, 'Your Admiral knows, I doubt not, in what time a ship may be got ready, but as an architect I think his calculations will fail.' I maintained, however, that whether it was upon land or sea Sir George Cockburn was of a character that would ensure success in whatever he may be called upon to undertake. He then inquired after those gentlemen whose names he endeavoured to recollect, and expressed a wish to see them as they passed; 'if,' said he, 'they will be contented to visit me as you do now, in the fields, as my present residence is not calculated to receive company.' Napoleon frequently makes one of Mr. Balcombe's family parties, where he is neither troublesome nor intrusive

but conducts himself with the manners of a gentleman, and a lively demeanour that promotes the general vivacity of the domestic circle."

On Napoleon's removal to Longwood, as he had complained of the intrusion of visitors at The Briars, it was ordered that no one should be permitted to visit the former without a passport from the Admiral or the Governor. The illness of General Gourgon caused the surgeon to pass much of his time at Longwood, as the Emperor's surgeon, O'Meara, was desirous that they should be together during the treatment. On one of these occasions he received from Napoleon an invitation to dinner. He was obliged to present himself in his riding equipments, and in these he made his entry. General Montholm, in full dress, received him in the ante-room.

"General Montholm whispered in my ear that I was to take my seat at table between the Emperor and the Grand Marshal. I had Napoleon on my right, and the Marshal on my left, and there was a vacant chair that had the air of ceremonious emptiness as a reserved seat for Maria Louisa. A bottle of claret and a

decanter of water were placed by each plate; but there was no drinking to each other at dinner; and if you did not help yourself during the time it lasted, the opportunity would be lost, as the wine vanished with the eatables. The service of porcelain far exceeds in beauty whatever of that kind I have beheld. The silver plate is massive, and decorated with eagles in curious abundance; the gold service appeared with the dessert. The entertainment lasted about an hour, and so frequent were the questions of my host that, from the perplexity I suffered in conjuring up answers to them, I scarce knew what I ate or what I drank. I will endeavour to give you a general specimen of his convivial inquiries.

"Napoleon asked: 'Have you visited General Gourgon?' 'Yes, General. I came to Longwood for that purpose.'—'How have you found him?' 'Extremely ill.'—'What is his disorder?' 'Dysentery.'—'Where is its seat?' 'In the intestines.'—'What has been the cause?' 'Heat of climate on a constitution peculiarly predisposed. . . . Had he been bled in the first instance, it is probable that the disease would have been less violent.'—'What

remedy is now proposed?' 'It will be necessary to have recourse to mercury.'—'That is a bad medicine?' 'Experience has taught me the contrary.'—'Did Hippocrates use it?' 'I believe not.'—'Yet he is considered as among the first physicians. Does not Nature endeavour to expel morbific matter, and may not the present painful struggles be an effort of Nature to rid herself of what is obnoxious?' 'I have been taught to assist Nature.'—'Could you not do so without having recourse to this dangerous mineral?' 'Experience has taught me that mercury is infallible.'—'Then go on with your mercury.'"

The General's disorder assumed a very dangerous appearance, and the symptoms seemed to indicate a fatal termination; his spirits were so sunk that he refused to take the only medicine that promised the least chance of relief.'

"'What ridiculous nonsense is this,' said Napoleon to him, 'and what are these silly fears of your own creation? . . . How often have you faced Death in the field of battle without the least sensation of fear! and now you are resolved to yield to his power. What

a childish obstinacy! Play the fool no longer, I beg of you, but submit to the remedies with cheerfulness.' This reproach softened the patient's obstinacy; he became submissive to the regimen prescribed, and recovered."

Some six weeks elapsed before Mr. Warden again visited Longwood. Las Cases met him, and said that his master had expressed surprise at his absence. "We have not seen you since your resuscitation of General Gourgon. I wish very much to consult you about the health of my son." This led Mr. Warden to obtain a passport, and his interviews and conversations with Napoleon were frequent. On one occasion, having been invited to breakfast, he says :—

"On entering the room I observed the back of a sofa turned towards me, and on advancing I saw Napoleon lying at full length on it. The moment his eye met mine he exclaimed in English, in a tone of good-humoured vivacity, 'Ah, Warden, how do you do?' He stretched out his hand, saying, 'I have got a fever.' I immediately applied my hand to the wrist, and observing both from the regularity of the pulsation and the jocular expression of his countenance that he was exercising a little of his

pleasantry, I expressed my wish that his health may always remain the same. 'I certainly enjoy,' he said, 'a very good state of health, which I attribute to a rigorous observance of regimen. My appetite is such that I feel as if I could eat at any time of the day; but I am regular in my meals, and always leave off eating with an appetite; besides, as you know, I never drink strong wines.'"

The conversation was prolonged, and branched off into a variety of subjects. He asked the doctor if he remembered the history of Capt. Wright. He answered: "Perfectly well; and it is a prevalent opinion in England that you ordered him to be murdered in the Temple." Napoleon emphatically denied this, and concluded a long speech by most solemnly asserting that Capt. Wright died in the Temple, by his own hand, as described in the *Moniteur*, and at a much earlier period than has generally been believed. His assertion, he said, was founded on documents which he had examined.

Now, to the surgeon's utter astonishment, he turned to the subject of the Duke d'Enghien's death. He became very animated. He began as follows:—

"At this eventful period of my life I had succeeded in restoring order and tranquillity to a kingdom torn asunder by faction and deluged in blood. The nation had placed me at their head. I came not as your Cromwell did, or your third Richard. No such thing. I found a crown in the kennel; I cleansed it from its filth, and placed it on my head."

He referred to a plot against him, the object of which, he said, was to destroy him. "It emanated from the capital of your country, with the Count d'Artois at the head of it. To the west he sent the Duke de Berri, and to the east the Duke d'Enghien. . . . The moment was big with evil, and I felt myself on a tottering eminence, and I resolved to hurl the thunder back on the Bourbons, even in the metropolis of the British Empire." He went on to say that the Duke d'Enghien was accessory to the confederacy, and although the resident of a neutral territory, the urgency of the case, his own safety, and the public tranquillity, justified the proceeding. He accordingly ordered the Duke to be seized and tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be shot. The sentence was immediately executed. "And," said he,

"the same fate would have followed had it been *Louis the Eighteenth*, for I again declare that I found it necessary to roll the thunder back on the metropolis of England, as from thence, with the Count d'Artois at their head, did the assassins assail me." Mr. Warden replied that he did not believe that any person would be found in England who would attempt to justify the precipitate manner in which the young prince was seized, tried, sentenced, and shot. The Emperor replied that he was justified in his own mind; at the same time he solemnly affirmed that no message or letter from the Duke reached him till after the sentence of death had been passed.

Talleyrand, however, was said to be in possession of a letter from the royal prisoner addressed to Napoleon. Mr. Warden saw a copy of this letter in the hands of Las Cases. The object of the letter was to beg the writer's life. In it he stated that in his opinion the Bourbon dynasty was terminated, that the crown was no longer in his view, and he requested to be allowed to live and devote his life and services to France, merely as a native of it. Talleyrand took care not to

deliver it till the hand that wrote it was unnerved by death.

The remainder of the volume is made up of various interesting conversations with Napoleon, mainly on the subject of health and disease, until the departure of our surgeon from the island.

The *Newcastle* and *Orontes* were seen from the heights of St. Helena on the morning of June 19th, and Warden's delight could not easily be expressed. He bent his steps to Longwood, where he arrived about ten in the morning, and Napoleon requested him to breakfast with him.

"On my appearing, he said, 'You are come to take leave of us?' 'I am come up, General, with that intention.'—'You will breakfast, then,' pointing to a chair. 'Have you had letters from your friends?' 'No, sir, the ships cannot reach the bay before evening.'—'Is the Admiral known?' 'Yes, he is Admiral Malcom.'—Are you glad to return to England?' 'Very glad indeed.'"

A long conversation followed on various subjects, mostly with reference to what the English press had said about Napoleon. This

was the last visit Warden paid to the Emperor, and when he took leave of him, Napoleon rose from his chair and said: "I wish you health and happiness, and a safe voyage to your country, where I hope you will find your friends in health and ready to receive you."

The original drawing of "Napoleon on board the *Northumberland*" was in my possession for many years. I parted with it some time ago, but I have been permitted to give the reduced facsimile of it which appears in this volume.

THE END

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
Edinburgh & London

WORKS BY E. MARSTON

Thomas Ken and Izaak Walton: A Sketch of their Lives and Family connection, by E. MARSTON, F.R.G.S. Large crown 8vo. With many Illustrations. Cash price, 6s. net.

From *The Field*—"The subject is charmingly treated. . . . Mr. Marston's brief life of Walton is a scholarly piece of work—and it is eminently fitting that he, the doyen of angling letters, should have given it to us." (Published by *Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.*)

After Work: Fragments from the Workshop of an Old Publisher. Second issue, demy 8vo, cloth, 7s. 6d. net.

"The spirit in which it is written and its literary ability will insure it a welcome."—*The Times.*

An Amateur Angler's Days in Dove Dale. Has long since been out of print, and is scarce. It has now been reprinted with the addition of the account of another visit to *Dove Dale.* Fcap. 8vo, beautifully printed, bound in half parchment, neatly boxed, price 2s. 6d. net; also a large paper edition of 250 copies, each numbered and signed by the author, 10s. 6d. net.

Dove Dale Revisited and other Sketches. Fcap. 8vo, Illustrated, 2s. 6d. net; large paper, 6s. net.

"A pleasant record of pleasant places."—*Athenæum.*

Punch says:—"Mr. E. Marston is the nearest approach the Twentieth Century provides to Izaak Walton."

An Old Man's Holidays. Fcap. 8vo, 2s. and 1s. Edition de Luxe, 6s. net.

"Extremely bright and told with a ring of sportsman-like enthusiasm."—*Country Gentleman.*

Booksellers of Other Days. Fcap. 8vo, Illustrated, 5s. net.

"Undeniably interesting."—*The Athenæum.*

Booksellers of Dr. Johnson's Time. Fcap. 8vo, Illustrated, 5s. net.

"The *doyen* of London publishers has a right to be heard."—*The Times.*

"On a Sunshine Holy Day." Fcap. 8vo, 1s. 6d.

"Shows the author of 'Dove Dale Revisited' at his best."—*The World.*

By Meadow and Stream. Fcap. 8vo, 1s. and 1s. 6d. (large paper, 6s. net, out of print).

"There are passages in it of quite idyllic charm."—*The Speaker.*

Fresh Woods and Pastures New. Fcap., 1s. and 1s. 6d. Other editions out of print.

"Both in subject and treatment it is a gem."—*Nature.*

Days in Clover. Fcap. 8vo, 1s. and 1s. 6d. Other editions out of print.

"Delightful to the contemplative man."—*Illustrated London News.*

Fishing for Pleasure and Catching it. Fcap. 8vo, 3s. 6d. net; limp leather, 5s. net. (Published by *T. Werner Laurie.*)

Frank's Ranch, or My Holidays in the Rockies. Fcap. 8vo, Illustrated, 5s.

Six editions—*out of print for years* (a few copies of 5th edition may still be had.)

How Stanley wrote "In Darkest Africa," A Trip to Cairo and back. Fcap. 8vo, Illustrated (out of print).

Sleeplessness and Old Age—How Does it Feel to be Old? New issue with an additional chapter on **Sleeplessness** (reprinted from *Chambers' Journal*). Fcap. 8vo, 1s. net; large paper edition, crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. net (only a few copies printed).

CONTENTS:—I. How Does it Feel to be Old?—II. Smoking Tobacco.—III.—Youth and Age.—IV. Time's Footsteps.—V. Sight: Spectacles.—VI. Hearing.—VII. Memory.—VIII. Sleep and Sleeplessness.—IX. Reading in Bed.—X. Walking and Running.—XI. Angling and Old Age.—XII. How to Live to be a Hundred.—XIII. An Old Man's Noctuary.

Copyright, National and International, with some remarks on the position of Authors and Publishers. By a PUBLISHER. 8vo, sewed, 2s. 6d.

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & CO., LTD.
100 SOUTHWARK STREET, LONDON, S.E.