John Wilson

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COLLECTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS
OF
NATURAL HISTORY AND SPORT.

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Ilanda Island in June.

Frontispiece.

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COLLECTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS

OF

NATURAL HISTORY AND SPORT

IN THE LIFE OF A COUNTRY VICAR.

BY

THE REV. G. C. GREEN,

VICAR OF MODBURY, S. DEVON.

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PREFACE.

WHEN I began to put together the subject-matter contained in the following pages, I had hardly any definite idea that what I was writing would ever be published. Different friends who had been much interested in various stories that I had told them of what had come under my own observation, had said to me that it was a pity that such things should not be recorded for the amusement of others, so, as I had diaries at hand to refresh my memory about most of these things, I determined to put into some connected form a history of the events which led to the acquisition of my various treasures, thinking that, whether these notes ever came before the eye of any one else or not, my children would certainly be interested to know the real story of each object in my collections, and would value the memories associated with them in my mind. When I had been amusing myself during spare moments for some time with writing these reminiscences, a friend came to stay with me who looked over them, was much interested in them, and persuaded me to go on with them assiduously, and make a complete work ; assuring me at the same time that there

were many publishers who would gladly undertake to bring such a book before the public, and that on his next visit to London he would undertake to see some of them, and bring me their proposals. The interest which many in different parts of the country had expressed to me on reading my contributions to *The Field* about Natural History, Angling, Otter-hunting, and Yachting tours, encouraged me to think that he might be right, and the publication of the present work is the result. As I have made many water-colour sketches of all the various places that I visited, and of the birds and insects that I have collected, it was an easy matter to illustrate it. There is nothing very startling, novel, or scientific in it. It is a narrative of out-door observations; but the truth of everything asserted may be depended upon, as I have put down nothing but what I can verify by my own personal observation. I have endeavoured throughout to place the reader in my own situation so that he might see with my eyes, and feel my feelings. It remains to be proved whether my book can effect this at all. At any rate it has been an amusement to me to write it. I hope it may be an amusement to some to read it.

G. C. GREEN.

MODBURY VICARAGE,
October 5th, 1885.

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COLLECTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS

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NATURAL HISTORY AND SPORT.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory—General prevalence of a taste for natural history and sport—The author's early experiences in natural history—The chances that led to his forming collections either of butterflies or birds—Observations of a young collector in the early spring morning—An Eton boy's efforts in the pursuit of natural history.

ANOTHER book about Natural History? Well! Why not? Many as are the books that have been written, and are being constantly written, about Natural History and Sport, and especially about the two combined, it is the exception to take up any that are not interesting to a very numerous class of readers. The taste for natural history is prevalent, as a general rule, among most young people, and I think it would be much to be lamented if it were otherwise. It is the first study that is offered to the young mind seeking for knowledge; and it seems to promise pleasure as obtainable with the least possible amount of trouble. What is there about which a child is more likely to be interested at first than those objects of nature which meet his eye at every turn? If ever he tries

to use a pencil or a pen, these are the first things that he attempts to depict. In almost every intelligent child there is that which would lead him to wish to become, up to a certain point, a naturalist. I do not mean to say that almost every child *would* become a naturalist. As years go on, the early-formed wish may pass away. So many tastes may come in to interfere with this particular one; so many things to hinder its development.

In the pursuit of this so much depends upon the encouragement received; upon answers given to questions; upon the view taken by any older persons who may be about the child as to the use and desirability of thinking about these things, and as to what *is*, and what is *not*, waste of time. For my own part, I feel sure that this is a taste which it would be wise for every parent to encourage in every possible way, at any rate during the hours of recreation.

I know well the very great pleasure which such little information as I have been able to acquire has given me throughout the whole of my life—the additional charm given to every walk or ride, or even to a railway journey; how by this what often might be a dreary solitude is changed into lively company, when I can look upon many other things besides human beings as my friends and companions: hence I can hardly imagine it possible to be placed in a scene where I could not find something to interest and amuse me.

Much regret has often been expressed to me by those who have grown up without an interest in these things. Deeply have they envied me my power of enjoyment; and, moreover, besides the pleasure

which a slight knowledge of natural history gives, I say that it gives something much better than pleasure. For, besides leading a reasonable being to use his eyes, it is also an excellent teacher of religion—it leads the mind almost imperceptibly from the things created to the necessity of there being a Creator. I am sure that there is nothing by which a child's mind is more easily led to forming right notions of God than by putting that God forward as the Maker of all the animals and plants which he sees every day about him. Therefore it is that, as I said at the outset, I think that it would be a lamentable thing if a taste for natural history were not prevalent among the young.

And this taste for natural history leads by an easy consequence to a certain amount of taste for sport. For from the habit of observing animals a young person is very easily led to the desire of possessing them ; and the greater the difficulty in this, the greater is sure to be the desire of obtaining possession. Human intellect and skill is matched against the instinct of the animal. Here is a foundation for the love of the chase, whether it be of beast, fowl, or fish. Of course there are many other incentives to a love of sport which have nothing to do with natural history. Emulation or a love of adventure are either of them found to be quite sufficient to make a man distinguished in the hunting-field, or a proficient with his gun, though he may know or care very little about the animals which are the objects of pursuit. The sportsman is not by any means sure to become a naturalist, nor is it safe to conclude that he has at any time been a naturalist ; but the naturalist is sure

to become, to a certain extent, a sportsman, and, what is more, to have the best parts of a sportsman in him. In hunting he will be more interested in following out the working of the hounds, than in showing his skill and courage over difficult fences, or being the first in a rapid flight across country. In shooting he may from various causes be by no means a first-rate shot, and may not be nearly so keen as many another in counting a large number of slain as his own share of the bag at the end of the day; but in a wild or unknown country he will probably get the greater number of shots, and will be most sure of a day's pleasure, with fewer drawbacks from jealousy or disappointment. He has so many more sources of enjoyment to depend upon than the sportsman who is no naturalist.

The love of natural history and of the chase being so strongly implanted in man, it is not to be wondered at that books which treat of these subjects should be so popular. And as the greater number of readers are likely to be of that class who do not care to pursue this study to its furthest depths and to make a science of it, so those books are most popular which deal chiefly with out-of-door observations, and bring before them over again things with which they are to a certain extent already familiar, only extending their information about those things of which they do already know *something*, and would like to know more, and about which they are always glad to talk. So such books as "White of Selborne," "Jessie's Gleanings," Waterton's Essays, the Rev. J. G. Wood's books, St. John's "Wild Sports of the Highlands," and "Tour in Sutherland," and many others, are sure to be favourites. They treat, in a rambling, easy, familiar way, subjects

which are in themselves of a pleasant nature, and they bring pleasant pictures and reminiscences to the mind; and, however many there may be, they are almost sure, each of them, to bring forward something new, though on an old subject, just as any two naturalists meeting for the first time and conversing on their favourite theme are sure to learn something fresh from each other. Feeling certain that this is the case, I have been led to imagine that some observations on this subject, collected out of an experience of more than forty years, may not prove otherwise than interesting, and that what has given myself such intense pleasure may also be the means of conveying pleasure to others.

I cannot recollect any time in my life when natural history in almost any branch was not a subject of the greatest possible interest to me. My earliest reminiscences are connected with Wombwell's Menagerie, the Saffron Walden Museum, and the Zoological Gardens. I think my taste was helped on by a rather early talent for drawing, and animals gave the most scope for the exercise of my pencil. I know that when I was six years old I had cut out in paper every animal then in the Zoological Gardens, and their shapes and proportions were sufficiently accurate for any ordinary person to recognize them. To cut out the Zoological Gardens was one of my favourite amusements; and many did I give away to those friends whom I wished to favour. Mrs. Trimmer's fabulous histories, and books with pictures and stories of animals were the chief ones that had any charm for me. But in this I have no doubt I was only like the generality of children, who all like much

the same sort of things during those early years. These tastes often fall off, or alter as the children grow older, especially if they have no help or special encouragement from older persons to keep them alive, and I had no relations with any particular knowledge of natural history, or taste for it. However, I think I can say what it was that fixed my taste for these things from falling off, and that was the beginning to make a collection. Is it a good thing to make a collection? Is it a thing to be encouraged in children? There are various opinions about this. With regard to collections in general, there is no doubt that the idea of forming collections is with many only originated by a desire of outdoing some one else in something that may for the time be fashionable; and so a man, who has plenty of money at his command, gets together a large collection of birds or butterflies, or ferns or plants, about which he knows nothing. He cannot tell from whence his specimens come, or anything about their habits or history. I look upon such a collection as this as the most worthless one possible: worthless to the possessor, and of very little use to any one else, because of the scanty information that can be gathered about it. And children, like grown-up people, are led by example to try and make collections. They see how pretty a collection looks which has been made by some play-fellow, and they think they should like to have something as pretty, and so they begin to catch butterflies, or take birds' eggs. But if this is only done from force of example, and the desire to have something pretty, the zeal in the pursuit will soon flag.

It takes some trouble to find out the names and

classification, and relative value of the various objects of pursuit, and not only to secure them, but to take care of them after they are secured. For instance, we will suppose that in trying to make a collection of butterflies, which is perhaps the most likely for a child to begin with, he is checked from catching a number of specimens of the same sort, and is obliged himself to take care of those that he has caught, to set them out properly, and put them away carefully, and not allowed to catch any more unless he can show that this has been done, and that he knows something about the names or the history of those that he has got; if he is collecting merely for collecting's sake, or to imitate another, or from the love of chasing and destroying pretty living objects, he will soon give it up. The pleasure will not be worth the trouble entailed. This will be a very good way of putting a stop to any wanton sacrifice of life which many suppose must be associated with forming a collection, and which they very reasonably think should be discouraged in children. But with such precautions as I have suggested there will be very little danger of this pernicious habit, and then, I think, the making a collection is a thing decidedly to be encouraged in the young. It confirms the child in the pursuit of some particular taste. It is a centre of attraction for him. To look at it is his reward after his trouble. It is an incentive to fresh exertions. And besides this, his collection is the beginning of a book of reference, a diary, for his life. My collections, whether of birds or of butterflies, are such to me. Each of them has been made at spare moments snatched out of a period of forty years of my life which was most of it

rather a busy one. But either of these two bring back to me, look at them when I will, memories innumerable—of bright summer days, early spring mornings, cold snowy afternoons; rambles by sea and land, fen or heath, wood and river, mountain and plain; of friends living or dead; of fireside chat;—almost every circumstance of my life can be pictured over again as I look at a few stuffed birds, or some drawers full of insects. I say therefore unhesitatingly that it is a good thing for one who shows a taste for natural history to make a collection. How well I can remember the beginning of our collection! It was in the butterfly line. We chil-

No. 1.—Lime Hawk Moth.

dren had already begun to catch a few butterflies with our hats or caps, and to pin them on loose sheets of letter-paper, when one evening a lady, to whose house we had been invited to tea, gave us a specimen of the Lime Hawk Moth (*Smerinthus Tilice*), which she had caught, telling us

at the same time its name and its value. This was something quite different from anything that we had ever had before, and on our return we were allowed to have a drawer to keep it in, and to put any others there that we might catch. About the same time my sister returned from a visit at a house where there were many boys who were butterfly collectors, and brought back with her the knowledge of how to set out the insects, as well as the names of several species.

Upon this we were set up by our parents with butterfly-nets and the two volumes in the Naturalist's Library on British Butterflies, and, a part of an out-of-the-way closet which had several deal drawers in it having been handed over to us, we commenced what we called a museum.

We had much to contend with at first. Our drawers were not lined with cork or paper, so our specimens were apt to tumble about, and we had never heard of such a thing as entomological pins, so some of the insects appeared almost as if they had been transfixed with a spear or pike; still I have some of those early treasures even now in my cabinet, and notably that which I look upon as the foundation of our collection, the Lime Hawk Moth given me by Miss Bearblock, at Eton, more than forty years ago.

And our collection of birds.—It was a few years after this, when I was a lower boy at Eton, that I heard in a letter from home that our gardener had shot in our kitchen garden a curious bird called a Crossbill, and that my father had sent it to be stuffed. How well I recollect, when I returned home, what a delight this case was to us children. How our fancy ran upon birds, their habits, and their names. It was a discovery to us to find that a carpenter in the village was also a birdstuffer, and many were our visits to his shop to see what specimens he had got. It was about this time that my father began to take in for us Yarrell's "History of British Birds," the

No. 2.—Common Crossbill.

first numbers of which were then appearing. We studied them greedily, and were never tired of copying the illustrations. Then came observations out of doors. The gardener was allowed to shoot us a few specimens of the commoner birds, which, as well as some pets that from time to time died in their cages, were sent to the village birdstuffer, and the nucleus of a collection was formed. Our taste for ornithology progressed rapidly, and our observations became more and more accurate as far as we had the opportunity of exercising them. And then, among my schoolfellows at Eton, I began to make the acquaintance of naturalists. I found others besides myself who were collectors either of birds or butterflies, and, besides the information that I picked up from them, my emulation was aroused. I was shown, by those older than myself, one or two really valuable collections, and in the birdstuffers' shops I was able to pick up a few rather rare specimens that were within the reach of my allowance of pocket-money, which encouraged me to entertain the idea of forming a regular collection of British birds.

Ah! those happy days during the early period of carrying this scheme into execution! The field of research just opened seemed so vast, and each day brought some fresh discovery or experience. What an interest it was to find out for ourselves the various warblers and small birds, new to us, common though they might be, as they came over in the spring, or to fit the real name to birds which we heard designated by the common people as cuckoo's mates, fire-tails, dishwashers, bags, wind-thrushes, and a vast number whose names were utterly unknown to these simple

folk, although they saw them every day. And then our chief collecting-ground was a very pleasant spot.

Towards the lower end of our village there ran a very sluggish but prettily-winding brook, well known to those who followed the Pytchley, or the Duke of Grafton's hounds, as Everdon Brook. Upon this brook were two water-mills, at a distance of perhaps half a mile from each other. Between these two mills the brook was very thickly bushed, and a great variety of trees grew in tolerable profusion. The ground was very much diversified with steep banks and tangled

No. 3.—Roman bridge at Everdon.

brakes; and a long line of pollard willows marked the straight course of the cut to each mill. The brook abounded in reeds, and flags, and every kind of common aquatic plant, and on the bank of the higher milldam was a small osier-bed, from which, though it was not fifty yards long, nor half that in width, I once saw three foxes bolt at the same time, thus sorely puzzling the pack which had just been thrown in. This stretch of ground from mill to mill was our ornithological paradise.

Here I made my first acquaintance with the various warblers and other small birds. We were too young at that time to be trusted with firearms ourselves, but my father had a servant, as gardener and general

out-door man, who had a gun of his own, and was a very good shot. He was enlisted into our service: we provided the ammunition, we pointed out the birds which we wanted, and he secured them for us; and then, in order that neither his work nor our lessons might be hindered by this, the time generally chosen for our collecting was the early morning. At 4 a.m., or even earlier sometimes, in the month of April or beginning of May, while the rest of the household were sound asleep, would my brother and myself let ourselves out at the back door, and sally forth down the village to our friendly gardener's cottage. With much rapping at his windows we would rouse him up, and, as soon as he could get himself ready, away we went to our happy hunting-grounds.

How lovely is a woodland scene on a bright early spring morning! How delicious every sight, every sound, every scent! Although the clear sky and the newly risen sun impart a gentle and pleasant warmth that speaks of a far hotter time to come by-and-by, how fresh, and green, and cool, and moist is each leaflet, and blade of grass! The cattle, some sleepy, and apparently not yet willing to rise from the spot which they have chosen for their couch during the past night; some having just begun the crunch, crunch of the dewy grass which sounds so clear and crisp on the ear before there are any other noises bespeaking business or toil from the neighbouring village to mingle with it and divide the attention. And then the thought that this is a treat that you have all to yourself; others *might* have had it, but they have not taken the trouble; you have taken some trouble to win it, and you have won it, and you find

it amply repays you. There may be a certain amount of conceit in it; but there is undoubtedly a feeling of satisfaction. Such I am sure were our feelings. But I am afraid I am allowing these pleasant memories to carry me away, and am wandering from my subject; and here we are on our scene of action.

The Chiff-chaff is in full song, and we are well acquainted with him and possess a specimen, so we would not think of interfering with him. But what is that other little fellow whose song sounds so plaintive with a minor cadence from the top of that tall tree? Yes! there he is—that must be the bird. He is just the size of a Chiff-chaff, and at that distance looks the same colour: we must get him. Well! here he is; and now that I have him in my hand I cannot see any difference between him and the Chiff-chaff, and yet how different was his song. From his size I expect he will prove to be the Willow Warbler, but we shall see from Yarrell when we get home.

The Black-cap Warbler is a well-known friend. He is so easily distinguishable, and answers so well to his title, that no one could fail to recognize him, but what are these two that we have got—one like a Black-cap, with a chestnut cap instead of a black one, and the other a Black-cap with no cap at all? Yarrell must show us this also. And so Yarrell did, for when we got home we found that we had got, as we expected, a specimen of the Willow Warbler, or Willow Wren, and also a female specimen of the Black-cap, and a Garden Warbler.

During these early morning rambles we became perfectly well acquainted with the note, appearance, and flight, of most of the spring visitors, and many

others besides. Among our earliest spoils were the Sedge and Reed Warbler, the Redstart, and the Black-headed Bunting. The villagers were soon aware of our collecting propensity, and word was continually being brought to me that a "*strange bird*" had been seen in this place or that. Most marvellous, I well recollect, was the description given of a very "*fine-coloured*" bird which was said to frequent a certain hedge, and which, on being secured, turned out to be the Whinchat; and a very pretty bird it certainly is, and we found it to be very tolerably abundant in our neighbourhood. The Stonechat I never saw there.

A bird that very soon particularly attracted me by his song, and which has always been an especial favourite of mine, was the Tree Pipit. There is no very great variety in his notes certainly; but then their power, and richness, and plaintiveness, and the manner of their being given, which so soon called our attention to him, made us take a very great fancy to him. To see him in the bright spring morning ascend on quivering wing from the top of a tree and then, spreading his wings and tail, float slowly down in a half-circle, singing with all his might and making both a *rallentando* and *diminuendo* on his last notes as he came again to the same twig which he had left, seemed to bring before us a most perfect little master of both expression and action. We were led into a most curious mistake about him at first. From having read in Yarrell that the Woodlark sometimes sings perched on the branch of a tree, and also having seen in "*White of Selborne*" the lines,—

"While high in air and poised upon his wings
Unseen the soft enamour'd Woodlark sings,"

we came to the conclusion that this bird, which was evidently of the lark tribe, was a Woodlark. However, we found out our mistake before very long, and since that time, both in Dorsetshire and more especially in Devonshire, I have constantly had the opportunity of hearing the real song of the Woodlark, which has an indescribable charm, particularly on a lovely spring evening, or at night.

All the commoner birds belonging to a rich, enclosed, woodland country were to be found in this part of Northamptonshire. There were no heaths, large commons, or unenclosed ground; consequently such birds as the Wheat-ear, Stonechat, or Dartford Warbler were never met with. Our streams were too sluggish to allow the presence of the Water Ouzel. Of the Raptures, when we first went there in 1835, the kite was not a rare bird. I have seen it many times myself, sailing in the air near large woods; and one taken in the neighbourhood lived for many years in captivity. But they were nearly exterminated before we began our collection. The Kestrel and Sparrowhawk were plentiful and I occasionally heard of a Buzzard. Once a nest of Hobbies was taken in Everdon Wood, one of which was reared in the village. Of the smaller birds, some local ones were not unfrequent. The Tree-sparrow was sometimes particularly abundant; and we had occasional visitations of the Brambling, or Mountain Finch, in great numbers. The Red-backed Shrike was not uncommon.

The country was too well drained to produce any great number of the water-birds or waders. Both Snipe and Woodcock were very rare. The Moorhen and Little Grebe were to be found on our brook, and I

have one specimen of the Great Crested Grebe that was killed there. Herons visited us in plenty from Althorpe. A friend of mine had a Bittern that was killed on a brook in the neighbourhood. But the great resort of all the aquatic birds was the fine piece of water, three miles long and a mile broad, known as Daventry Reservoir, and also the smaller one not far from it known as the Old Reservoir. Here all the rarities were to be met with. Here summer after summer used to come the Black Tern and many kinds of Sandpipers. Here the Grey Phalarope was sometimes procured, one specimen of which came to our lot. From this place also we secured once a specimen of the Fork-tailed Petrel. Many and various were the treasures that these haunts afforded us.

Of the climbing birds the Green Woodpecker was abundant, as were also the Wryneck and Tree Creeper, and we were able to discover their haunts and their nests, and occasionally the larger spotted Woodpecker was to be met with. All the Tits, except the Crested Tit and Bearded Tit, were to be found. The Kingfisher of course gladdened our eyes occasionally. All of the Swallow tribe were there, and the three common Wagtails,—Pied Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, and Ray's Wagtail. Indeed I have never seen the latter bird so abundant in any part of England; and a very beautiful feature did its bright plumage make in every ploughed field in those bright spring days, flashing before the eager eyes of the young naturalist. We were soon able to fix pretty accurately the dates at which each of our spring visitors might be expected. Though so far north, the Nightingale was generally a very early

arrival, and I once heard its song on the 1st of April, though the 12th was generally about the first day for renewing our acquaintance with this delightful songster.

As I grew older I found ample opportunities of carrying out my researches in natural history during the schooltime at Eton. My lessons now being brought well within my power of accomplishment, I was able, without neglecting either my studies or my share in games, to give some time out of most of the weeks, especially in summer-time, to my favourite pursuit. Being a very keen aquatic, I was able to combine it with the pleasures of boating, and, with one or two companions of a kindred spirit, used to explore all the osier-beds in the neighbourhood of Clewer, Cuckoo Weir, Lower Hope, and other parts of the ever-delightful river. Here I hunted out the nest of the Reed Bunting, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Kingfisher, Sand Martin, and many others. No shooting here of course, or obtaining of specimens, but the habits, song, and flight of each bird were observed, and noted down; a rare specimen was occasionally picked up in the flesh by visiting poulterers' shops in the town, as well as the birdstuffers' dwellings, which I rarely passed without looking in to see whether anything new had been brought in. In this way I one day picked up a specimen of the Little Bittern which had been shot near Surly Hall. My knowledge was increased by visits to the magnificent collection of birds made by the Rev. E. Coleridge, then a master at Eton, and a considerable addition to my own collection was made by a handsome present of several of the larger Raptores from the Rev. E. H. Pickering out

of his own collection, which was afterwards given to the boys' library at Eton.

All that I had read of falconry in my study of birds had filled me with a great wish that that sport could be revived, and when, on a visit to the bird-stuffer's at Eton one day, I found that he had a nest of young Hobbies, I lost no time in securing one, with the idea that I should some day be able to train it. I did not think at that time of the difficulty that I should have in carrying out my project: of the constant and individual care and attention requisite to be given to the bird; of the obstacles which a frequent change of residence between home, and school, and college would present. I did not succeed in training that Hobby to kill any small game for me. I did not succeed afterwards when I tried with two Peregrines. I had not sufficient time at home, and had not proper ground for a trial. But I never regret the efforts that I made. We kept that bird for more than two years, and a most beautiful little creature it was. Of all the falcons none is a greater favourite with me than the Hobby. With its full, dark, lustrous eye, very long wing and graceful outline, I almost doubt whether even the Peregrine, which it exactly resembles in everything except size, is equal to it. We taught it to wear patiently hood and jesses. It became very tame, and would come to us from any part of the garden. On one occasion it was lost, and absent for a month, but it came back again. I really believe now that we might safely have flown it at small birds without any risk of losing it, only we were afraid to try, and I doubt whether we had been sufficiently careful about its wing feathers to give it a fair chance of

killing. It was, however, a most interesting pet to us all, and great were our lamentations at its death, which I think was brought about through some neglect of servants during our absence from home.

No. 4.—The Hobby.

CHAPTER II.

Natural history at Cambridge—Expeditions to the Fens—Short eared Owls and Grasshopper Warblers—Mountain Linnets—Visits to the markets, and purchases there—Falconry.

IF during my last two or three years at Eton, in the midst of the real hard work which was necessary to secure a scholarship at the university, which was with me not only a great wish but a matter of vital importance in determining my career in after-life, I was able to find sufficient leisure to make considerable progress in my favourite pursuit of natural history, much more did I find ample leisure to follow it up at Cambridge, when, having secured the scholarship, the disposal of my time was a great deal more under my own control. A new and much wider field was opened to me. I question if any place in England could be found more favourable to a young naturalist for developing his taste for natural history than Cambridge. The very best books, sympathizing companions, scientific teachers, all within his reach. And then the country itself—ugly, flat, uninteresting; that is the verdict generally pronounced upon it. But to the naturalist it has charms which make him rank it as equal in interest, if not superior, to most of the loveliest, most mountainous, and most attractive counties in our island.

Nor is the characteristic part of the country devoid

of a certain kind of beauty, a beauty peculiar to itself, though that beauty be not the beauty of hill and dale, wood and torrent. Wildness and solitude are to be found here almost as complete as any in the remotest parts of Scotland or Ireland ; and here, in the centre of our densely populated England, you may find on the banks of the sluggish stream a low, dreary-looking dwelling which tells nothing but the truth in the large letters painted as a sign on its front, " Five miles from anywhere."

And, although at first sight the expanse that meets the eye of the wanderer appears nothing but a dreary, black waste, I question whether he will find as he advances into this waste any place carpeted with a greater abundance, a greater variety, and a richer colouring of flowers, than the soft springy ground on which he sets his foot if he enters the fen domain at Quy in the month of May. But this subject has been handled over and over again by far abler pens than mine, and it seems almost an impertinence to say anything in defence of the charms of such scenes as a Kingsley has made interesting and delightful to all who have any feelings that can be moved to appreciate them ; only I could not resist the temptation to say a word in praise of places full of charming reminiscences to me. I know that much of this is now changed ; that cultivation has advanced, and has considerably lessened the area of these happy hunting-grounds ; that the Cambridgeshire of the present day is not the Cambridgeshire of 1850. But I am told that some of it still remains ; that Upware and Quy are not even yet quite things of the past.

I can well recollect my first visit to Quy Fen towards

the end of March in 1849. Having, up to that time, not seen more than three or four snipe in all my life, my astonishment at seeing them get up in wisps, and moving in one day something like a hundred of them, was great. Though my companions who were provided with guns could not get more than three or four shots, and only succeeded in bagging one bird, still the nature of the ground, the walk, and the objects that I saw, were altogether a new experience to me, and I came back delighted with my excursion, and quite determined that these fresh fields of adventure should before long be familiar ground to me.

The spring was advancing, the gun must for the time be laid aside, but entomology was as dear to me as ornithology, and I was fired with an ardent longing to see the Swallow-tail Butterfly (*P. Machaon*), which up to this time I had looked upon as a rarity that I could hardly ever hope to possess, at home in his own chosen stronghold.

A day in these fens in the month of May was a treat to the young entomologist to which he will always look back with the greatest pleasure to the end of his life. A bright, sunny morning, a pleasant drive of about seven miles to the nearest place for stabling our steed, and here we are, with hopes raised high, close to the scene of action in expectation of adding we know not what treasures to our gradually improving collection. As we enter the fen what a different appearance does it present to that which it wore when we last visited it in March; myriads of tiny blue blossoms spangle the mossy-green carpet; insect life is abundant. The bright *M. Artemis*, Greasy Fritillary, is darting hither and thither; over almost every other blossom is hovering the pretty

little *T. Alveolus*, Grizzled Skipper. We are constantly kicking up from under our feet the lovely crimson Cinnabar Moth (*C. Jacobææ*), to flutter a few yards lazily and settle again. We secure as many specimens of these as we want, and then advance farther. And now we catch sight of a treasure which we were told would meet us in this locality. Hovering over one of the bright blossoms, with quivering transparent wings and body perfectly still, is what at first sight looks like a large wild May Bee, but we know that we have now for the first time caught sight of the Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk Moth (*Sesia Bombyliiformis*). A quick stroke of the net, but our intended victim is keensighted and quicker of movement than we are, and away like a flash of lightning, and we see him in a second hovering over another blossom some thirty or forty yards away. An eager chase after him and a wild stroke of the net, and another, and another, are made in vain. Now that he is once on the alert, and aware of our friendly intentions, he is very careful to keep out of our reach, and soon takes himself out of sight altogether. But it is not long before another is in view, and, by proceeding with great caution, we manage to secure him, and so, throughout the day, though many contrive to escape us, we obtain some six or seven specimens. But we have proceeded a long way into the fen before we catch our first sight of the chief object of our visit. At last, near one of the roads that crosses the fen we see a very large pale butterfly moving about, of whose species there can be no doubt, and he does not escape us, and after a short, quick chase is made safe in our collecting-box, and we are the proud possessors of a

P. Machaon caught by ourselves. We did not, however, see many specimens on that first day, nor have I ever seen very many at a time in Quay Fen; nothing at all in comparison with the number I used to see, later on, in Wicken Fen, when I had made its acquaintance.

Still we managed to pick up many different things that were valuable to us; larvæ of the Lappet Moth (*G. Quercifolia*), and of the Emperor Moth (*S. Pavonia minor*), and other commoner things. Nor did we find ourselves always the only ones engaged in a similar quest in the Fen; for, if I remember rightly, on our very first excursion we were fortunate enough to fall in with the great entomologist, Mr. F. Bond with his friend Mr. Barlow, and he showed us a very beautiful variety of *C. Jacobææ*, which he had just taken, in which all the parts which are usually crimson were of a beautiful cream colour. Many such expeditions did I make, during my stay at Cambridge, to Quay, and afterwards to Upware or Wicken Fen.

It has always been a great matter of regret to me that I was never able to go to Whittlesea Mere, except once in the winter, and that was after the draining of the fen had been more than half accomplished.

During my first winter I saw very large bags of snipe brought in from the fen by friends of mine who visited it; but even then the glory of its summer had departed, and the large Copper Butterfly was a memory of the past.

I soon began to enrich my collection of birds by paying frequent visits to the market, where great quantities of wild fowl and aquatic birds were brought in from the fens and decoys. Ruffs in every plumage were brought over, but mostly from Holland. Here I

used to see bitterns, wild swans, garganey, and one day, while examining a duck new to me, and which turned out to be the Ferruginous or Custaneous Duck, I made the acquaintance of the best naturalist and best shot that I ever met, the Rev. R. A. Julian, then an undergraduate like myself, who was inspecting the market for the same purpose that I was. Congenial tastes soon brought about a warm friendship between us, a friendship which I had hoped to renew ten years later, when I moved to his native county of Devon; but, alas! almost directly after my arrival there he was cut off by an early death at Dinan, where he was a most indefatigable and hard-working chaplain.

At Cambridge, however, this friendship was most valuable to me, and through it I was introduced to many of the leading naturalists at the time in Cambridge, and to the young men of similar tastes with ourselves.

We very soon joined ourselves into a society, which we called the Cambridge University Naturalists' Society, which flourished till after I left the University. Very pleasant indeed were our meetings, and especially pleasant were the excursions that we took once or twice a year in the pursuit of natural history. How well I can recollect the first, which was recorded by Julian in the pages of a monthly magazine then coming out, called the *Naturalist*, conducted by Beverley R. Morris, Esq. At that time we were a very small party, and there were only five of us who went on this expedition. I have not the exact day noted, nor is the date given in Julian's account, but it was about the 15th of May, in the year 1851.

It was a lovely morning, and we made an early start, being at the river-side and leaving Cambridge

at 7 a.m. We proceeded down the River Cam in a four oar. When we reached Waterbeach, we were informed by a farmer that some Little Grebes, or Dabchicks, which he, according to the custom of the country, called Dobdivers, were breeding in a pond among some reeds about half a mile distant from the river. As we wished very much to see their nests, we determined to visit this pond, and as there was no boat upon it we decided to carry our boat overland to the place. This was a task which I think we should hardly have undertaken could we have foreseen the severe toil it would entail upon us, and still less if we could have known the little profit that would accrue. But we were then fresh and full of hope, and thought that it would all come in as a pleasant variety in our day's amusement. So we landed, drew our boat on shore, and then lifted it on our shoulders.

Away we went, but we were soon obliged to stop and rest; then up and off again, but we could not go very far without rest. In some places, where the ground was level and smooth, we were able to drag the boat, and this was a relief to our weary shoulders. We tried every change of position, from left to right and from right to left, but many were the groans and sighs before we were able to launch her in the long-wished-for water. And then, to our disappointment, after searching every part of this pond, we could find nothing but moorhens and their nests. Of these eggs we took some curious varieties, and then we had before us the fearful task of taking our boat back again by the way by which we came. However, we knew it must be done, so we started. Our progress each way caused much

amazement or amusement to the ploughboys and cattle as we passed them. Everything must come to an end at last, and most thankful were we to find ourselves in the river once more, and to exchange the exercise of beasts of burden for the more pleasing one of a long swinging stroke, which soon brought us to Upware, which place we reached about eleven o'clock. We then went at once into the fen, chiefly in search of Grasshopper Warblers, and by walking on briskly among the sedge we succeeded in obtaining several fine specimens. We also saw a very fine pair of Harriers, which a man informed us had a nest among the reeds. These birds, with their nest and eggs, were obtained a few days afterwards, and proved to be Montague's Harriers. We saw a quantity of Cuckoos, a few 'Turtle-doves and Lapwing Plovers; the smaller Sedge Warblers were exceedingly numerous, and several fell victims to our guns from their similitude in appearance, when on the wing, to the Grasshopper Warbler, before we had learned fully to distinguish the one from the other. We noticed that when the Grasshopper Warblers alighted they seemed to settle as near as possible to the roots of the reeds, or at any rate to lose no time in creeping downwards towards the bottom. We did not on that occasion find any of their nests, but Julian found one with six eggs in it a few days later. We saw quantities of Swallow-tail Butterflies, and I carried away with me whole nests of the caterpillar of that lovely insect the Scarlet Tiger Moth (*C. Dominula*), the greater part of which I succeeded in rearing. I observe that Newman in his work on British moths does not give Wicken Fen as a locality for this moth, but it was a never-failing nursery for

them in my time, and I saw in a number of *All the Year Round*, as late as 1880, in an article on the fens, that Wicken Fen is still mentioned as a locality for this moth.

But our summer-day's ramble must come to an end. We were twelve miles from Cambridge, so after a hearty meal in the evening we once more took to our oars, and not the least pleasant part of our day's excursion was our journey home, the nightingales singing round us the whole way, as nightingales in Cambridgeshire can sing, till we left our boat just as the clocks in the town were striking the hour of midnight.

Many other expeditions to the fens did we make with various success at different times of the year, but it would be wearisome to give a detailed account of too many. One or two events stand out vividly in my memory. We were out in the fens one day, a party of three, Julian being one, when we were told of some Short-eared Owls having been seen there lately. I recollect well walking on rather in advance of my friends, musing with myself how terrible it would be if I should be the first before whom one of these expected birds got up, and I should miss it, being a very uncertain shot, when my musings were interrupted by a long-winged yellow mass of feathers rising awkwardly right in front of me. I was startled, but I raised the gun and pulled the trigger, and was agreeably surprised to see the bird at once fall to the ground. Startled by the report, another of these same birds rose before Julian, and fell directly to his gun, and before he could pick up his bird another pair rose before our friend E. Outram, who floored

them both right and left. Such wholesale slaughter of these beautiful birds in the summer-time I should be ashamed to take part in now, but we were young then, and too enthusiastic in making our respective collections, and were not a little proud at the time of this exploit, by which, in a few seconds, four beautiful specimens of the Short-eared Owl, in perfect plumage, were in our possession.

Another memorable occasion I can recollect. It was in the month of March. Several of us had undertaken an expedition to Wicken Fen, but we had arrived by different routes. I was strolling by the banks of the river with my gun, when I saw a large flock of small birds fly past, and thinking that it would be a good opportunity of getting some food for an owl which I was keeping in my rooms, I fired, and knocked down several, which I put into my pocket. On arriving at Upware I found that Julian and some others had already gone into the fens, so I went after them and joined them. In the middle of the day we came again into the inn for some refreshment, and I happened accidentally to pull out some of the small birds which I had shot in the morning, and lay them on the table. Julian looked at them, and immediately uttering an exclamation of surprise, asked me where I had found them. I told him, and he said that they were Mountain Linnets, and were very valuable indeed, and that we must lose no time in going back to the same place, and trying to secure some more. This we had no difficulty in doing. A flock was evidently passing this spot on its northward migration for the summer, and each of us that

wanted any were able to secure some beautiful specimens, which formed a welcome addition to our collection.

I noticed that the Merlin was of rather frequent occurrence in the neighbourhood of Cambridge. I do not know whether this is still the case. We used to find the nests of the Tree Sparrow in some of the pollard willows a few miles down the river. One thing surprised me, and that was that during the whole time that I was at Cambridge I never but once saw a woodcock. No doubt they were to be found in the large covers and preserves, but in all the wild open shooting to which I had access, numerous as the snipe very often were, never, except on this occasion, did I see a woodcock. I had been shooting with a friend a few miles from Cambridge in the neighbourhood of the river, and he had wandered ahead of me, till I began to wonder where he could be, though I had occasionally heard his gun. At last I saw him coming back, and he beckoned me forward to join him. He then told me that in a narrow belt of plantation a short distance ahead he had flushed a woodcock and missed it. He was generally a very good shot, but he had marked this bird down several times, fired at it, and could not kill it; till at last he had resolved to come back and fetch me, and see whether any better luck would wait upon me, for he still had the bird marked down. We went on together, and very soon found the bird, and each of us had several more shots at it; but there was something uncanny about that bird, we could not hit it, and at last it disappeared. We thought we had marked it to an inch, but we could not make it rise, and we could not find it dead or alive. And that was

the first woodcock at which I had ever fired, and the only one I ever saw at Cambridge.

The entomologist was able to find many happy hunting-grounds at Cambridge without going nearly so far as the fens. The Cherry Hinton Chalkpit was one of these, and for so small an area of ground it was surprising how many species were to be found here. Here I was first introduced to the beautiful and delicate little Bedford Blue, the tiniest of British butterflies. Such spots as these close at hand were a nice ramble when we only wished to spare an hour or so out of the day for such an amusement. With such resources close at home, and the fens and river for our longer expeditions, ugly, flat, uninteresting Cambridge always supplied me with objects of sufficient beauty and interest during all the time that I was there.

I had always had a great longing to see something of falconry, and it was at Cambridge that I first had the opportunity of gratifying my wish. At that time falconry, at any rate in England, was supposed to be all but a thing of the past. We had heard dim reports that a few gentlemen in Scotland still kept it up; but the revival of it, which took place a few years later, had not commenced, and if there was a hawking club anywhere it was known to very few, and its fame had not reached us at Cambridge. When, therefore, we were told that Barr, the falconer, was staying in Cambridge, and would take his falcons out the following day towards Madingley for some flights at pigeons, it may well be imagined that a large number turned out to see the sport, and that all the members of the Naturalists' Society were sure to be there. Pigeon-

hawking, that is hawking for pigeons thrown up by hand, is, I suppose, the lowest of all the branches of falconry, but it was the only hawking which could be practised within easy access of the town; it was the only way of showing us at all what hawking was like, and it gave us an opportunity of seeing how beautifully the falcon could be trained, its readiness to return to its master, its beautiful flight, soaring, mounting, and stoop. We had many flights that day, several pigeons were killed, and several escaped; but the description of one flight, which I thought the best of all, will be sufficient to picture to those who have never seen hawking something of what it is like, and to give them some idea of the power and swiftness of a falcon's flight.

The company of spectators on foot, horseback, and in carriages, were gathered together on the windward side of a very large, open grass field. There were no fences to speak of, and no trees at all for many fields round. The falconer cast off a very fine falcon, having unhooded her, and as she began to circle round his head he walked away to windward, scattering from time to time as he went some feathers which he picked from a dead pigeon which he held in his hand. She circled higher and higher, keeping her eyes fixed all the time upon her master, and watching every movement of his. He walked on across three or four large fields, the falcon continually rising, till she had mounted to such an enormous height that it seemed to a novice almost impossible, especially with the very large circles that she was now making, that she could ever overtake so fast a bird as a pigeon if he were to cast one off while she was at such a dis-

tance. At last, when we thought that he must by this time have miscalculated the powers of his bird, he suddenly took from a bag a fine fresh pigeon and cast it loose, uttering at the same time the shrillest of whistles. The pigeon did not hesitate for a moment in deciding on its course, but flew at its utmost speed down-wind, straight towards the company in the field. The pigeon had quite the start of one clear field, as the falcon at this moment was at the farthest end of its circle. But now these circles were at an end, and from the clouds a feathered thunderbolt seemed to be shooting. The pigeon flew fast, very fast, but a few short, vigorous strokes of the falcon's wing brought it right over its prey, though still high in air, all the length of start having been annihilated in a few seconds, and with closed wings, down she came with a force that quite took away our breath, and which it seemed to us would have knocked the pigeon to atoms had she succeeded in striking it. But the pigeon had eyes also, and just succeeded in turning aside as her enemy came upon her; and now another start had to be made, for the falcon does not follow its prey as a greyhound does a hare, or as the short-winged hawks, such as the sparrowhawk or goshawk, with a stern chase, but always stoops from above. So this falcon now had again to mount in the air, while the pigeon was continuing its course towards the company as before—with a very definite object, as will be seen presently. A very few seconds, however, sufficed to place the peregrine again in the ascendant, and a second time she came down upon the luckless bird. But another quick turn again saved it, and by the time the falcon was once more above its prey the pigeon had

reached the company assembled in the field. And now we saw what was the object of her tactics. Without a moment's hesitation or any fear of man, she darted right at the place where the spectators were gathered most closely together. Several carriages were drawn up in line, and in at the open window of one of the close carriages flew the poor bird, and out on the opposite side, and then, making a sudden turn, flew over the backs of the horses, and wheeling round, dived under their bellies—so she kept twisting in among the horses and the foot people. In the meantime the falcon waited in the air above, till at last the unhappy pigeon, wearied out, took its course once more across the open field, making for a hedge in the distance. Then down came the falcon again with a most determined swoop, and in a second had its prey in its talons, and bore it to the ground. The falconer quickly ran up, and throwing a piece of meat to his falcon, removed her gently from the quarry, picked it up, and then hooded his bird again, and replaced it on its stand. All the flights that day were much of the same character, but this struck me as being the best, and will serve for a picture of what pigeon-hawking is like. I saw a day very much like this once afterwards, a year or two later, in the Phoenix Park at Dublin, with the same falconer. It gave me an idea of what the sport must be like, when, instead of tame pigeons turned out, wild game is hunted for, and found with the assistance of dogs, beaters, and all the exciting accompaniments of wild sport, and I can well understand the enthusiasm which must animate all those who have had the opportunity of indulging in this truly royal sport. Most thrilling

pictures have been put before me by a dear friend of mine, an eye-witness of it in all its branches, who used to go out with Clough Newcome, and has seen the falcon flown at grouse, Norfolk plover, and the noble heron, and from his description it seemed to equal, if not surpass, the pleasures of either hunting, shooting, or fishing.

CHAPTER III.

Entomological reminiscences—Mothing in evening at Eton, Bromley, and Sheerness—Rambles in Northamptonshire woods—Rarities secured—*V. C. Album*—*T. W. Album*—*S. Apiformis*—Brighton Downs—New Forest—Dorset—Lulworth Cove—Corfe Castle—Death's Head Moths—*S. Convolvuli*—Curious captures of *Deilephila Livornica*.

A WORLD of pleasant reminiscences comes back to me whenever I look at the drawers of my cabinet and think of the various times and places that furnished the treasures which now adorn it. The young entomologist generally does the greater part of his collecting in the day, and among the butterflies rather than among the moths. But this was not the case with us. A young schoolboy has much to call him away from such pursuits during his playhours in the middle of the day. Games are considered of paramount importance, and the cricket-field or the boats have a very strong counteracting influence on his mind; and besides, I was naturally of a rather shy disposition, and in such a large school as Eton, finding very few congenial spirits in the study of entomology, I felt ashamed of being seen starting forth with my green net, and giving up some of the brightest hours of the day to what my companions were unable to appreciate, and what they contemptuously called "bug-hunting." But during

a great part of my early years at Eton I lived at home in my father's house in the cloisters, and very often the evening was at my own disposal.

The College garden was a large one, abounding in shrubs and trees of various kinds, as well as large flower-beds, and also possessing several ivy-covered walls and outhouses, eminently calculated to shelter the nocturnal lepidoptera, and here I was free to roam at will in the twilight with my sister and brothers in pursuit of such treasures as we could pick up. We did not begin by sugaring the trees or plants, for at that time this plan had hardly been thought of by any entomologists, and indeed I myself have never been very successful in that way, although I know it is generally the best method, and almost the only method of securing many of the nocturni; but we used to beat the shrubs and the ivy in the twilight as long as we could see anything that was flying; and as in those early days of our collection almost everything was new to us, hardly any evening passed that we did not make some addition that was valuable to us at the time, although of course we caught over and over again specimens of the same insects, which we could not distinguish as worthless till we brought them to the light. We could see their size and whether they were thick-bodied or thin-bodied moths, and we secured them all for a time, till we became able to distinguish the flight of a great many even in a very uncertain light. Thus we obtained a great many *Geometridæ* of various sorts, and nearly all the different species of Yellow Underwing; *Triphaena Interjecta* and *Janthina* were more abundant here than I have ever seen them anywhere else, and *Alcis Roboraria*, the Oak Beauty,

was also of very frequent occurrence. After our return to the house we used to keep the windows open and see what could be done by light. Of course the Drinker, Oak Egger, Lackey, and Burnished Brass were among our earliest captures in this way. *Mormo Maura* astonished us at first by its great size, till we found out how very common it was, but the Lappet Moth (*G. Quercifolia*) was a really good addition that was made by light during our first year. Of this same insect we were also fortunate enough, soon afterwards, to obtain a full-fed caterpillar, and to succeed in breeding a very good specimen.

Our moth-hunting expeditions in the twilight were continued in the holidays, wherever those holidays might happen to be spent, and the groves at Bromley College added many novelties to our growing collection during one holiday, and the hotel garden at Sheerness during another, besides what we secured in our home in Northamptonshire. But as I grew older I began to be less shy of being seen with a butterfly-net among my companions at Eton, and many an "after twelve" was spent in the Datchet fields, or near Chalvey by Queen Anne's spring, and I was gradually becoming familiar with most of the common butterflies as well as the moths. What a treasure I thought I had secured in those early days when I caught my first large Tortoiseshell (*V. Polychloros*)! As I got higher in the school my rambles could be further extended, and Windsor Park supplied me with the first specimen of the lovely Clouded Yellow (*C. Edusa*). I always found the Lime Hawk Moth particularly abundant at Eton, as also the Poplar Hawk, and the many willows furnished a most liberal supply of Puss Moths. I only met with one

Death's Head Moth while I was at Eton, and one specimen of *Sphinx Convolvuli*, which I took in the evening from some jessamine ; but that specimen was far more beautifully marked than any that I have ever seen in any of the many collections that I have looked over. It has happened twice in my life that I have obtained possession of that rare insect *Deilephila Livornica*, the Rayed Hawk Moth, in rather a remarkable way, and one of those occasions was while I was a boy at Eton. One day, as I was passing the " Wall," as that low wall was called where so many " cads " were wont to come and supply the boys with anything which might tempt them to buy, from every kind of eatable to birds alive or dead, birds' eggs, insects, &c., I saw a " cad," not one of those accustomed to frequent the place, but a stranger, with a beautiful specimen of *D. Livornica*, fresh caught and unset, stuck with a very large pin into his hat. He knew nothing of its value, and was very glad indeed to accept a shilling for it, and I was equally glad to take it home and set it, and place it in my collection. The way I obtained my other specimen of *D. Livornica* was much more remarkable, but that will be related later on when I come to tell of my doings in Devonshire. I think I have dwelt quite long enough upon my collecting experiences in entomology at Eton.

By far the greater part of my collection of insects was made in the neighbourhood of our Northamptonshire home. That district was, as far as I am aware, quite unknown to entomologists, and, at any rate, at that time was not recorded in any book as a locality for anything, but we found many of the woods in that part of the country very favourable for our pursuit,

and one in particular, which was the nearest of all, was especially rich in the number of species that it supplied. It has long been a theory of mine that there are very few places in England which have not within easy reach some very good locality for insects if it were only explored, and that it is the fact of an entomologist going to live in a place, and carefully hunting out everything that is to be found there, which makes certain spots become so famous. Everdon Wood, or Everdon Stubbs as it was frequently called, had been known for years as a favourite point for a hunted fox, but I do not suppose that to this day it is known to any beyond the members of my own family as a rich sporting-ground for the entomologist. But this it certainly was at the time I speak of, from about 1845 to 1858, and I have no reason to suppose that it is in any way different now. It was not at all a large wood, and was composed chiefly of oak. It was barely a mile distant, and was our most frequent resort when we were at home. Here most of the ordinary wood Butterflies and Moths were to be met with. That part of the country was certainly not rich in fritillaries, the Silver Washed Fritillary, *A. Paphia*, and *M. Euphrosyne*, the Pearl Bordered Fritillary, were the only two to be found, and the latter by no means abundantly. But some other things, which I have since found to be very local, were very abundant, particularly so the large Tortoiseshell (*V. Polychloros*), of which I have taken five specimens at one sweep of the net. At that time I little imagined I should ever be in a place where I should never see one of these insects from year's end to year's end. Another very local insect which was always to be met with there, and in some years very abundantly,

and which I have never found since that time, was that curiously-shaped butterfly, the Comma (*V. C. Album*). How well I can remember our exclamations of wonder and delight on first discovering this insect! It was in my father's grounds, and to our great grief and disappointment it eluded the sweep of the net and was gone. It was about a fortnight afterwards, on a Sunday afternoon, that we saw another. There was some doubt as to what we ought to do, but the temptation was too great. The net was brought out, and to our great rapture, the prize was secured. It was not till some time after this that we found out how frequently the insect was to be met with in the wood. I always had a very great admiration for this insect. Its flight in circles so strong and swift and graceful—and then its colour; when seen in the cabinet it does not strike the eye as a particularly bright object, but when seen with its wings open, and the sun shining upon it amidst the dark foliage of a wood, it blazes like a gem against some dark setting. It was always a most welcome prize to us, though I had no idea, when we met with it so frequently, that, after leaving that neighbourhood, I should never see it again. Another insect, the capture of which used to give us great pleasure, although we knew it to be common in most oak woods, was *T. Quercus*, the Purple Hairstreak, on account of the difficulty of reaching it. We always considered it the greatest possible fun to make an expedition to the wood in July, or the beginning of August, armed with poles about sixteen feet long, with a light bag-net at the end of them. A sunny day was an absolute necessity, or the insects would not fly, and we could not easily discover them at rest. Arrived at

the wood, we soon saw numbers of these little creatures flitting about among the tops of the trees; and then we used to look about to find out those which were lowest and most favourable for our purpose. Then we commenced operations. But these operations were attended with great difficulty. For to make a stroke at a flying insect sixteen feet above our heads, or to sweep it when settled on a leaf at such a height, and then to give a dexterous turn to the net, and bring our prize in safety to the ground, was a task of no small difficulty. And, moreover, *T. Quercus* is a very tender insect, not at all capable of enduring rough usage, and the delicate plumage of his wings suffers most terribly from any rude blow; consequently out of those specimens which we did contrive to secure in this way, very few were worth keeping to adorn our cabinet.

But the difficulty of obtaining good specimens constituted the charm of the capture, and we were generally able to catch enough to reward us for our trouble. Of course we always kept one ordinary butterfly-net in reserve for those which would leave the higher parts of the trees and come down and settle on the brushwood, and in one week in 1858 I was fortunate enough to capture in this way two of the far more rare *T. W. Album* (Black Hairstreak), which had never been recorded till that time as occurring in that district. We secured innumerable moths by beating the brushwood, amongst others the lovely Beautiful Carpet (*Melanippe Albicillata*). *Calligenia Miniata*, the Pink Arches, was often met with. On one evening, while walking with some pupils, I took a beautiful specimen of the Hornet Clearwing (*Sesia Apiformis*) at rest on

the branch of an oak-tree. On another occasion in this wood, I saw the Purple Emperor (*Apatura Iris*), but it was flying far out of my reach, and I could only watch its evolutions, and admire them. But I have said enough to show how many valuable insects this unknown wood could produce.

But the area for forming our collection of lepidoptera was not confined to the neighbourhood of Eton, or our Northamptonshire home, even in those early stages while I was a boy at Eton. It happened occasionally that our summer holidays were spent in visits to friends in various parts of the country, and then we had the opportunity of securing local insects that had been up to that time unknown to us. I have already mentioned some of our doings at Bromley in Kent, and at Sheerness, but a very pleasant holiday stands out vividly in my recollection which was spent at Brighton. I had been told before that the Greasy Fritillary, *M. Artemis*, and the Clifden Blue, *P. Adonis*, which were both of them new to us, were to be met with here, and it was not long before I went with my brother in search of them. Oh, those delightful rambles over that endless succession of downs carpeted with every variety of tiny flower, so bright, so sunny, with the wide expanse of glittering sea for a background! Young as we were, and ardent in our pursuit, our eyes were quite able to appreciate the beauty of the scene around us. Many expeditions did we make to this fascinating hunting-ground, which I have never visited since, and we soon obtained a good series of *Adonis* and *Artemis*, besides the Chalk Hill Blue, *P. Corydon*, and many other insects very valuable to us at that time. It was our first experience of collecting in a chalk district. It has

never been my fortune to stay for any length of time on a chalky soil, which I have always heard is the most productive of any for the entomologist; the neighbourhood of Saffron Walden in Essex, and the Brighton Downs are the only two chalky places which I have had the opportunity of exploring.

A year or two after this we had quite a different experience, and made our first acquaintance with the insects peculiar to the heath. An uncle of mine had at that time a living in Hampshire, not far from Ringwood, on the borders of the New Forest, and we were asked to spend our summer holidays with him. Here was an entirely new scene for our labours. I shall never forget our surprise at our first introduction to the New Forest to find that so many a vast expanse in it was entirely destitute of all trees. Up to that time our idea had been that forest and wood were almost synonymous terms, only that a forest implied an enormous extent of ground covered with wood; and then to find that in this forest we might in some places roam for miles without even seeing anything which we should call a wood, was quite a shock to our feelings. But we soon became reconciled to this new idea of a forest; and the more so when we found how very productive to the entomologist these wild open spaces proved to be. In truth these heath-covered slopes were a lovely picture, and when backed up, as they often were, with here a park-like expanse of green turf studded with magnificent timber, and there a thick wood whose impenetrable mazes showed a blackness in their recesses forming a strong contrast to the bright foreground, they made a deep impression on our minds, and we were glad to think that our favourite

pursuit was to be followed amid scenes so charming to every sense.

Our collecting here was chiefly done in the daytime, and we were introduced to several insects in abundance which up to that time we had considered either very rare or very local. Neither in Northamptonshire nor at Eton had we had much experience of heath as a collecting-ground, and of course such an extent of heath as the New Forest affords put before us many entirely new species, new that is to us. The chief that stand out in my memory were the little Silver Studded Blue (*P. Ægon*), which we found to be the commonest blue of that region, and the Clouded Buff Moth (*E. Russula*) which was very abundant, of both of which we took long series. At that time I had never heard of those lovely Crimson Underwings, *C. Sponsa*, or *C. Promissa*, and even if I had, as I have said before, we were never very successful at sugaring, so we went away without obtaining any specimens of those insects, though since that time I have obtained a beautiful series of both; but we found quite enough to employ our time, and whenever I look over the drawers of my cabinet I see numerous bright objects which recall sunny rambles during those few very pleasant weeks which we spent in the charming neighbourhood of the New Forest.

I have already given an account of what I did in the way of collecting lepidoptera at Cambridge. Some few years after leaving the University circumstances led me to a fresh home, and I quitted Northamptonshire. It was a remarkable thing that on the very morning I was leaving my old home, as I was driving to the station I saw for the first time that I

had ever seen it in Northamptonshire, a specimen of *C. Edusa* flying by the roadside. Up to that time it seemed quite unknown in that district. This was in the year 1858. I have seen it there since when on a visit, and in tolerable abundance, in the year 1877. But before that I never met with any one who had seen it there. It was a great surprise to me. But I left it undisturbed to pursue the even tenor of its way.

I felt very sad at parting with the old familiar woods and lanes. And I had now, though I did not know it at the time, bidden a long farewell to *V. Polychloros* and *V. C. Album*. The former I have only seen once or twice, and the latter never, since. But I expected my exchange, so far as entomology was concerned, to prove an advantageous one. And so I think it really turned out to be. I was going to a small village in Dorset, close to Poole, and certainly during my stay there I increased my collection more than I have ever done at any other time either before or since.

The vast heaths and sandy soil, being very much like what we had seen in some parts of the New Forest, produced for the most part the same kind of insects; but being close to the sea there were many others also which we had not found farther inland. I never in any other place saw *C. Edusa* so abundant as it was here. I have seen one large clover-field so covered with these beautiful insects, that no space of four or five yards square could be picked out which was not occupied by one or more of them. The var. *Helice* was of course to be met with occasionally, but I thought it remarkable that during the year and a half that I was there I never once came across *Hyale*. *H. Semele* was very abundant. I soon found out many

favourable localities for insects which up to this time had not often fallen in my way. All the three larger Fritillaries, Dark Green, *Aglaia*, High Brown, *Adippe*, and Silver Washed Fritillary, *Paphia*, were of frequent occurrence in all the wooded places, as also *M. Euphrosyne* and *Selene*. Of blues, too, I found *P. Argiolus* very abundant, which I had not met with in my northern home, and *Agestis* was more frequent here than I have ever seen it elsewhere.

Then we fell in with many moths new to us, *A. Myrtilli*, *H. Dipsacea*, very local even in this heathy country, and several different sorts of Footman ; indeed the number of smaller moths seemed almost endless. And the plants which I met with offered a new charm. Here for the first time I saw larkspur growing wild. The ferns were a great contrast both in variety and luxuriance to anything that I had seen up to that time. And even since that time in ferny Devon itself, I have never seen the noble *Osmunda regalis*, plentiful as it is here, growing to such a height, or such a circumference as those which I saw near Lytchet, a place only three miles away from our new home. Nor was entomology the only charm for our rambles amid these scenes. I had not wandered long among the heaths before I found that a small bird, of which I had often read, but which I hardly ever expected to see, was quite common here, and that was the Dartford Warbler so fully described by Montagu. And a most interesting and amusing little fellow he was to watch in every motion. So different in his habits and appearance from any warbler that I had ever yet seen, he could not fail to strike the attention. Of course the wild fowl and waders were numerous in this county of many bays and mudflats,

and some of them were brought before my notice, but as this chapter professed to be chiefly entomological I will return to the records of what we did among the butterflies and moths once more.

I was struck on my first arrival in the parish with the very great extent of potato-fields which I observed, and I asked several of my parishioners, when they were digging these up in the autumn, to bring me all the large grubs which they might happen to turn up. The result of this was that in one season, 1859, I obtained no less than ten chrysalides of the Death's Head Moth, *A. Atropos*; and not only this, but I was fortunate enough to succeed in getting very fine and perfect specimens from every one of them. I had had the chrysalis of this insect several times before, but every one had died in that state. All that I did to secure this fortunate result was to place the chrysalis in a large flower-pot, buried about two or three inches deep in mould, and to keep this mould constantly rather damp. As far as I remember, the chrysalis always worked its way very near to the surface just before the imago emerged. Of course the flower-pot was covered with muslin, raised by sticks a sufficient height to allow the moth to develope his wings when he came out. This always took place in the night, but whether this was accidental or not I do not pretend to say. Since that time I have succeeded in breeding *Atropos* both from larva and pupa, but never to anything like such an extent as ten perfect insects from ten pupæ in one year, nor have I ever heard of any one else who has done so. And never shall I forget the sensation produced among the servants in the house by the squeaking noise heard in the cupboard when the first of these large insects,

having escaped from his temporary shroud and dried his wings, was walking round and round his place of confinement to try to discover, as I suppose, some means of exit by which he might extend his travels and make acquaintance with the world outside. They all came out during the month of November. Many specimens of *S. Convolvuli* were met with during that year near our house, and I managed to secure two, which were found among the timber stored up for ship-building. The stag-beetle was particularly abundant here, and that magnificent sawfly, *Sirex Gigas*, was of frequent occurrence. Another very pretty little insect, which, as far as my experience goes, is very local, for I have never met with it anywhere else, was the Green Forester, *P. Statices*, which was to be found fairly abundant at Swanage. But before I had been long in Dorsetshire I discovered that a far more local species than any of the above was to be obtained in profusion by a visit at the right time of year to a spot which was easily to be reached and explored in a day. Lulworth Cove, the headquarters of *H. Actæon*, was only distant about an hour by rail, with a walk of three or four miles afterwards, and a visit there seemed to promise a most interesting expedition.

Accordingly about the middle of July, having received full directions as to the route from an entomological friend, a chemist in Poole, I started on a sunny morning well armed with a net and collecting-boxes. And a most delightful and successful day I had in this charming spot. My directions had been so well given that I had no difficulty in finding the exact place to commence operations. But the area over which these merry little creatures extend their

gambols is, or at any rate was at that time, very small. They are only to be found on the east side of the Cove, and only here over a small bit of broken ground and undercliff, covered with herbage, which reached a very little distance. Directly I surmounted the cliff I found that I had got beyond the limits of their domain. They were flitting merrily about, but they were so small and so obscure that it required a quick sight and a quick hand to secure them. And besides this, every passing cloud that obscured the sun for a moment, caused them instantly to subside and hide themselves among the grass. However, I managed very easily during the time that I had to spare to catch as many as I wanted. Besides *Actæon*, I saw here a few specimens of *Tages*, and two of *A. Luctuosa*, new to me, and a few *P. Adonis* on the top of the cliff. *Edusa* was, as usual, abundant, and so was also a moth, which I have never met with before or since, *Selidosema Plumaria*, but whether it is really a very local insect or not I do not know. I took a very nice series of them, which help to remind me every time I look at them of a very pleasant day long ago spent near the home of the owner of the famous *Alarm*, whose triumphs over the *America* were at that time the theme of conversation among all interested in yachting, in that yachting neighbourhood. At Lulworth also I first made acquaintance with *A. Galatea*, which I have since seen in many other places.

I was sufficiently pleased with my expedition to resolve to give Lulworth Cove another trial, and the second time I varied my route by only going as far as Wareham by rail, and then hiring a carriage direct to

Lulworth for the rest of the journey. And a very pretty drive I had, with a companion who had joined me on this occasion, and I was no less successful than before in securing treasures for my cabinet. And that was the last that I saw of Lulworth and its Cove, but it left a pleasing picture in my mind that will never fade away. I was such a short time in Dorset, and was so fully occupied while I was there, that I was not able to find out half of what I am sure might have been discovered in the neighbourhood. Branksea Island, which was just opposite to my house, would, I feel certain, have amply repaid a thorough exploration. And then there were innumerable small islands in these winding bays about Poole and Wareham which, I expect, were never fully investigated. At that time I had several boys as pupils, and we used to make boating expeditions, sometimes for fishing, sometimes for natural history, but it was not easy to accomplish much in the time which we had at our disposal. It required some knowledge and experience to steer a boat safely among these vast mudflats, when, if by any chance we got aground when the tide was ebbing, it would be at the very least six or seven hours before we should get afloat again, and till we did get afloat there would be no possibility of getting to land, for walking over the mud without regular mud-shoes—large flat pieces of board—was out of the question. And to spend many hours in an open boat, in such a situation, with darkness coming on, was not a pleasing prospect. It is true the proper channel was always marked out with upright poles, with a broom at the head of them, at regular intervals, but these were not easy to see in the dusk, and the channels were so numerous, and the

routes so various, and they intersected one another so often, that it seemed far easier to lose one's way than to find it.

However, we never did meet with any accident in this way, though we often went out, after we had been at the place for a little time, without any boatman to guide us. In the long days there was little risk in doing this, and it was in this way that we paid our first and only visit to Corfe Castle. From the windows of my house I could see, every day, this ruin shining in the sunlight, and it did not seem a long distance off. So, having heard that the Marbled White was to be obtained in abundance on the hill on which the castle stood, and having a desire to see more closely a place so famous in history, I resolved to take my boys for an expedition there by water. Starting in good time, and taking provisions for the day, we chartered a boat and set out. We found the distance much longer and the road more intricate and difficult to find than we had anticipated, and in consequence of this the best hours of the day for collecting had passed before we reached our destination; but we did get there, and managed to secure a fair number of specimens of the insect of which we were in search, as well as to make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the ruins of this famous fortress, before we were obliged to return to our boat. Of course, we had stayed to the utmost limit of the time which we dared to allow ourselves for our homeward journey, and I own that I felt some anxiety as to whether darkness might not come upon us before we reached the safer and better known parts of our course; but all went well, and we arrived home in good time by daylight, with the memory of another delight-

ful day to add to those already stored up in the pursuit of entomology.

I believe there were few places in that neighbourhood of which I did not make trial in collecting. We paid visits to Bournemouth, Wimborne, and all the intervening country, and went even as far as Parley Heath and Christchurch. On one occasion I had taken a rather curiously-marked specimen of *H. Dipsacea*, which, from comparing it with the plate in Humphreys and Westwood's book I thought was *H. Scutosa*, and announced it as such in a number of the *Entomologists' Weekly Intelligencer*. This brought about a correspondence between myself and the Rev. O. Pickard Cambridge, the well-known authority on British spiders, who showed me my mistake; but the correspondence so begun led to his paying us a visit, which paved the way for another entomological expedition. He looked over the whole of my cabinet, and then told me that he was glad to be able to say, to compensate for my disappointment about *Scutosa* that he had discovered a small moth among my drawers which he was sure was a new British species. This was a *Pimpelia* which I had caught during the summer, at the sandhills, and which more nearly resembled *Palumbella* than anything else. He took it away with him and showed it to Mr. Bond, and it was exhibited at the British Museum, where much discussion took place, as to whether it was really a new species, or only a very curiously-marked variety. The question was to be decided by visiting the locality in the following season, but before that following season came I was hundreds of miles away, and whether anything was ever done to decide the point I never knew.

But Mr. Cambridge noticed that I had not at that

time any specimens of the very local *Heliophobus Hispidus*, and as it was then the month of October, just the proper time for procuring this insect, he proposed to meet me at Weymouth, and that we should make an expedition to the Isle of Portland, where it was frequently to be found. So this brought about my only visit to that curious spot. If I had gone by myself I do not think I should have succeeded in finding a single specimen of these moths. They were not flying about, but were at rest upon the grass, and it required a very keen and well-practised eye to discover them. But my companion was well used to this sort of work, and before very long managed to place in my collecting-box some eight or ten beautiful specimens of this prettily-marked little insect. A most pleasant day we had in this curious place, and many were the spiders bottled between us for the furtherance of that work which he was then just beginning. And that was my last entomological expedition in Dorset. Two months after that I bade farewell to the county, to seek a home still farther south and west in South Devon, and I have never seen it since, but the memory of it is very pleasant to me, and I am sure that I added more to my cabinet, and learned more about entomology during the year and a half that I spent there than I have ever done at any other time, and I consider it to be one of the most favourable localities for a butterfly collector that I have ever visited.

CHAPTER IV.

Early fishing recollections—Large perch in Daventry Reservoir—Pike and eels in brooks—First trout-fishing—A walking tour in North Wales—Snowdon—Various reminiscences.

I CAN hardly say when it was that my great fondness for fishing first began to develope itself. I know that it has become to me the sport which I infinitely prefer to all others, but I cannot say of myself that I was a fisherman from my earliest childhood. I cannot speak, as many do, of some occasion when I went out with a stick and a piece of string and a bent pin to catch minnows, and of then catching a trout or some large fish, and from that moment having my taste fixed as an angler. Though I lived close to the banks of the Thames, I do not think that during my early years as an Eton boy I often tried my hand at the gentle craft, and when I did, I am quite sure that I was never very successful. When I saw, as I frequently did, of a summer's evening, a large trout of six or eight pounds' weight leap out of the water off the end of the Fellows' Eyot, a dream would come before my eyes of myself becoming unexpectedly the captor of one of these monsters, and bringing it home in triumph to my astonished family; but I felt pretty sure at the time that it was but a dream, and I had no idea of setting myself to work perseveringly to acquire

the skill which should enable me to turn it into a reality. From the time that I have become really a fisherman at all I have been essentially a *fly*-fisherman and nothing else, and I do not think that the Thames at Eton is a favourable river for making a boy a fly-fisher. With a worm I used to go out occasionally and catch a few chub or perch or dace, and of course some gudgeon, and I was shown how on favourable days to secure some roach with gentles or paste after ground-baiting the place beforehand. I can well remember our surprise at the success which attended our first effort in this way when a friend of my father's, a noted fisherman, who was on a visit, took us to the river and showed us how to proceed, and the result was that in less than two hours we were able to carry home such a basket of fish as we had never caught before in a whole year's fishing, amongst them being some very large ones, which our friend had caught with a single hair.

My father had been a very good trout-fisher as a young man, having had much practice in the streams of Kent, and the stories which he told made me wish after a time to try my hand at fly-fishing. He was willing to encourage me in this, and set me up with a fly-rod and tackle. I went to the river and whipped away with a black gnat, but did little more than make a splash in the water. An elder boy passing by, took my rod, and in a very few casts caught two or three bleak, which were sporting before us in hundreds, but I vainly tried to follow his example. I did not persevere very much, but after a time I did learn to catch these bleak with a fly, and some dace also, but this was all I could do for a long time. As I grew

older I saw some very fine chub caught with a large red palmer, and, adopting the same bait, managed after many unsuccessful trials to catch one or two, but never any of more than half a pound weight. In fact, all the fishing that I ever did at Eton was not worth recording, except as an introduction to the many more eventful fishing reminiscences of later years. I did not really learn to throw a fly or to manage a fly, and it was by luck rather than skill that I caught such fish as I did catch. Still it brought out in me some patience and perseverance, two of the most necessary qualities for a fisherman.

Our Northamptonshire home was not a favourable one for fishing. There was no river at all in the neighbourhood, only some small brooks and a few large ponds within reach. The Fawsley ponds held perch and tench and many carp of an enormous size. I recollect on one occasion going there to see these carp moved from one pond to another, when I saw more than fifty taken out weighing sixteen pounds apiece, besides others of various sizes, and a pike of twenty pounds. I had two carp given me to take home, weighing eight pounds each. But very few people went to fish there in those days, and I never heard of any very good sport being obtained. I do not recollect that we ever went there to fish. Then, besides these ponds, there was, at a distance of six miles, that fine sheet of water, the Daventry Reservoir, of which I have spoken before, and here it was that I caught the first large fish that I ever caught in my life. One day in the holidays I had gone over there with my brother, more by way of a day's excursion than with the expectation of catching many fish.

It was a very pretty place, and we liked to go there and row in the boat, and take our lunch with us on a summer's day; and so we started off, taking our butterfly-net with us in case we should meet with anything worth catching along the shore, for it was a very likely place for insects, and especially the caterpillar of the large Elephant Moth (*C. Elpenor*) was to be met with here abundantly. However, we did not catch any butterflies, and stuck to the fishing all the time we were there. We were fishing with the simplest tackle, a worm on a single hook, shotted, and with a float, and at a considerable depth. We had each of us caught nothing but very small perch, and very few of them, when I saw my float give a bob and then disappear, and on striking found I was fast in a fish which would not allow me to bring him to the surface as the others had done, and that I must give him a little line first if I would not lose him altogether. However, it was easy work to play a fish in such open water as that, and after a few minutes he began to give way, and at last I brought to the top of the water a magnificent perch of two pounds and a quarter. Such a beauty he looked as he made his last run in a half-circle, with every fin erect. We had no landing-net, but we managed to slip our butterfly-net underneath him, and to lift him into the boat. After this most unexpected piece of good fortune, we fished away most assiduously, hoping to fall in with another of the same sort, but, if there was another, he was not to be beguiled by our art, and neither on that day nor any other did I ever catch any large fish there again. However, we were able to return home in great triumph to show our prize to the assembled family.

It must have been about this time that we discovered that there were abundance of small perch to be caught in the little brook that was our favourite resort for collecting purposes. How we made the discovery I forget, but we did make it, and soon turned our knowledge to some purpose. Our luck was very variable, and the fish seemed to be limited to a very small portion of the brook, but at times we had some very successful catches. On one occasion my brother caught in one hour, out of one hole, fifty-nine perch, one of them weighing about a pound. I caught one day, just above the mill, a tench weighing a pound, the only one I ever heard of in the brook, and the only one I ever caught in my life. After our discovery of the perch in this little stream, it occurred to us that, as it was very weedy in many places, with very deep holes here and there among the weeds, there might very probably be some pike there. So I tried some of these places with a gorge-hook, which seemed to be the only possible way of fishing them, and very soon succeeded in pulling out some small pike of about two pounds apiece. I recollect on one occasion seeing an instance of the voracity of these little fellows, which quite surprised me. I had had a run, had given my fish time to pouch the bait, struck him, and brought him to the surface, but just as I was about to land him he dropped off, not having properly pouched the bait, I suppose. In a pet I threw my bait, which I had only just pulled out of his mouth, after him, when he turned and seized it, and this time I hooked him more firmly and secured him. In spinning I have had a pike follow and seize the bait a second time after pulling it out of his

mouth, but then I thought it very possible that he may have hardly felt the hooks at all; but it seems difficult to imagine that such could be the case in gorge-fishing. Besides pike and perch, we found that there were magnificent eels in this brook. We used to catch them by night-lines, and usually brought home two or three of a morning, and rarely one that was less than two pounds' weight. I never met with such large eels anywhere else. But to catch them it required to be late in the evening in putting the lines down, and very, very early in the morning at the brookside to take them up, for these great fellows used to twist themselves round the line in a marvellous knot, and then come to the surface, where they formed an object conspicuous enough to catch the eye of any chance passer-by, and attract him to carry off the spoil.

This coarse fishing in Northamptonshire and on the Thames at Eton was all the fishing of which I had had any experience till after I had taken my degree at Cambridge. Only once before that time had I the opportunity of trying my hand at trout-fishing, and that was one day while staying at Bromley, Kent, when an uncle of mine procured leave for me to fish at a mill somewhere on the Cray. He accompanied me to witness the sport, and I started full of hope, with numbers of flies, artificial minnows, and baits of all kinds. Having arrived at the stream I could see any number of very large trout swimming about in the bright smooth water under a blazing sun. It was about the worst day for fishing that could be imagined, but still I should like to have that chance over again with those splendid fish. I think I could account for

a few of them in some way. But at that time I had not an idea how to keep myself out of sight, how to present a lure to the fish without noise or splash, so I flogged away with my flies, threw minnows in every direction, and then tried with worm and float, which was my idea of worm fishing-in those days; and the only result that followed my efforts was that I drove the fish from every part of the water that I approached. It is needless to say that I did not catch a single one. However, the days were near at hand when I was about to learn something in trout-fishing, and to find out that it was a sport which I should soon prefer to all others and be able to pursue with as fair a chance of success as many other people.

In the month of July, 1853, my brother and myself had resolved to take a walking tour in North Wales. My own purpose was chiefly to sketch. Up to that time I had never seen a mountain, never anything higher than some of the hills in Hampshire near Petersfield. Of mountainous countries North Wales seemed to be the easiest for us to reach, and I was much inclined towards it by the pictures and descriptions I had seen in Roscoe's "Wanderings." So after some debate N. Wales was chosen as most suitable for walking and sketching; and having thus decided we determined also to make an essay in trout-fishing. Having provided ourselves with knapsacks and blue gauze veils, we also looked out for fishing-rods and tackle, and resolved that before our return some trout should die at our hands. The sunny morn of July 13th saw us start from Eton with light hearts on a never-to-be-forgotten tour, which fully came up to the auspicious promise of its beginning. Nine o'clock

that evening found us comfortably installed at the hotel at Chester, from whence the next morning a short railway journey and a very wet drive on the top of a coach landed us by the middle of the day at the Hand Hotel, Llangollen. Here we were in Wales. Well I remember the sensation of delight awakened in me by the rippling noise of the waters of the Dee under the hotel windows, the first sounds of that kind that I had ever heard. Wet or fine, we thought we must see as much as we could of the country in the time at our disposal, so, in spite of a pouring rain, we made our way that same afternoon to Valle Crucis Abbey, much to the astonishment of the old woman in charge of the place. Trout for dinner in the evening called up visions of sport in store for ourselves ; and the sound of the Welsh harp enlivened the hour and brought to a most enjoyable conclusion our first day in Wales.

From Llangollen our walking tour began. The next day our knapsacks were shouldered, and we set out in earnest. We did not advance by long stages, from ten to fifteen miles a day was generally enough for us, as we lingered to make sketches, explore waterfalls or other places of interest, and occasionally to try to fish. But of this more anon. Our track was for the most part along the regular well-known Holyhead road ; full of interest to us, but so often described that it would be wasting the reader's time to particularize the events or impressions of each day in order as they came. I know that the first day's march brought us to Corwen, and that during that day, besides making a sketch on the road, we made our first acquaintance with a Welsh coracle, and had many opportunities of studying the manners,

customs, and the language of the natives. Neither on this day nor the following one did we make any serious attempts at fishing. Indeed we only laid in our stock of flies as we were starting from Corwen. Soon after leaving this little place we diverged to see the first waterfall that I had ever seen, and I

shall never forget the impression which it made upon me; and even now that I have seen so many of the most celebrated ones in England, Scotland and Ireland, as well as in N. Wales, I still think there is a charm about the little fall at Pont y Glen which inclines me to prefer it to them all. We were particularly fortunate in our weather at the time. There had

No. 5.— Pont y Glen, near Corwen.

been much rain, so that the streams were all very full, and richly coloured, and we had a cloudy day with gleams of sunshine; and although the river is not a large one, nor the fall very

high, there is a peculiar elegance about the shape of it, and a harmony in the tone and colour of all its surroundings, which I think I have hardly ever seen equalled in any other. This idea grows upon me every time I look up to the wall where hangs the sketch which I took that bright day so many years ago. Possibly the early associations may have much to do with the feeling, but I still think an artist would have difficulty in finding a lovelier subject for his brush.

Our next halting-place was at a wild, out-of-the-way spot, in the midst of a bleak, open moor, surrounded by heath-covered hills, which we were told abounded with grouse, and rejoicing in the remarkable name of Cerig y Druidion, by interpretation the Druid's Stone. Here we made a stay of two or three days, for besides the fact that one of those days was a Sunday, and we had the opportunity of trying to gather something of the meaning of the Welsh language in a Welsh service, here we made our first real essay at trout-fishing.

Often and often in later years have I thought of that little stream, and wished that I could have the opportunity of trying its waters in the same condition that they then were, both as regards water and fish, after I had had a little more experience of the fly-fisher's art. For I am quite sure now on looking back at it, that the day, the colour of the stream, the humour of the fish, and indeed every requirement must have been exactly right, and there were abundance of trout there, and very free risers too, in those days. Our host, Mr. Jones, a fisherman himself, had shown us how to fit our lines with tail-fly and droppers,

and had recommended which flies we should use, and in case of failing with the fly we had worms with us to fall back upon; and so we started with a fair amount of confidence. Each day lately both Mr. Jones and another guest at the inn had been bringing home full creels, why should we not do the same? We agreed to take the stream for a mile or two above the inn for our first beat, then to return to lunch, and fish the lower pools after lunch. But on arriving at the bank a very few minutes showed us that fly-fishing was a much more difficult thing in practice than we had imagined. Our first difficulty proved a very serious one. The stream in this part of it was very narrow, not much wider in most places than what an active man might jump across; and its course was very straight and fringed with much long grass and weeds. The breeze, if I remember right, was blowing slightly up-stream, so we began to fish up-stream; but we found that if after several fruitless casts we did manage, either with a splash or without one, to place our flies on the water, they came back to us so quickly that we could not keep them entirely on the surface of the water, in our sight, which at that time we thought to be absolutely necessary in order to ensure a chance of success; and we found that most of our casts hooked the bank on one side or the other; so we soon decided that it would be useless, at any rate for us, to attempt to fish up-stream. Accordingly we walked some distance upwards and turned round and tried to fish with the stream and against the wind. But this we found a matter of equal difficulty for such novices as we were, so my brother very soon gave up the attempt, and

substituted the worm for the fly; but he tried in the same fashion that we had always fished before for perch, with a float and some shot on the cast. I persevered with a fly, but instead of making casts I got my line out in front of me, and let it float down the stream, following it and keeping it to the surface as well as I could. I have, in later years, caught many trout, even in such a primitive way as this, in small streams that are so much bushed as to make it impossible to manage a good cast, but in this open stream where there were no bushes at all, these tactics proved quite useless. I did get a few rises which I could see, and probably had some more of which I was not aware, and did hook a fish, which got away directly among the weeds; but not one fish did I succeed in catching, nor did my brother do any better with the worm, and we were obliged to return to the inn to lunch with empty creels. We found that others had been able to achieve that which we had tried in vain; for our host and our fellow-guest had managed to bring in respectively eighteen and fourteen fish. In the afternoon we tried the lower part of the river, which was much more favourable for beginners, as the river in this part took a much more winding course, and opened out in many places to considerable pools; but the sun had come out brightly, and I suppose we were not sufficiently careful in keeping out of sight, and the result was that we did not succeed in bringing any fish to bank, and our first day's trout-fishing proved an entire failure. During the next few days we visited Bettws y Coed and Llanrwst, and I made sketches of the Machno Falls and the great falls of the Llugwy called the Swallow

Fall ; and we made various unsuccessful essays in fishing both in river and lake. We found that we were gradually making some slow progress in the art of throwing the fly. We were not disheartened. The scenery charmed us, and especially the colour of the rocks in the neighbourhood of Bettws. The "Royal Oak" at Bettws in those days was a very humble abode indeed, compared to the grand hotel which bears the same name there now. But it supplied us with all the comfort and enjoyment that we wanted. And now we determined to abandon the rod for a day or two and push on to Capel Curig and from thence make the ascent of Snowdon. We were fortunate in our first near view of Snowdon, for it was a beautiful afternoon when we reached Capel Curig, and I was lucky enough to be able to make a sketch of the grand mountain, free from clouds, that first evening as soon as our dinner was over. Full of hope we made arrangements with a guide for the following morning, and retired to rest with great anticipations of our first essay in the ascent of a real mountain.

When we awoke, we were anything but gratified at finding that Snowdon had his cap on. Still the day seemed tolerably fine, and we hoped that the clouds might clear away by noon, so we determined to make a start. The ascent from Capel Curig is, I believe, generally considered the most arduous of the three different routes that can be chosen ; but it commands the best views, and is reckoned the most worth undertaking for those that are equal to the task ; and we were young, and in first-rate condition ; so off we set.

We left our hotel shortly after 10 a.m. and walked for five miles along the high-road, and then turned

off to the right, and began to ascend the mountain. We were not long in finding that we had got our work cut out for us, for the first part of the path by this route is much the steepest, but as we went on it became gradually easier. We were continually opening fresh views of mountain lakes and tarns, one I particularly recollect in which the water was of a most lovely green colour, the effect of some copper from a mine in the neighbourhood; on the other side we looked down on the Pass of Llanberis, a grand and gloomy prospect. But we did not pause many minutes to look at any views, but pushed onwards and upwards at almost a racing pace. When we got about three-quarters of the way up it began to rain, or rather, I suppose we got into the cloud which we had seen on the top, and in this we remained till we reached the summit. We performed the climb of three miles after we left the road in an hour and forty minutes; having done the whole distance from the hotel, eight miles, in less than three hours. Not very bad work! as any one who has accomplished the same task will know. At the house at the top we rested a while, waiting in the vain hope that the clouds might lift and give us the much-coveted view. Of this, however, there seemed to be no chance, so we started off again and descended the mountain on the Llanberis side. This was a much more gradual slope, and so, although it was longer, being about five miles, it was generally chosen by less enterprising pedestrians for the ascent. We found it a very easy descent, and were not long in making our way down. As soon as we got below the cloud we had some very good views of the Menai Straits and

the Isle of Anglesea, and we also visited a very pretty waterfall over a granite rock, and then made our way to the Victoria Hotel, Llanberis, where we were not sorry to sit down to a good dinner after our mountain climb. However, we had no intention of ending our labours for the day here, as we had resolved to return to Capel Curig the same evening, and knew that we had ten miles still before us. So, when we had duly refreshed the inner man, we resumed our march again through the Pass of Llanberis, at all times gloomy and wild, and especially so to us, as we fought our way in a blustering wind, with frequent rain. But we held on our course manfully, and constantly found fresh points to admire, till we regained the road which we had left in the morning, and reached Capel Curig Hotel about eight, having accomplished a tramp of twenty-three miles, including the ascent of Snowdon, in less than ten hours since we started in the morning. We were rather stiff at first, but having refreshed ourselves with a good tea, we were able to sit and chat with our neighbours over the events of the day till midnight.

By the afternoon of the following day we were sufficiently recovered to undertake the ascent of Moel Siabod with three other gentlemen, which task we found very little easier than Snowdon; but we took it quietly and were rewarded by finding the summit, when we reached it, entirely free from clouds and rain, and, at the expense of very wet feet from bogs, we had a glorious prospect, and were well satisfied with the success of our undertaking.

Our other halting-places in North Wales were Beddgelert, Caernarvon, Conway, and Bangor, and during

the fortnight that was spent in these places and their neighbourhood, we did at last manage to discover the way to catch trout, and brought home spoils quite sufficient to gladden our hearts. Our fishing from these places was mostly in lakes and from a boat, and this we found much easier than the river-fishing which we had tried before. Llyn y Gader, a small lake, near Beddgelert, which in those days abounded with small and very free-rising trout, supplied us with our first basket of fish to our own rods. After this we got more and better fish from the lovely Llyn Gwynnant. We tried our hand in vain several times at the salmon and sewin in the Avonglas river as far as Pont Aberglaslyn; but we were interested to see others catch them, or lose them, as the case might be. From Bangor we made some lovely excursions. Never shall I forget a ramble up the river from Aber. The day was far too bright and hot for fishing, so after catching a few very small ones we took to climbing up the Aber mountain. The picture presented to our eyes was one of the best coast views I have ever seen. In front of us Anglesea and the sea beyond it; Penmaen Mawr and the Great Orme's Head to our right, with a vast extent of coast; the left bounded by some nearer, very high, and precipitous mountains.

Since that time this place has become associated in my mind with a sad memory as being the scene of a fatal accident to the son of a dear friend, but on that day all was bright and joyous. Another most successful expedition from Bangor was a two days' trip to Llyn Ogwen. We took advantage of a coach which left Bangor in the morning, and took us through the magnificent Nant Francon Pass. We left such

things as we should require for the night at a small roadside inn, which we passed about three or four miles short of the lake, and then proceeded thither.

But we had made a most serious omission in the arrangement of our day's programme, which caused us great inconvenience later on. We carried no lunch with us when we left Bangor, calculating, I suppose, on getting this at our roadside inn. But here the coach did not allow us time for anything more than depositing what we wanted to leave, and so we went on, trusting to being able to get something in some cottage near the lake. On reaching it, however, we found that this was out of the question, for if there was any cottage near, we could find no inhabitant to offer us even a glass of milk or a crust of bread. However, we thought little of that during the early part of the day. We had plenty of occupation which required our immediate attention, for we found the boat of which we were to have the use, full of water, and it took us full half an hour to bale it out and make it fit for fishing. We had to be our own boatmen, and to row the boat against the wind to one end of the lake, and then to drift back and fish our way back to the point from which we had started. At the end of each of these voyages we had to stop and bale out the boat again, so that very much time was wasted. Nevertheless, we fished on assiduously till past seven in the evening, and caught more and better fish than we had ever done before since we had been in Wales. By this time we felt that we must think of returning, so we brought our boat to the shore and packed up our tackle. We had then to undertake a walk of about four miles to reach our resting-place for the night.

And now we felt the full effects of our long fast during all the baling work and other toils of the day, after all the excitement of the sport was over. Not a morsel had we tasted since our nine o'clock breakfast, nearly twelve hours before; and we had still a stiff walk to accomplish. Never in my life, before or since, have I felt the pangs of hunger so much as I did then, till we could sit down to such a frugal supper as we could get at our little inn, and which, such as it was, we could not get till nearly ten, when from exhaustion my appetite had almost failed me. But the young soon recover their strength and spirits, and early next morning we were up and off to the lake again, and, with a better boat, and catching some more fish, we soon forgot all the fatigues and inconveniences of the day before; and when the breeze died away in the middle of the day, we gave up fishing and managed to snatch a sight of that weird-looking lake, Llyn Idwal, before the return coach passed along the road and carried us back to Bangor. Of course we did not leave Conway or Caernarvon Castle or the Menai Bridge unvisited, but they have been described over and over again, and it would be foreign to the purpose of this book for me to record our impressions of them. Our observations on Natural History and sport are all with which I have to do. We went into Wales to see the country, to fish, and to sketch; and I have to put before the reader what we did in this way. In trout-fishing we had certainly now made a beginning, and all that we required after this was practice; and as it happened, we had more opportunities of this given us constantly as years went on. I did not add very much to my ornithological or entomological

knowledge during this tour, as most of the time was devoted either to fishing, sketching, or mountain-climbing. I made my first acquaintance with the water-ouzel in these Welsh streams, and also saw more of the common sandpiper, and of snipe in summer, than I had ever done before. With regard to the fishing, the trout in North Wales are, and I should suppose always were, very small, but at that time they were very abundant, and much easier to get at than they are now according to what I hear in the present day, when there are so many tourists, and every bit of accessible water is so dreadfully over-fished. A great source of amusement to us during our tour was the supply of wit of various kinds to be found in the visitors' books at the different inns where we stayed. The complimentary remarks passed upon the waitress at Corwen; the sketches and epigrams inserted by artists at Bettws y Coed, especially the picture of an artist with his sketch-book under his arm striding away at I know not how many miles an hour with these words written underneath, "Dinner at five, and Bettws in sight." Many of these sketches were beautifully done, and if the wit sometimes was not of a very high order, we were in the right humour to be amused, and a more successful and pleasurable tour than our first visit to North Wales I can hardly wish to experience.

CHAPTER V.

Ireland—Impression of country and people—Dublin—Phoenix Park—River Tolka—Trout-fishing—Snipe and woodcock—Small hawk and rook—Stag and hounds run to a standstill—Castle Howard and Vale of Avoca—A tour to the south—Cork—Glengariff—A day's sport in Glengariff Bay—Killarney—Mangerton—A spring salmon.

IRELAND ! as beautiful a country, and as pleasant a people as a man need wish to visit ! Those were my impressions of it thirty-one years ago, when it was my good fortune to spend seven months at the seat of J. H. Hamilton, Esq., then member for Dublin County, about six miles out of Dublin. Alas ! that such a change should have come over the whole scene, and over the condition of everything in that beautiful land, during the years that have elapsed since that time. Fenians were then a thing hardly thought of, although there had been disturbances previously, which were now becoming forgotten as a thing of the past.

For myself, wherever I went, I met with the most genial kindness and hospitality from all, both gentle and simple. I was there at a most particularly fortunate time. The city of Dublin, at all times beautiful and gay enough to please a stranger, was at its very best then, and full of people from all parts. For it was the year of the first International Exhibition at

Dublin, and in those days international exhibitions were not so common as they have become since, and every one was anxious to be there. There was also a visit from the Queen to Dublin at that time. It was a time of excitement also, for it was evident to all that a storm was brewing which seemed likely to end in a war with Russia, and it was not very long after this that the storm did break forth. I shall never forget a cavalry charge in a review at the Phœnix Park with Lord Cardigan heading the same brigades which were to repeat the manoeuvre in stern reality the following year at Balaclava. It was almost fearful to look at the sham warfare. Little did we think how it would be for those same noble fellows that we were looking at even then with awe twelve months later. But,—

“Non hæc jocosæ conveniunt lyræ,”

these reminiscences have nothing to do with Natural History collections or sport. What did Ireland do for me as a lover of Natural History or sport? Through one end of the park, at about half a mile's distance from the house, ran the little river Tolka, which was very well described as to its fishing capacities in a number of the *Field* last year. Its course through the park was perhaps half a mile long, or rather more, and in this part it had hills on either side, wooded in most places to the water's edge. But after leaving the park its course towards Dublin was much less wooded and more open, while above the park for a long distance it was entirely open and the banks flat. There were plenty of trout in the river, and some very fine ones too, especially in the wooded part of the park; but it

was almost impossible to fish there without wading, and not very easy to do so even with wading, as the depth was very uneven and the holes dangerous.

As it was August when I reached Ireland, and I had many things to occupy my attention on first arriving in such a new country, the best time for fishing had passed for that year before I made any trial of the river. Still I did go out once or twice to that part of the river which runs through the park, but never, I think, with much success. The keeper, I recollect, used to catch some nice ones occasionally, dapping with a clock beetle, but I did not at that time show any aptitude for that kind of fishing. But when I had become familiar with the other part of the river above where it entered the park, which I learnt to know during my rambles on its banks through the winter, then when the month of February came I soon made acquaintance with some of my spotted friends, and gradually became fairly successful in river-fishing, which I had never properly learnt in Wales. It was a very pretty river to fish—small, but quite wide enough to allow plenty of room for throwing the fly; and in its tortuous course, which was very little bushed, it opened out here and there to some very fair-sized pools; and, during the few weeks that I had left me in Ireland, after the fishing began, I took many rambles of an hour or two from above the park to the bridge at Mullahuddart, and always managed to bring home a few fish; and I doubt not that if I had been able to stay on into the spring and summer, I should have secured some very good baskets indeed. I said that I used to ramble along the banks of the river during the winter, and my reason for so

doing was that I soon found that a very fair number of snipe were to be met with here, and in some of the meadows adjoining the river, and especially in a marsh just below Mullahuddart Bridge; and these with an occasional duck here and there afforded me sport whenever I had more leisure than I knew what to do with. Although the snipe here were not nearly in such numbers as I had seen them in the fens at Cambridge, I found them much more accessible, and much less uncertain in their appearance, and consequently brought home more in the bag. While I was on this visit I found plenty of employment for my gun. The wooded banks of the river swarmed with rabbits; and the keeper and his ferrets were always at my disposal, so I had abundance of rabbiting. There were also plenty of hares, and I had ample opportunity of noticing the difference between the Irish and English hare. The appearance of the Irish hare, being in form and colour so very much like a very large English wild rabbit, was noticeable at once. Here also I had the first shot that I ever had in my life at a woodcock, with the exception of the one at Cambridge recorded in a former chapter, and a successful shot too; and from the beginning of October till the end of my visit to Ireland, I fell in with a fair sprinkling of these birds. Of partridges there were very few in the district; there were a few quail at that time, landrails, and in the winter water-rail. It was while I was out for one of my rambles with my gun in the neighbourhood of the river that I saw a sight which struck me with great surprise at the time, and which has always puzzled me when I have looked back upon it. I saw what I felt certain at the time

was a kestrel fly at a rook and attack it in a most determined manner. I watched the two birds in the air for many minutes, the hawk mounting and stooping, and the rook dodging and shifting, till at last the hawk fastened to the rook, and the two birds went down rapidly to the ground. But alas ! during the flight they had got so far off from me that a hill intervened between me and the place where they would touch the ground, and I was unable to get to the spot and see the result of the contest. As I say, I felt sure at the time that the hawk was a kestrel, and it was a very little distance from me when I first saw it ; but on the other hand, from all I have ever seen myself, or heard, or read, I think it most unlikely that, even if ever so hard pressed with hunger, a kestrel would attack such a bird as a rook, and beat him too, and that this must have been a merlin or a hobby, although it seemed to me so very like a kestrel. It was certainly not larger than a kestrel.

Another curious thing which I saw while on this visit was a stag, hounds, and horses all run to a standstill, or at any rate to such a state of exhaustion that none of them could move as fast as I could walk. It happened in this way :—

I was sitting in the house by myself one afternoon, when I heard the cry of hounds, as if they were crossing the park. I ran out and very soon found them, and came up with them, and then had no difficulty to keep up with them. Some one had seen the stag just before, but after leaving the park the hounds were at fault. Only five or six horsemen came up, and all their horses seemed as if they had hardly got a leg to stand upon, and they could not move faster than a

walk. We all went down to the river, and we had not tried many of its pools before from one of them, right in the midst of the hounds, out jumped the stag. He just managed to hobble along for a few yards up the slope of a green meadow, with the dogs lopping along heavily beside him, and just behind, when he came to a few very low hurdles. He could only just get his fore-legs over them, and then fell right among the leading hounds. However, he kicked out right and left with his hind-legs and scattered his enemies, turned down towards the river again, tumbled over the hurdles once more, shook himself free from the surrounding dogs as they came near him, and betook himself once more to the water. The hounds were now whipped off, several of the rustics plunged into the water, and the deer was secured. But even then, as they were leading him away, it was surprising to see what courage and strength was left in him, beaten as he was for running ; for he fought and struggled powerfully and constantly with his head and neck ; and it required all the efforts of some strong men to hold him, and make him go in the direction they required. I was shown afterwards a place in the park where he had fallen through being unable to jump a little ditch not above two or three feet wide, with a fence not more than a foot high. I never quite ascertained what the length of the run that day had been, but although I have often been out for a day's hunting and enjoyed it, it was quite painful to me on that occasion to see all the animals so thoroughly exhausted. I suppose the hounds were the Ward Union pack. I know the stag was one which rejoiced in the euphonious name of "The devil."

I did not go over very much of Ireland during the seven months that I spent there, but I did make two expeditions outside County Dublin. One was a visit of three days to Castle Howard, in County Wicklow, in the Vale of Avoca, just above the lovely meeting of the waters. From this place we were to have made some expeditions ; but the weather was not favourable, and I saw very little of the surrounding country. But the other expedition was a most delightful one to the south just before I left Ireland altogether. I started on the 20th of March by rail for Cork, from whence the route I proposed to take was by Bandon and Bantry to Glengariff, thence to Kenmare, and so to Killarney. All this I carried out most successfully in ten days, and was very much pleased with everything that I saw in each place ; but as I only want to make notes of those things which are most likely to interest others, I shall only speak of the time spent at my two chief centres, Glengariff and Killarney. All I saw of Cork was seen in an afternoon stroll after my arrival there at 4.30 p.m., and I left the city early next morning by rail for Bandon, and from thence I started directly by coach for Bantry. I recollect being much struck by the rope-harness that was used for keeping the horses together, and by the pace at which we always went down the latter part of every hill preparatory to getting the horses into a good gallop in order to get them well up a considerable part of the next ascent. It seemed startling and hazardous to me, who had not been used to travelling in a mountainous country. However, all went well, and we arrived at Bantry without any mishap. From here I took a car round the bay to Glengariff, which

I reached in very good time before evening closed in. I was determined to lose no time in seeing as much as I could of this beautiful country during the few days that I had at my disposal, so the next morning I was up at 6 a.m., and very soon after that was at the top of a high hill at the back of the hotel, with my paint-box and sketch-book, making a sketch of the bay, surrounded by mountains, with its innumerable islands glittering most brightly under a brilliant

No. 6.—Cromwell's Bridge, Glengariff, Ireland.

morning sun, butterflies flitting around on all sides, and everything telling me most plainly that spring had really begun. The sky was cloudless, and although at that time of the year there was of course hardly any foliage on the trees, the colouring of the hills, the islands, and the sea, with the gorse in blossom scattered among boulders and rocks for a foreground, made a lovely picture. After an hour or two spent

up here, I returned to my hotel, and having taken a snack by way of a compromise between breakfast and lunch, walked to that very picturesque, ruinous old bridge, called Cromwell's Bridge, which I very soon transferred to my paper as a memento of the day. Then I visited in due course the regular lions of the place—the Glen, Lord Bantry's Cottage, the Look-out, and the Lodge.

Having spent the morning on the land, I decided to vary my proceedings by taking an afternoon on the water. So I returned to the hotel, chartered a boat, and set off. I proceeded to make a close inspection of Garnish Island, and Glengariff Castle, which I had already put into my sketch in the morning, as seen from a distance. I was then rowed about among the islands to various parts of the bay, and during that row saw, for the first time in my life, a seal, and a Great Northern Diver, called by my boatmen a loon. The shore was quite alive with wading-birds, and amongst others I recollect noticing a specimen of the greenshank. We had a gun with us in the boat, but I was not able to get a favourable shot at anything that was worth securing. But I know that I was enchanted with the place, spent a most enjoyable day, and returned in the evening only regretting that I had not weeks or months at my disposal, to spend in exploring such a paradise for either a naturalist or an artist. A conversation which I held in the evening with my host, Mr. Eccles, a most intelligent man, and the information that he gave me about the birds to be met with here, made me decide to remain another day at the place, and to spend that day in exploring some caves a few miles

away along the coast. He told me that otters were very abundant among the rocks in some of the islands. So the next day he accompanied me in a boat, and we started off, taking with us guns and some large rough terriers, to see what we could do. We first tried among the rocks for the otters, but although we came upon some very fresh tracks, we were unable to bolt any so as to get a shot at them. We then went on towards the caves, and on the way thither, I shot a herring gull, a turnstone, and then I came upon a prize; running about upon a rock just above the waves, I saw a small, dark-coloured bird of the sandpiper class. As soon as I could get within shot of him I knocked him over, and when I had got him in my hand, as the sun shone on what had at first appeared to be his dark grey back, was delighted to see the purple gleam which revealed to me that I had got a Purple Sandpiper. He was a very nice, clean-killed specimen, in beautiful plumage. I had one specimen in my collection before, procured a long time previously at Brighton, and I knew that it was not a common bird on the English coast, but I did not at that time know how much more rare it was in Ireland. Still, I knew enough to be very pleased at my acquisition.

During our row we chased for a long time a Great Northern Diver, but were never able to come up with him. Gulls of various common sorts we saw and shot, and then we went to the caves. Those who have seen caves of this kind will know pretty well without any description what such a place is sure to be like, and to those who have never seen one it is almost impossible to describe it; but the beautiful colouring on the roof and sides, caused by the various minerals

in the rocks, and the picturesque grouping of the stalactites, hanging like icicles from the roof, made a very strong impression upon me, seeing such a thing for the first time. We lit a candle, or a torch of some kind, to notice the effect. Here we had our lunch, and tried the echoes of the place with our voices, both by shouts and songs. A row as far as the Point, and a pause to make a sketch, looking towards Berehaven, completed our outward journey, and then we turned homewards.

On the return voyage I made the heaviest shot that I ever made in my life. As we were passing a headland, I noticed on the point of a rock a flock of shags sitting very close together. "Do you think my gun will carry far enough to kill any of those birds, Pat?" "Cannot say, yer honour, no harm to try." No sooner said than done; but although we could hear the shot rattle amongst them, it did not appear to produce much impression upon any of them. However, they all rose at once, and with a heavy, lolloping flight crossed a little way ahead of the bows of the boat in making for the open sea. Thank goodness there is another barrel left, we will see what that will do. Bang! As the smoke clears away, six of the great birds are seen fallen, or falling, into the water, and then such a scene of confusion, flapping, splashing, screaming, diving, my boatmen wild with excitement, chasing the cripples, and the shouts of triumph as we secured any of them. They were in splendid plumage, and two of them look down upon me every day from their case, as a handsome reminder of that bright afternoon in Bantry Bay so many years ago. The gun was one of twelve bore, an old muzzle-loader, bor-

rowed from mine host, and the charge No. 4 shot. After this I shot some gulls of various kinds, and saw various sea-birds of the commoner kinds, guillemots, oyster-catchers, a raven, and also two black guillemots, in splendid plumage, which I should have been very glad to secure. However, I thought that I had not done badly, and after a good dinner I found that I had occupation enough to last me till midnight in skinning and curing my birds.

No. 7.—Killing six shags at a shot.

It was with much regret that I left the charming Glengariff and my kindly host the next morning. But I had a very pleasing prospect before me, for I hoped before the evening to be established on the shores of the far-famed Lakes of Killarney, which was the grand object of my visit to the south. So it was in very good spirits that I mounted my car and started forth. The first part of our journey was necessarily slow, as we had to climb quite to the top of a very

high mountain for several miles; but the drive was a most beautiful one, and there can be no more favourable position for seeing the country on all sides than that which the traveller has who is lounging on the side of an Irish outside car. My driver entertained me with many stories of eagles and their depredations among the lambs in that particular neighbourhood, but we looked out in vain to see one on that occasion. The mountain-side appeared wild enough to justify our expecting to see one at any minute. At the top of these mountains is a tunnel through which the road passes, and here is the division between County Cork and County Kerry.

Before entering the tunnel we paused that I might have a last look back upon Bantry Bay and County Cork. Immediately on issuing from the tunnel the Reeks, Carran Tual, Mangerton, and the Gap of Dunloe burst upon my sight at once, and under no more favourable auspices could they possibly have been seen. A belt of clouds was encircling the Reeks half-way up, but their summits were quite clear, and everywhere else the sky was cloudless. This prospect we soon lost as we descended to the beautifully grand valley beneath, and we did not catch sight of it again till we were close upon Kenmare, when it burst upon us once more with an additional charm thrown in. The day was not only bright, but perfectly calm, and the waters of Kenmare Bay were a most perfect mirror, in which every mountain-peak, every belt of cloud, every combination of purple and gold was so exactly reflected, as to present a picture such as I have never seen for harmony and loveliness and completeness in every way, in any subsequent wandering by

mountain or lake. We drove rapidly down the hill into Kenmare, where we had lunch, and I changed cars and drivers. My fresh driver was a very amusing fellow, who told me endless stories, and called my attention to the wonderful echoes that could be awakened at various points of the drive. We went on at a rattling pace to the top of the next hill, when I came suddenly upon the view of the whole panorama of Killarney from the most favourable point by which it can be approached. Just beneath me lay the Upper Lake embosomed in thickly wooded hills. On our left rose the Toomies and the Eagle's Nest, and other mountains beyond; on our right hung over us the Torc and Mangerton. We paused here, and got a charming echo from the Eagle's Nest, then left the car to get a sight of the Torc Waterfall. I got a beautiful piece of the rare fern *Trichomanes brevisetum* (the Bristle Fern), root and all. We picked up an old piper with a cornet, who enlivened the rest of the journey with strains from his instrument, and so we came on *harmoniously* in every sense of the word to our resting-place, the Lake Hotel, at the very edge of the waters of the lake. That very evening I saw for the first time in my life an osprey, and retired to rest full of most pleasurable recollections and anticipations.

I had intended that my first day should be given to the ascent of Mangerton, but on getting out of bed in the morning I saw that the clouds were down all over the summit, so, as I had no wish to be cheated of the view as I had been from the top of Snowdon, I decided to change my programme altogether. Accordingly the Gap of Dunloe was selected to be the first and

chief point of attraction. Attended by a guide, a car was to take me to Kate Kearney's cottage at one end of the Gap, from whence I was to walk through the Gap, and to meet a boat on the Upper Lake at the other end, which was to take me to other points of interest, Dinis Island, the old Weir Bridge, &c., and so bring me home. This plan was very successfully carried out, and a most enjoyable day was the result. The contrast of the wildness of the Gap of Dunloe with the sweetness of the scenery of the Upper Lake was very effective; and as I made several sketches, I found I had quite enough to get through to fill up a whole day. I studied the manners and customs of the natives, made my guide sing me Irish songs, and for some part of the day had the company of a barefooted mountain-dew girl in the most picturesque of costumes, who supplied us occasionally with a taste of the mountain dew, viz. potcen with the admixture of goat's milk. The air and exercise and change of scene made me very sleepy by the time I reached the hotel, and I was very glad to get an hour's repose before I joined the rest of the company at the table d'hôte. After such a busy week, Sunday came as a very pleasant rest for the morning, but in the afternoon I had a very nice ramble with a fellow-guest to Ross Island, Ross Castle, Innisfallen, and round the Lower Lake to Lord Kenmare's domain, and through the town of Killarney, returning under a bright sky which seemed to promise well for the ascent of Mangerton on the morrow.

Before going any farther with my own personal narration I must make a few remarks on a mode of fishing which I found very prevalent at Killarney, which seemed to me at that time, and always has

seemed, most objectionable and unsportsmanlike, and my only wonder is that it has not been forbidden long ago. It is called cross-fishing, and is carried on in this way. Two men who are going to fish each take a separate boat. Each man takes his own rod and line with a very long casting-line at the end; the tail ends of the two casting-lines are fastened together, and a number of dropper flies are put on at distances of about a yard apart. The two boats then row gently along a parallel course at such a distance from each other as the lines will allow. In this way it is of course very easy to cover every inch of water in any lake, and every fish must have a fly pass over him. When fish are hooked they are dragged out by the nearest boat, while the fisherman who is farthest off helps as well as he can by giving line, or rowing nearer, and if there are many fish hooked together near the middle of the line, the two boats can come together and do the best which they can with them. Of course by such proceedings as this an immense number of fish are pricked over and over again and made very shy, many break off at the last after being too much injured to recover, through the difficulty of playing them properly, and the fair fisherman's chance of success is very much lessened. There is no room for much exercise of skill, nor do I think that it can be dignified with the name of sport at all. The only reason for ever resorting to such a practice that I could imagine would be if it was particularly desirable to procure a certain number of trout within a certain time by whatever means they could be procured without any regard to future consequences. It seems to me to be just on a par with fishing with the otter,

which is universally condemned, and yet I understand this cross-fishing goes on uncondemned season after season at the beautiful Lakes of Killarney to the present day.

The Monday morning did not belie the promise of the Sunday evening, for the sun rose entirely free from clouds, so after a very early breakfast I started with my guide in a car to drive to the foot of Manger-ton over a very rugged road. Here we left our car, and being joined by two mountain-dew girls and our old friend the bugler, we commenced the ascent. This we found very easy till we reached the Devil's Punch Bowl. Here we made a halt and tasted some of the remarkably cold water which was before us, and then by way of warming ourselves after the cold draught took a small sip of the mountain dew which the girls were carrying. The bugler "set the wild echoes flying," and then we braced ourselves up again for a fresh start. We had some steep climbing till we reached the top, but then we were well rewarded for our toil. The sun was bright, and there was not a cloud in the sky, and the air was remarkably clear, as it so often is on a bright March day. Before me on the one side lay Bantry Bay, Kenmare Bay, with a boundless expanse of the vast Atlantic Ocean glittering beyond them, while the foreground was made up with countless lakes and mountains. Then when I turned to the other side I saw all the Cork and Kerry mountains, and beyond these like a silver streak I could trace the course of the Shannon for forty miles to the town of Limerick, which was plainly visible through the intensely rarefied atmosphere. I cannot imagine a

more favourable day for the purpose that we had in view, and the panorama presented was certainly the most extensive that I have ever seen from the top of any mountain. We took our fill of gazing at it, and then proceeded to the Horses' Glen, a precipice of nearly 2000 feet. On one side of this we found the bed of a small cataract, down which we scrambled, and at the foot of it made another halt for lunch. Here there was a small lake, and I varied the day's proceedings by doing a little trout-fishing.

Again and again at intervals we woke the charming echoes with our bugle amidst this weird scenery. Evening was now approaching, so we began to turn our steps homeward; but I was resolved to have a memento of my day to carry away with me, so I made the mountain-dew girls pose for their portraits, forming with their bright-coloured kerchiefs and bare heads and feet a most picturesque foreground to the background of bleak rocks and distant mountain-tops. At the foot of the mountain we found our car waiting to pick us up again, and carry us home to a comfortable dinner, and so ended as successful a day's mountain-climbing as I ever wish to experience.

Two more days were left me for my tour, and the first of these was chiefly occupied with seeing Mucross Abbey, Lord Kenmare's deer park, and Aghadoe. At Mucross, for the first time in my life I saw a heronry, and the birds were very busy, having already commenced building. My last day was entirely devoted to fishing. I started directly after breakfast with a fellow-guest, Mr. H., to fish the Laune. We each of us had our attendant guide to carry provisions, landing-net, gaff, &c., and H. was resolved to try hard for a salmon. I aimed

at nothing beyond trout, and I very soon made a good beginning, catching a good-sized trout, which had a smaller trout in his mouth when I landed him. The wind, however, was very high, and in the early part of the day we did very little. But as the afternoon advanced, I found I was getting among some rising fish, and began rapidly to fill my basket.

I had left my friend some distance behind when I saw a good trout rise behind a bush which I just managed to cover with my fly, and he came directly, and I found I had him fast. The bush, however, favoured him very much, and he took every possible advantage of it, and I saw that I should have some difficulty in bringing him to land. I looked round for my man with the landing-net, and saw that he was a long way off, watching Mr. H. in the hopes of seeing him catch a salmon. I gave a lusty call, when he came running up, thinking that I could have nothing less than a salmon from my calling so loudly, and he appeared rather disgusted when he found it was only a trout. However, we secured him, and a very good fish he was, and then we turned back and joined H. He had only caught two trout, and had then given up trout-fishing altogether, and put on a large salmon-fly. As we were going back I pointed out to him a place where I had seen a salmon rise as I passed it before, and left him to try it with his salmon-fly. I had not parted from him more than a minute when I heard a shout, and running back found that he was fast in a large fish. His reel was giving forth glorious music, and his face bore a curious mixture of anxiety and excitement. Occasionally we caught a glimpse of a large dark form in the deep water, with now and then

a gleam of silver. After about ten minutes of give and take he began to show more towards the top of the water, and at one time when he was running close under the bank on which we stood the man with the gaff thought that he saw an opportunity of ending the fray, and made a dash at him. But *Salmo Salar* was equal to the occasion. He eluded the stroke, and then after a shake of his tail made a furious rush of about fifty yards in a slanting direction across the stream. Had there been the slightest hitch in any part of the tackle, the game would have been all over, but the reel gave out the line freely and all was well. This was his last rush, and now he began to turn on his side, and only needed careful guiding to bring him once more within reach. A second stroke more carefully directed, landed him high and dry on the green sward, while we greeted the exploit with three cheers. He was a beautiful springer of 6 lbs., perfect in shape and colour. This was H.'s first salmon I believe, and it was the first that I had ever seen caught; and as I had twenty-two good trout in my basket, and H. two, we returned much elated to our hotel with two dozen trout and a fresh run salmon of 6 lbs. And with this day ended my experience of Killarney, and my first and last visit to Ireland.

CHAPTER VI.

A tour in Sutherland—Voyage to Invergordon—Long walks—Loch Boarlan—Innisnadamp—My first trout of one pound—Loch Inver—Black-throated Divers—Loch Roe—Scourie—Handa—Durness—Sea-trout—Roseate Terns—Loch Katrine—Stirling.

IN a period of about eight months beginning from July, 1853, I had made acquaintance with most of the best scenery in North Wales and the South of Ireland, but the country visited was mostly that chosen by all tourists, without much deviation from the regular route, well-known to a great many, and described over and over again. But the following year I was destined to be introduced to scenes which at that time were known to very few indeed, and which even now are seldom visited except by ardent sportsmen, especially those of the angling fraternity; scenes, however, which possess such a charm that they are almost sure to attract those who have once visited them, to come again and again, as often as they can find an opportunity of doing so. My first visit to them was brought about in this way. During the summer of 1854 my brother and I had read with the most intense interest that delightful book "St. John's Tour in Sutherland." We were at once seized with a great desire to explore for ourselves these far-off

regions; and the practicability of carrying our wishes into effect was put into a more definite shape by some conversations held with an old clergyman in the neighbourhood who, immediately after reading the book above mentioned, had made an expedition to these places himself, and who gave us such accounts of the sport which he had had, and the facility of accomplishing the task, that we at once made up our mind that if we were alive and in health the following summer, to Sutherland we would go. And to Sutherland we went.

Accordingly on a bright morning, on the 11th of June, 1855, we left our Northamptonshire home and journeyed through a country new and interesting to us after leaving Crewe, without any adventure worth recounting, to Edinburgh. Of Edinburgh I can say very little, as we only reached it in the evening, and left it the following morning. Our time was occupied in visiting one or two shops and laying in a store of fishing tackle, which we procured of one Phinn, a very suitable name for the trade, where amongst other things I bought a check reel which I have used without intermission ever since, and use no other at the present day. At that time there was no Caledonian Railway, and Edinburgh was the terminus of the line in that direction. So we decided to go by steamboat from Granton pier to Invergordon. Experience, both before this time and subsequently, has shown me that I am a very good sailor, and that no changes of weather would have affected my comfort, but the voyage on that occasion would not have caused the slightest inconvenience to the most sensitive traveller. During the whole of the two days and

a night that we were on board the *Martelló* from Granton to Invergordon, the sea was as smooth as any millpond. The sun shone brightly overhead, and the company on board were very pleasant and sociable. I recollect that we were rather astonished at the length of the grace said by a Scotch minister before dinner. We had constantly changing views before us, with patches of snow on the mountains here and there, and my pencil and paint-brush were frequently employed. In the evening some of the voyagers danced a reel, and my brother and I sat late on deck, singing duets, which were not unfavourably received by the company. On the second day we had our first view of the country we were going to visit.

Sutherlandshire was in sight, with Caithness, Ross, Banff, and Moray; Ben Wyvis appearing covered with snow, and the Ord of Caithness. I know that after a very pleasant voyage we reached Invergordon in very good time in the afternoon. A canny old Scotchman, who had been on board with us, had kept on repeating to us that if he could win the length of Bonar Bridge the night, he wad like it fine. We told him we were going there and were going to try and get a conveyance for that purpose, but after leaving the boat he missed us, and we never saw him again. We were some time in getting what we wanted, but we did at last secure a dog-cart which answered our purpose, and having stowed away our traps and ourselves, we started, *viâ* Stittenham, for the Ardgay Inn at Bonar Bridge. A magnificently kilted gentleman travelling in a carriage and pair, fell in with us on the road, and we thought he must at the least be the chieftain of some Highland clan. He

went with us to Ardgay, from whence I believe he was going to fish the Beaulay or the Conan, but we found to our disappointment, that instead of being a chieftain, he was only a plain Englishman like ourselves, who had only donned the Highland garb for the occasion. At Ardgay, situated on the Kyle of Sutherland, our real tour in Sutherland was to begin. From the inn we sent our luggage on by mail car to Loch Inver, and we ourselves, having shouldered our knapsacks and fishing-baskets, started for a twenty-mile walk to Oykel Bridge. I recollect observing how very numerous the Black-headed Gull was in that neighbourhood. It seemed to be the only species of gull to be seen. Our walk that day was not a very eventful or interesting one. A short stage of five miles brought us to Shin Bridge, where the country was pretty enough to induce me to make a sketch while my brother bathed. Another short stage took us on to Cassley Bridge, where we halted for some lunch, and then we had rather a long, dreary tramp to Oykel Bridge, which we did not reach till nearly 9 p.m., having found Scottish miles rather long ones. A very meagre inn, which could only supply us with very moderate fare, received us at the end of our journey. I am told that there is now much better accommodation. But it answered our purpose by giving us some tea and a night's rest, and the next morning we were ready to renew our tramp. But as we wanted to begin our fishing as soon as possible, we decided to take advantage of the mail car, which passed from Lairg as far as Aulnagalach; and here we made our first essay at fishing in Scotland. The inn at Aulnagalach is on the shores of Loch

Boarlan, a lake which is not very picturesque, but it holds plenty of fair-sized trout, and the inn had a boat upon it, which was at liberty, so we were able to make a start with a fair chance of success.

And now the question was what flies to use. We had no previous experience of Scottish waters to guide us, so we thought the best thing we could do was to consult our boatman. We were quite surprised at the size of the flies which he recommended. He passed over all the flies that had been used for trout in either Wales or Ireland, and pointed out some which we had had for sewin in Wales, and some of those which we had bought in Edinburgh, but which we imagined would only be wanted for sea-trout. However, we took his advice and found it worth following, as we quickly began to pull good fish into our boat. In the course of two or three hours we had basketed three dozen, and then we thought it was time to think about having some dinner.

There was, I believe, at that time nothing procurable except bacon and eggs, but this, with the addition of some of the trout just caught, made a meal which to our well-whetted appetites appeared quite a luxurious feast. As we were bent on reaching the hotel at Innisnadampf the same evening, and meant to do some fishing on the way, we did not delay long after dinner. Our road soon brought us to the shores of Loch Awe, a prettier lake than Boarlan, and with some of its inhabitants we soon made ourselves acquainted, fishing from the bank. When we had passed the lake, a burn, which flowed from it by the roadside, still kept us company, and so we went on whipping

the water occasionally till three dozen more trout were in our basket, when we thought that as evening was coming on it was time to put up our tackle and give rather more energy to our walking. I shall never forget the walk on that June evening. As we were nearing Innisnadamp the road lay through a valley with magnificent mountains on either side; on the one side the cliffs were reddish granite, on the other slate, or something which looked like slate. The sun had gone down below the tops of these hills, and there were a great many clouds rising behind and around the tops; and these clouds were coloured by the sun to the deepest crimson, and as they were moving and rolling about they gave the effect of crimson smoke produced by some enormous Roman candles. I recollect observing to my brother at the time, that if any artist could have shown this effect upon his canvas, no one would believe that any such thing could really have been seen in nature. Nor do I think it could be seen anywhere except in the far north, where the glow of sunset lasts to such a very late hour. I have seen many glorious sunsets in the north, but such a wonderful appearance of crimson smoke, as it seemed to be, rising from behind the rugged mountains I never saw before or since. We were well rewarded for prolonging our journey to Innisnadamp to such a late hour, which gave us the opportunity of witnessing such a sight. At Innisnadamp we found for the first time since entering Sutherland, a first-class hotel. There are now plenty, I believe, along the whole route. Innisnadamp is a lovely place in the heart of the Assynt country, but on that occasion we only lingered one night there. We had elected to

make Loch Inver our headquarters, and we were anxious to reach it by the following evening, Saturday. So we pushed on the next day, fishing occasionally such bays of Assynt from the shore as had been most recommended to us by our host at Innisnadamp, and also the upper waters of the Inver where it flows out from Loch Assynt. It was getting on towards evening by the time we reached this part of our journey, and we were beginning to think of giving up our fishing, when I called out to my brother that I had seen a fine fish rise under the opposite bank, and the next moment I exclaimed, "He has risen again, and to me, and I've got him too!" My whippy Irish rod was bending double, and my reel was screeching as the fish was running now down stream, now up, and I, feeling that I had a larger fish on than I had yet met with, was beginning to indulge a wild hope that a grilse might be at the end of my line, as I knew this was a salmon river. However, after a few minutes he was brought under control, and in due time landed, and proved to be a trout of one pound weight, the first that I had ever caught of that size, and as perfect in colour, shape, and condition as any that I have ever caught. After this capture we made the best use of the daylight left us in walking on to Loch Inver as quickly as possible, where we were not sorry to fall in with our luggage and avail ourselves of the opportunity of making a change of our apparel, and to sit down to a table-d'hôte with some company besides our own.

After our week of travel the Sunday's rest was not unacceptable. We made our first acquaintance with the Free Kirk and its services, but they seemed

rather incomprehensible, and not at all attractive to our English ears. On subsequent occasions these services have always had the same effect upon me, but at the same time I always feel very much touched with the devotion of these Highlanders to their kirk; the utter disregard of weather and of distance shown by all, both men and women, in order to attend it; the large congregations that are drawn together every Sunday, or rather Sabbath as they call it, in places apparently destitute of all population, so that one wonders from whence they can possibly be drawn. And if I may judge the effect of this on the lives of the people, from that which I saw on the lives of a family with whom I boarded on a subsequent occasion for a considerable time, I should say that it is a most beneficial one. My friend was a large farmer and steward under the duke, and he was a deacon or elder of his kirk. The regularity and simplicity of the religious habits of the family, their consistency, the unostentatious way in which everything was done, their unaffected piety, combined with constant cheerfulness and amiability, won my highest esteem as well as affection. And, as far as I have had an opportunity of judging, the character of the Sutherlandshire people generally is well worthy of regard and admiration.

We stayed at Loch Inver for ten days. The hotel was very comfortable, the living good as well as cheap, and there was very pleasant company there all the time. At that time there were four rods on the Inver, and one on the Kirkaig, and all of these were staying at the hotel. But we only aspired to trout-fishing, and of this we had abundance. We had any number of lochs within reach of us, all of them free;

but the two which were highest in reputation at that time were Loch Fewn and Loch Mahinnon; Loch Fewn for the number and size of its trout, and Loch Mahinnon for the redness of their flesh. Loch Fewn was our favourite, and to this we made many expeditions, though we tried most of the others in turn. It was accessible by two different routes; the shorter one a tramp of about five miles over the mountains, wild and grand, but the other, although two miles longer, was infinitely more beautiful. It lay near the sea-coast as far as the mouth of the River Kirkaig, and then the path turned upwards by the banks of the river, which were beautifully wooded, till we reached the magnificent falls, which were an effectual barrier to the upward course of the salmon. At the foot of these falls is a very large pool which always held salmon, but it was a very difficult pool to fish, as the angler had to stand on a rock many feet above the water, and if a large fish on being hooked was determined to go down, it was impossible to follow him, and nothing could be done but give him the butt, and stand the chance of a breakage.

Many were the fish that escaped for every one that was landed. And, even when a fish was fairly played out and brought to the side, the only way to get at him was for the gaffsman to climb down to a small ledge beneath, just large enough for a man to stand upon, and still about three feet above the deep boiling water, and then to strike the fish and hoist him up over the face of the rock to the feet of the angler above. To do this successfully required a keen eye, a practised hand, and plenty of nerve, and there were very few who could accomplish it with any certainty.

Many fishermen were tempted to give up this pool altogether in despair from the frequency of their losses, but when a fish was secured here he was sure to be a prize to be remembered through life, from his symmetry of form, beauty of colour, and the difficulty of his capture. We were told by our gillie that the late Duchess of Westminster had killed a salmon on this spot the previous year. After passing the falls the route is easy to the foot of Loch Fewn, for whose waters the River Kirkaig is the outlet.

I recollect on one occasion, on a bright day, seeing *M. Artemis* (the Greasy Fritillary) flying about in great abundance over the heath-covered downs above the Kirkaig Falls. I should think that this must be the farthest northern limit reached by this pretty butterfly. At any rate Newman does not mention any known locality for it farther north than Forres. Our best day on Loch Fewn was a basket of seven dozen trout and one charr weighing in all 28 lbs. We had two fish of $1\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. each and many of $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. We fished from a boat, and often had two or three fish on at a time, sometimes two of $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. each. On other days our basket varied from three dozen to six dozen.

In those days there was no Wild Birds Preservation Act, and I used frequently to take my gun with me to secure specimens for my collection, besides making some expeditions out to sea. I shot various gulls, sandpipers, &c., besides some Golden Plovers in full summer plumage with the black throat and breast. We spent one day, or the greater part of it, in trying to stalk some Black-throated Divers on a distant loch, by name Loch Crogach, but could never get within reach of them. Another day we made a fruitless

expedition of ten miles to a Loch Roe, of which great things had been said as to its being a resort for sea-trout, but we found that it was too shallow to be fishable from the shore, and too weedy to be navigable for a boat, although a boat was placed at our disposal, so, after my brother had caught one very small sea-trout, we left it in disgust. I have heard since that many others have had a similar experience of this loch, so that it is often called Loch "Do" instead of Loch "Roo." However, our ten days at Loch Inver passed most pleasantly. We had full experience of the length of the days in a northern summer. We were there for the longest day, and we found that we could easily read a newspaper without any candles or artificial light at midnight. The sun did not set till past ten and rose before two, and the light from sunset had not entirely passed away before the light of dawn was beginning. This used to puzzle us when we were out on our fishing excursions, and we were some time before we could bring ourselves to believe that it was really so late as it was. Frequently we did not come in to dinner till 10 p.m. From Loch Inver we decided to travel farther north, so we came back a part of the way toward Innisnadampf along the shores of Loch Assynt and then turned northwards over a very mountainous range towards Kylesku. As the mails could not be made to suit us, we had to hire a car for this journey, and a very tedious one we found it, with a horse which had taken the same journey of eighteen miles and back the day before, and we ourselves had to walk the greater part of the way. However, we cared little for this, so long as our luggage was conveyed, and the scenery as we

approached Kylesku was magnificently grand and wild.

At Kylesku we changed conveyances, and with another jaded steed managed to reach Scourie, which was to be our next halting-place, at nine in the evening. I see by my diary that at this time the very great cleanliness and comfort of the inn at Scourie struck us, and that character it has maintained throughout the thirty years that have since elapsed.

The great event of our sojourn at Scourie was a visit to Handa Island, that very famous breeding-place of gulls and sea-fowl. We went there on the 28th of June, the very best time possible for such a visit, as the birds were then in the very midst of their family duties. Handa Island has its shores on the side nearest to the mainland sloping gently towards the sea, and gives no promise at all of the scene which is to greet the eyes of those who approach it, as we did, in an open boat, as soon as they get round to the opposite side; for then at once they see cliffs of several hundred feet high running down sheer into the deep water, with no breach at all at the foot of them. The formation of these cliffs is a succession of layers of rock one above another, which constitute natural shelves in long rows, quite inaccessible from beneath, right up to the very top. In one part of the face of these cliffs, the action of the sea has hollowed out an enormous cave, and opposite to the mouth of the cave stands a huge pillar of rock of the same formation of shelf upon shelf. These shelves are fixed upon by the birds for their nesting-places, and as the habits of these birds in nesting, and the methods of taking their eggs by being let down with a

rope from above, have been described by many other writers, I shall not dilate upon them here, but shall confine myself to noticing some peculiarities which I have not seen specially mentioned by others. In the first place with regard to the numbers of the birds, no idea can be conveyed of this to any one who has not seen them, by saying they are countless. Indeed no words can convey an *adequate* idea of the impression produced, but still it may interest those who have not seen it, to hear something of what ideas were suggested to our minds. The birds on the wing, especially those of the guillemot tribe, seemed to us to resemble a swarm of bees while in the act of swarming more than anything else, causing the same kind of innumerable moving lines crossing one another, and the same constant noise of wings. We seemed to be passing through the swarm. Many times some would knock against our hats, or the oars of our boat. Indeed it appeared impossible either to move or remain still without touching them in some way. I think it would have been difficult to have fired a gun in any direction, even with the eyes shut, without hitting several of them. These were the birds that were continually passing backwards and forwards. At the same time all the ledges were packed seemingly as closely as possible, with the birds sitting side by side; and to give an idea of the numbers of these, and how closely they were packed, I may mention that when we fired off some powder to startle them, the air was quite darkened with the wings of those that flew off, and at the same time the number of those that remained sitting was so great, that it seemed that not one could have moved away. The noise was

almost deafening. At this time of year they seem entirely to lose all fear of man. I landed on a rock that stood out of the water to make a sketch of the scene, and during the whole time that I was thus employed, one or more of these birds would be sitting within reach of my arm. Great as were their numbers, there seemed to be very little variety of species here. I could see none but puffins, common guillemots, razorbills, and kittiwake gulls, with a good number of shags, and a few of the black guillemot. But one thing I did particularly notice, and that was that each species kept exclusively to its own ledge or shelf. The highest ledges were entirely occupied by the puffins, and the lowest by the kittiwakes, while the middle ones were held by the guillemots and razorbills, of which I think the razorbills took the lower. The water was full of these birds, as well as the air and rocks. I have done what I can to give an illustration of the scene, but no picture can do it a tenth part of justice. It can only be seen by going there in the month of June, for as soon as the young are all hatched and able to leave the shelter of the rocks—for I cannot say to leave the nest, as nest there is none—the old birds take them away to sea, and then there is nothing to be seen of that which attaches the chief interest to Handa Island, which contains nothing else but rabbits, and affords a scanty pasture for a few sheep or goats.

One of our objects in staying at Scourie was to try to get leave from Mr. McIver, the factor for both the Duke of Westminster and the Duke of Sutherland, to fish in Loch Stack, one of the best sea-trout lakes in Scotland. Unfortunately at that time some of the

Duke's own friends were staying there on purpose for the fishing, so Mr. McIver was unable to give us leave during such time as we had at our disposal, though he was very kind, and expressed a great wish that we should be able to come again at a time when he could give us the opportunity of making a trial of this celebrated loch. We did not at that time know what an excellent centre for fishing in other lakes Scourie would prove, whether for sea-trout or brown trout, so we left it and pushed on farther northwards.

We stayed a day at Rhiconich in order to call on a clergyman of the name of Trevelyan, who had for some years taken a small farmhouse called Gualin, about four miles from Rhiconich, which he used to visit for about three months every summer for fishing and shooting. To him we had a letter of introduction from a friend, and as he had the salmon-fishing of the River Grudie, or Dionard, and of the lake from which it runs, he was able to put us in the way of some sport. He very kindly gave us leave to fish for three days on the lower part of his river, so the very next day we left Rhiconich, which in later years we found a most excellent fishing-station, and proceeded to Durness at the mouth of the River Grudie, on the north coast of Sutherland, and in sight of Cape Wrath. During the time of our stay there the weather was anything but favourable for fishing, especially for trying for salmon, with such novices as ourselves. The fly was found to be almost useless. But the son of our landlady, whom we took with us as our gillie, showed us a way of trolling with the natural sand-eel which proved most effective. We inserted a rather large hook through the mouth, and again near the tail of

the sand-eel, put a small lead weight on our line about two or three feet from the bait, and then threw the line as far as we possibly could into the water and let it sink and remain there. We let a few yards of line off from our reel, which we held in our hands, and whenever we felt a pull, we allowed the line to run free for a few minutes, and then struck hard, and generally found a fine sea-trout of about a pound or more at the end of it. In this way we fished all the large pools for about three miles up the river, and also the tidal water at the mouth. We fished the upper waters of course from the bank, the tidal water we fished both from the shore and from a boat, and the best time for fishing was at the turn of the tide from the ebb to the flow. In the fresh water we caught both brown trout and sea-trout in this way, besides occasionally some very large eels. Our best basket was twenty-three fish weighing twenty-one pounds. The sea-trout generally ran from a pound to two pounds, but my brother caught one three-pounder. We were there for four days and had fair sport every day, and besides our sport in fishing I was able to make several observations in natural history.

I had been told by Dr. Charlton of Newcastle, whom I met at Loch Inver, an excellent naturalist, and one of the party who made the first exploring tour into Sutherlandshire under the auspices of Sir William Jardine, that there was a loch near Durness called Loch Boralie, where the Roseate Tern was to be found in abundance. I went there and saw terns in abundance, but was not successful in shooting any to prove whether they were the Roseate Tern or not. I could see quite plainly by the shape of the tail that they were

not the Common Tern, the great length of the fork showing plainly that they were either the Roseate or Arctic Tern, and I had very little doubt that they were the Roseate Tern, as these had been ascertained to breed there; on the same loch I saw a Black-throated Diver and two goosanders. We also saw about the river and the Kyle an eagle, two Great Northern Divers, and some wild geese, a merganser, a large cormorant, and a greenshank. One morning as we were starting up the river I picked up on a piece of heath a specimen of that pretty little moth, the Wood Tiger (*Nemeophila Plantaginis*). It surprised me much to find such an insect so far north. We used to observe seals occasionally out at sea while we were here. The grandeur of the cliffs washed by this northern ocean struck me very much—I never so thoroughly realized an iron-bound coast as here. The cliffs, many hundred feet high, went perpendicularly down into the sea apparently just as many feet deep, without the smallest vestige of a beach at their foot. The view towards Cape Wrath on one side, and Whiten Head on the other, was the grandest bit of coast scenery that I have ever seen. We spent a very pleasant four days at Durness, and then turned southwards, going towards the borders of Caithness on our way. A thirty-one mile drive on an uncomfortable car took us to Aultnaharrow, the first part of our journey being through splendid scenery, round the shores of Loch Erriboll and at the foot of Ben Hope, alongside the River Hope and Loch Hope; but on leaving this we had to pass through a long stretch of bleak moor, interesting to no one but a grouse-shooter.

The view of Loch Naver from the hotel was pretty

enough, but as we could get no fishing here, and wanted to see something of other parts of Scotland on our way home, we left it the next day, and pressed on to Lairg, and thence, with no delay except for meals, by Ardgay, Stittenham, and Dingwall, to Inverness. As my book only purposes to relate my own recollections in the pursuit of natural history or sport, or any travel that was associated with these, I shall not give any time to the description of those places which have been visited and described by so many. It will be quite sufficient merely to set down what was our route, and the places through which we passed. We left Inverness in a steamer by the Caledonian Canal, passing through Loch Ness and visiting the Fall of Foyers; then passing many other small lakes till we came in sight of Ben Nevis, which sight fired our ardour with the resolution of ascending it. So, after dining on board, we left our steamer at Banavie, hired a guide, and proceeded to our task. We made the ascent in three hours and twenty-five minutes. We found plenty of snow at the summit, which had drifted to a great depth in many places. The weather was quite clear, and we had a very good view from the top, but it is surrounded by so many other peaks and ranges that the view is not nearly so fine as that which I saw from the top of Mangerton looking down over the comparatively flat country of Limerick.

However, we were so fortunate as to be on the top of Ben Nevis at the time of sunset, and saw a very beautiful sunset from thence. I found the descent still more trying than the ascent, but we came down at a great pace, and reached our inn exactly six hours after we left the steamer.

From Fort William we went the next morning by coach to Ballachulish, and thence through the Pass of Glencoe to Tyndrum and the head of Loch Lomond, whence we took the steamer down the lake as far as Inversnaid. From thence we journeyed by car to one end of Lake Katrine, where a rowing-boat was hired to carry us on to the Trossachs. We could not fail to be interested and delighted with all we saw here, and I devoted my time to making sketches, but we did not stay here long. We found that the expense of one week in this tourist-visited part of the Highlands was nearly as much as that of the whole month previous put together, and we hastened to get off for fear our finances should fail us. We went by coach along the shores of Loch Vennachar, through Callander, to Stirling, which at that time was the farthest point to the north reached by the railway. Having seen the chief points of interest in the town, we took train to Glasgow, and taking tickets for the south, brought our first Scotch tour to a prosperous termination.

Before closing this chapter, I should like to make a few remarks on the features of the scenery in Sutherlandshire as it struck me at that time and has always done since. I have seen some of the most beautiful scenery in Scotland; all those grand mountains and passes in the neighbourhood of Dunkeld, Blair Athol, and Killiecrankie; all that can be seen of the Western Islands from Mull to Gairloch in Ross-shire. Many of the mountains are much higher and larger in every way than any that can be seen in Sutherland. But they are so much joined together, and run in such long ranges, that the eye can never get any notion of their size. Now in Sutherlandshire the distinctive feature

is that so many of the mountains stand quite apart from one another, so that the whole of one mountain can be seen at once, and its height appears therefore much more imposing. As instances of what I mean, I would mention Suil Ven, near Loch Inver; Arkles, near Rhiconich; Quinag on Assynt; Stack Polly, Coul More, and Coul Beg, on the S.W. borders of the country. All these hills stand so much apart, and have such distinctive features of their own in shape and colour that no one who has seen them could ever forget them or mistake one for another. This makes them look much higher and more striking than many others which really far exceed them, and makes Sutherlandshire such a particularly interesting and constantly attractive country to visit.

No. 8.—Sutherlandshire mountains.

CHAPTER VII.

South Devon—Trout—First salmon in Devon—The white fish of Devon—Observations on the same in various rivers—Salmon *versus* trout—Piscatorial anecdotes—Snipe and woodcock in Devon—Notes ornithological—Entomological—*D. Livornica* again—Bolt Head—*P. Arion*—Slapton Ley—White Moles—Burying Beetles.

FROM the extreme north to the extreme south! Not quite from John o' Groats' house to the Land's End, but from Cape Wrath to the southernmost part of South Devon. That is the jump which we are to take in going from the last chapter to the present one. Beautiful South Devon! which has now for so many years been my home, what have I got to say about you? rather, what have I *not* got to say? As trout-fishing was the prominent subject in the last chapter, we will begin with that, and talk about the trout-fishing, and the fishing generally, in South Devon. When I first came to South Devon, at the end of the year 1859, it was my good fortune to find myself established within easy reach of two as pretty rivers for trout-fishing as any man could wish to see, the Avon and the Erme. Even in those early days the Erme was beginning to feel the pernicious effects of a paper-mill which had been established at Ivy-bridge a few years previously, which, as it has in-

creased in size, has done so much injury to the fishing; but the Avon at that time was free from everything detrimental, and was a perfect trout stream, full of fish. The Erme, however, was much the nearer to me, being little more than a mile away, while the Avon at its nearest point was five miles distant, and consequently it is of the Erme that I have had most experience.

Up to this time, with the exception of the short time that I had in Ireland, my experience in trout-fishing had been almost entirely among the trout in lakes. These lakes had been but little fished, and the trout were very free risers, and the flies used were large and the tackle strong. But now I had come to a place where I had to fish in rivers which were fished by plenty of other fishermen besides myself; where the water was often very clear and low, and where consequently much more skill was required in order to catch a dish of fish. Small flies, fine tackle, a light rod, the power of casting over, or under, or between, bushes and trees, all this was essential to ensure success. However, patience and perseverance, combined with observation of other fishermen, when I was out with them, soon enabled me to get on fairly well. The trout of South Devon are not large, but they are game fish for their size, and afford excellent sport. A fish of half a pound is considered large, and it is very seldom indeed that one is caught over a pound. I myself caught during my first season on the Erme at different times a dozen trout that weighed a pound each, and every year since that the number of pound fish that I have caught has been fewer and fewer, so deadly has been the effect of the poison from the paper-mills at

Ivybridge in reducing the weight of the fish more than their numbers. One great charm to the fly-fisher in the South Devon rivers is their being entirely free from all coarse fish; with the exception of eels and minnows, nothing but the various kinds of Salmonidæ is to be found in them. At that time our rivers were not placed under the operation of any Fishery Acts; no Board of Conservators watched over us. Salmon were hindered in every possible way from ascending

No. 9.—Flete and Sequers Bridge.

the rivers, and trout were allowed to be caught by almost any one, by any method that he chose to employ; and yet at that time there were more trout to catch than there have now been for many years past. Of the two rivers near to me, the River Erme was preserved in its lower waters by the owner of Flete, who gave the liberty of fishing to his own friends, in the number of whom I was fortunate enough to be reckoned, while the upper waters were

free to every one. The River Avon was preserved by a fishing association, and by the riparian landowners, who could give a free ticket to their own friends. Sea-trout ascended the Erme in great numbers, but very rarely any salmon. The Avon being rather a larger river, salmon were very numerous about its mouth, but a large weir, and traps, and nets, as well as poachers, prevented any very great number from going up, though there were always quite enough that escaped to breed and keep up a stock in the lower waters. It was very seldom indeed, however, that a salmon was caught by an angler, and then it was only by accident, while fishing for trout. No one thought of going out on purpose to fish for salmon with a fly. But in the year 1862, two young men who were living near the river began to fish for salmon in the month of February, and great reports were brought of the success that they were having. As this went on to the month of March, my ambition was fired, and I determined to give a whole day to working a large rod and salmon-fly, and started with a friend firmly resolved to bring back a salmon. I recollect that the day was not a favourable one for trout-fishing, and a water-bailiff told us on reaching the river that we should have no sport. I told him that I intended to fish for salmon, and he told me of a place where one had been risen the day before. Besides my salmon-fly, I had put on a trout-fly as a dropper for the chance of catching a passing trout. In a deep and very rapid pool surrounded by bushes and trees, I caught, after fishing for a short time, a nice trout of half a pound, and joining my friend soon afterwards, who had been fishing above, we turned

back to fish downwards, and on passing this pool I showed him where I had caught my trout. He made a cast there, only a little farther over, with his trout-fly, and rose a large fish, but missed it. A second time he rose, and then would not come any more at my friend's fly. I then determined to try him with my salmon-fly, which I did, and at the second cast he took it, and instantly leapt through the water, and I saw, as well as felt, that I was fast in a salmon. My exulting shout brought my friend back to my side, who watched gaff in hand, while I played him, which was rather nervous work, as I was surrounded with bushes and trees ; the stream was far too strong and deep to wade, and the banks rather high. However, all went well. I had plenty of strong line, and he never ran to the end of it, and in due time he was brought within reach of the gaff and hauled up on the bank. He weighed just under seven pounds. He was a beautifully-shaped fish, and as bright as possible, and his flesh when cut at table was a good colour and tasted well, and I was firmly persuaded at that time that he was a newly-run fish ; but I feel sure now that he was nothing but a very well-mended kelt, as subsequent experience has proved to me that clean salmon are never found above the tidal water in the River Avon before the month of May or June, and this was the 29th of March. But of this I shall have more to say by-and-by. At the time I was very much delighted, as this was the first salmon that I had ever caught, and not one of my friends in the neighbourhood had ever accomplished such a feat. After my success my friend put on a salmon-fly, and hooked another salmon, but lost him directly. We caught a

few trout, but the day became very hot and still, so we gave up early, and went on our way homeward rejoicing.

When I first went to Devon I was told much by the natives about the white fish which are so abundant and rise so freely in all the rivers during the early spring months of the year, and then disappear entirely at the beginning of May; no one seemed able to say for certain to what class they belonged. Some thought they were young salmon, and some that they were young sea-trout, or, as they are called locally, peal or truff. I have studied the question a great deal during my twenty-five years' experience of the fishing in the rivers Erme and Avon, and will here give my opinion on the subject for what it may be worth. There is a great difference between the two rivers, the Erme abounding in sea-trout, but seldom holding any salmon above the tidal water, and indeed, very few even there; while the Avon abounds in salmon at certain seasons, but it is not famous for the numbers of its sea-trout. Now I will deal first with the migratory Salmonidæ of the River Erme. The fish of all kinds found in its waters are divided into three classes, to which are given the local names of truff, peal, and white fish. These three are easily distinguished by the difference of their size, and the different times of their appearance. The largest of these are the truff, which vary in size from three pounds to five, though they are occasionally taken up to eight pounds; but three or four pounds is their usual weight. They begin to run up, a few of them, as early as March, but the great run is from the middle of May to the middle of July. The next in size are

the peal; these vary in weight usually from three-quarters of a pound to a pound and a quarter, or a pound and a half, and the great run of them is during the months of July and August, although there may be a few earlier and a few later. The number of them at times is quite extraordinary; and the truff are also sometimes very abundant on this river. And now we come to the white fish of the Erme. These vary in size from about three ounces to six, three or four ounces being the more common size. They are to be found in abundance in every pool and stickle throughout the months of February, March, and most of April, but they then begin to slacken, and with the first flood after that disappear altogether. They are very lively, sporting in every direction, taking the fly most readily, and fighting very gamely for their size when hooked, with frequent leaps. In colour all these three kinds of fish are very much alike, as bright and silvery as a newly run salmon; the peal are, I think, rather the bluest on the back, the spots all alike, and rather more numerous than those of the salmon. The flesh of the truff and peal is as pink as that of a small salmon, and is equal in quality to any salmon that is caught in this neighbourhood. The flesh of the white fish is generally white like a common small brown trout, but I have occasionally detected a slight tinge of pink. It is, however, very good and firm, and quite equal to that of a trout of the same size. These are the fish of the Erme. And now for the Avon. In the Avon are found salmon in abundance, and also fish that are called truff, peal, and white fish, but whether these last three are the same that are called by these names in the Erme is the question. There is

no question about the abundance of salmon in the river. Directly after the time at which I caught my first salmon, strenuous efforts were made to protect the fish, and to turn the Avon into a regular salmon river, and the result has been so far successful that any number go up to breed in the months of November and December. Of how far the angler is benefited by this I shall speak hereafter. But I think that the fish which are called truff, peal, and white fish in the Erme are to be found only in very small numbers, if at all, in the Avon at the present day. As I said before, there *are* fish in the Avon which are called by these names, but they are not, generally speaking, the same fish that are so called in the Erme. There can be no question what the white fish are that are generally found in the Avon. Any one who has ever fished on a Scotch salmon river would know them at once. All as near as possible the same shape, size, and colour, and bearing the various names of parr, samlet, or what you please, they are the young salmon of the first year. Many years ago I used to catch occasionally in the Avon, in the spring months, a few of the larger kind of white fish, exactly like those I have described on the Erme, but I have not done so now for a long time, nor do I hear of other people catching them there. The peal and truff, as they are called, of the Avon vary in weight from a pound to four or five pounds, but we do not hear nearly so much of them as we do of these fish on the Erme, and of late years I fancy they have been decreasing more and more, and I have a very strong suspicion that all, or very nearly all, of this kind of fish that are found in the water of the Avon are merely salmon in different

stages of growth. And now we will return to the fish of the Erme, which have most come under my notice, and I will put forward my theory concerning them. I believe that they are all one and the same fish in various stages of its life, and that fish is the one which is called in Yarrell's "Fishes" the salmon trout (*Salmo trutta*). The first time that we make their acquaintance is as white fish of from three to five ounces in the months of February, March, and April; then I believe that they leave the fresh water and go to the sea, those which were first in the fresh water being the first to leave; for they are continually on the move, not keeping to the same haunts as trout do. Then I expect that these same fish come up the rivers again as peal, varying in weight from three-quarters of a pound to a pound and a half, in the months of July and August. Taking advantage of any flood that occurs, they push up many of them to the very highest waters on Dartmoor. Here they remain till November or December, when they go down to the sea once more, whence, after recruiting themselves in the salt water for four months or so, they reappear as truff, from three to five pounds' weight, in the late spring or the summer months. They keep on moving upwards, and towards the end of summer all go up to breed. According to this theory the peal is the white fish on his return from his first visit to the sea in the same year, and his increase in weight is the result of something less than half a year's growth in the salt water, while the truff is nearly a year older than the peal, having been to the sea twice since we first saw him as a white fish. Supposing this theory to be a correct one, there are two questions still to be solved: what is the age of

the white fish when we first see him? and has he been to the sea at all? With regard to his age, seeing that when he first appears he is three or four times the size of the samlet when he is first noticed, I am led to think that he is at least a year older than the latter; and that, having been hatched high up on the river in the spring, he does not leave the waters of his birth till the following spring, so that at the time that we first see him he is fully a year old. If we do see him at all in his infancy, probably we do not distinguish him from his brethren the trout of the same age and size. When we first notice him he has acquired a much larger size and a much more silvery appearance than the samlet. And now for the other question which has puzzled me most, and is, I think, the one of the most interest—has he yet been to the sea at all? Do we catch him on his way down to the sea for the first time, or has he been there already for a little while and come back for a short visit to the fresh water in the lower parts of the river? It is generally supposed that he is on his way to the sea for the first time. But if this is the case, what is the reason for his acquiring that very bright silvery appearance which generally is a mark of the fish having just returned from the sea? The greater number of these white fish are whiter and brighter at this time than at any other period in their lives. And they are perfect in shape too, lively and strong, and their flesh quite firm, although not pink. Now with peal after they have been in the fresh water for some weeks their colour very much deteriorates. I noticed this first in Scotland. But in Devon on the Erme I caught a peal a few years ago on the 1st of September, weighing a

pound and a quarter, and the brightness of his colour had so much gone off that at first I could hardly feel sure whether he was a peal or a trout. On the 11th of August in the same year I had caught two peal which, although somewhat smaller, were so bright that they would hardly have been known to be the same kind of fish. The larger fish was not thin or flabby, but in external brightness, and in the colour and taste of the flesh he was far inferior to those which had been caught earlier and lower down in the same river. If, at a later stage of their lives, the fresh-water has such a prejudicial effect on the colour of these fish, why should they acquire, while younger, such extreme brightness in the fresh water before they have ever gone near the sea? On the other hand it is to be argued that with a visit to the salt water generally comes the pink flesh, and these white fish certainly have generally white flesh. Which is the greater difficulty to get over, the absence of pink flesh after a visit to the sea, or the presence of the very bright silvery appearance before a visit to the sea, I am not prepared to say. It has occurred to me as possible that these young fish may go down towards the end of winter to the brackish water about the mouth of the river, and then run up in the early months of February and March for a little way up the river, to return by the end of April and first week in May. If the river were mine I would soon solve the question whether the fish are going down or up by having several caught in a net early in February both as low down and as high up as they are to be found, and then marking those that are in the lowest waters with one kind of mark, and those that are in the highest with another,

return them to the water, and by constantly repeating this process for a few weeks, it would soon be seen whether the marked fish were going up or down the river. I have merely given the result of my practical experience as an angler, but I think if some one observant angler would give the result of his observations on the river which he most frequents, and if this was done on all the rivers which are frequented by the Salmonidæ, much valuable fresh information might be supplied with regard to the habits and life history of these interesting but mysterious fish. With regard to the Avon, although I do not doubt that there are a few sea-trout there of the same sort as those in the Erme, I believe that what are there generally called peal and truff are grilse or salmon of various sizes. As the salmon of the Avon are not, generally speaking, of a very large size, it need not be considered surprising if the grilse, or even salmon of the first year, are not much larger than the peal and truff of the River Erme.

And now I will go on to talk about the change that has been wrought in the Avon by the endeavours made to increase the number of salmon there. There is no question that the number of salmon about the mouth of the river and in the tidal waters has been very much increased—a free passage is left, and many more fish go up to spawn in the late months of autumn than used to be the case formerly. I do not doubt that the net-fishers about the mouth of the river have been very much benefited. But the fair angler derives no benefit at all from these salmon. The river is so small during the summer months, that fish hardly ever come up until they come up quite late in the year for spawning, and the only time at which they are to be caught with

the rod is during the months of February and March ; and every one of the fish so caught is a kelt on its way to the sea after spawning, unfit for food, and caught, if it is caught, in direct defiance of the law. Many gentlemen do go out, armed with a salmon licence, in these months, and persuade themselves that all, or almost all the fish that they catch are fresh run, and as very few of them have had any experience of salmon-fishing elsewhere, they are quite unable to distinguish a clean fish from an unclean one, and so are only too ready to believe what they wish ; but it appears to me that they are breaking the law as flagrantly, and deserve quite as much punishment, as the labourer who, under much greater temptation, spears the salmon which these gentlemen only preserve in order to catch it illegally themselves. And very little skill is required to catch these fish. They are so hungry at this time that they will swallow almost anything. I have known a man catch nine in a morning with the artificial fly. But this is not judged a sure enough method of slaughter with many of these sporting fishermen, and so the common way of proceeding is to string a large lobworm on a very large hook, to put a bullet on the line a short distance above, to use very strong tackle and a very heavy rod, to pitch the bait into a strong pool known to hold salmon—in a short time there is a tug, the bait is bolted, and then for a few minutes there goes on a game of “pull devil, pull baker,” and this is the *sport* of salmon-fishing as it is carried on by many on the banks of the Avon. So, in order to give a few the opportunity of enjoying such very inferior sport as this for six or seven weeks in the year, the trout-fishing on one of the best

trout streams in South Devon has been almost entirely ruined. From my own experience, as one who used to be able to catch beautiful baskets of trout at almost any time from this river, and from the experiences of the best trout-fishers in the neighbourhood, I can assert that it is very difficult indeed to catch one trout now where three or four dozen would have been caught twenty years ago. From the time of putting the river under the Fishery Act, and taking steps to increase the number of salmon, the trout have steadily decreased. And no wonder. A kelt on his return from spawning is so hungry that he will devour everything that comes in his way, and is, as Francis Francis observes, as destructive as, if not more so than, a pike. All trout-fishers agree in saying that there are now very few trout left in the Avon.

Besides this, to injure the small chance of sport left to the trout-fisher, the river swarms all through the summer with the samlets, which will rise at every cast of the fly, but which it is illegal to keep. If by any chance a good trout should here and there have escaped destruction, and be lying up in some favourite haunt, is it likely that he will come near the angler's lure when he has just seen two or three of these little plagues dash at it before his eyes, and then be dragged through the water with splash and flurry enough to frighten any sober *fario* out of the neighbourhood with a resolution never to feed there again? And this, as I say, goes on through the whole season. I see that Yarrell says that, "it rarely happens that any salmon-fry are observed in the rivers late in June," but I have myself pulled them out in the Avon, three

years ago, on the 28th of August, having found them there every month from March onwards.

And it is to keep the Avon in such a condition as this that trout-fishers on the Erme, as well as on the Avon, have to pay ten shillings for a fishing licence, and salmon-fishers a pound; and all this time no water-bailiff at all is kept on the Erme, and the owners of the paper-mills at Ivybridge are allowed to let their poisonous refuse run off into the river according to their own will and pleasure without let or hindrance. The Erme is in no way benefited by the Fishery Acts or Conservancy Board, all the preservation of the river that is done being done in the lower part of it by the Flete keepers, who receive nothing for it except from their own master, H. B. Mildmay, Esq., the generous owner of Flete.

Pernicious, however, as the paper-washings are, they are not so destructive to the trout of the Erme as the salmon are to the trout of the Avon. The poison kills a great many fish, and seems to hinder their growth, but good baskets of trout are still to be caught on the Erme, and I have spent many pleasant days on its banks, and can almost always depend on bringing home a dish of fish. I have never caught a brown trout there weighing more than a pound, but I have known one caught of two pounds and a quarter. One evening I saw a trout leap out of the water close to me, as yellow as a guinea, which must have weighed more than three pounds, but I could not move him, and I never heard of such a trout being caught either at that time or since. To show what is considered a fair size for the fish, I may mention that one of my best baskets that I can find re-

corded consisted of two dozen, weighing in all five pounds and a quarter. On another occasion in a few hours' fishing in the morning I caught nine fish, six of which weighed in all four pounds; but two of them were peal, weighing respectively, one a pound, and one three-quarters of a pound. However, I think enough has been said for the present about the fishing of this district—we will pass to the gun.

South Devon was the first place where I found close to my home snipe and woodcock really plentiful. In hard weather snipe were to be found in almost every ditch, and in more open weather I had not to go far before I could come either upon a piece of moorland, or some rushy meadows near a brook, either of which would contain snipe. It was not at all uncommon to flush more than thirty or forty in a day. And the hanging woods over the banks of the rivers were very favourite resorts for woodcock. Twice have I been out with a party when it was supposed that we had moved five-and-thirty of these birds in a day. But I have known fifty killed in a day on the borders of the moor not very far away.

Although South Devon is certainly not a first-rate partridge county, I can hardly imagine a pleasanter locality for all-round shooting. And with regard to partridges, although they are not numerous, still they are more easy of access than in most other places. The high fences and small fields seem to have the effect of making them never very wild, so that the sportsman can get almost as many shots in January as in September. And those who, like myself, prefer shooting over dogs, can always take their dogs—in fact, very few partridge-shooters in this neighbourhood shoot in any other way.

And then the delight of a mixed bag over a wild bit of country in December or January. A few partridges and pheasants, with snipe, woodcock, plover, water-rail, and here and there a duck or a teal—the constant expectation of something fresh getting up—all this makes the environs of Dartmoor very pleasant shooting-ground for those who live within reach of it.

To the naturalist, too, what a paradise is this region ! Ornithologist, entomologist, or botanist, whichever he may be, he will find here a fine field for observation. Nearly all the birds which are common in any other counties are fairly abundant here, and many have been met with here which are hardly ever seen anywhere else. When I first fished along the banks of the Erme I was struck with the great number of water-ouzels, kingfishers, and long-tailed tits which I saw. As I traced the stream farther up into Dartmoor, I occasionally came across the ring-ouzel. The common sand-piper is my constant companion on such occasions in all parts of the stream.

In Orcheton Wood, near the mouth of the river, is a very pretty heronry which I have never seen mentioned in any list of the heronries in England. A year or two before I came into South Devon, no less than nine Night Herons were killed in the early part of the summer near this river, which slaughter was duly recorded, and somewhat severely commented on, in the *Zoologist* of that date.

All the commoner warblers are found in the neighbourhood, but I have never met with the Reed Warbler. The Wood Warbler is fairly abundant in the Ivybridge woods. Although I have searched carefully for the Dartford Warbler in those localities near Kingsbridge,

where Col. Montague found it, I have never been able to see one; and other ornithologists at Kingsbridge have told me the same, so that I fear that this pretty little bird has disappeared from this neighbourhood. The nightingale is, of course, unknown to us. The Black Redstart occurs occasionally, and I have seen one myself on a tree in my own churchyard; but the Common Redstart I have never seen in this part of the country. Another fact that struck me as very curious was that, although we have the Grey Wagtail abundant near our rivers both in summer and winter, the Yellow Wagtail is hardly ever met with anywhere. I have only seen one in the course of twenty-five years. The Pied Wagtail is, of course, common everywhere. The Cirl Bunting is one of our local visitors, and among the larks the woodlark is very welcome as the best substitute we can get for the nightingale to sing for us at night. Though destitute of Philomela's power and variety, his song is beautifully soft and pleasing, and has a very soothing effect on a calm spring evening.

Of the birds of prey, almost all are to be found here, I myself have seen peregrines, harriers, buzzards, and once had the opportunity of watching very closely for some time a honey buzzard, which was so near to me that with a field-glass I could see every feather. Hobbies I have heard of, but not seen. Owls both long-eared and short-eared are not unfrequent. The croak of the raven high in the air is often heard. I have only once seen Cornish Choughs. Of waders worth recording, the bittern has twice occurred in this parish since I have been here. All sorts of wild-fowl are occasionally met with. One morning a pair of garganey was brought in to me for identification,

which had just been shot on a pond close by out of a flock of nine. On the same pond a young shoveller was killed. But perhaps the most remarkable birds of this kind were a pair (mallard and duck) of the beautiful summer duck of America, shot on the River Erme by Captain Langley of the Artillery. They had no appearance of having escaped from confinement, and no birds of the kind are known to be kept in any part of the county. A bird of the same species was once killed at Slapton Ley by N. W. P. Pitts, Esq., of Whympstone, in this parish, and is now preserved in his collection. A specimen of the Little Auk was picked up dead on the beach at Challaborough by Mr. Bernard Randolph, son of the rector of the parish of Ringmore, and was given to me for my collection. Curlews breed abundantly on Dartmoor, and on all the wild moorland. Stone-chats are abundant, and the Wheat-ear is often seen ; but not so the Whin-chat, which I used to see so frequently in Northamptonshire. Night-jars are common enough. Of the woodpecker tribe I have never seen the Wryneck in the neighbourhood, and the Nut-hatch is not at all common.

But it would be endless to give a list of all the birds found or not found here. There are very few of the rare waders and sea-birds that have not been killed here. Long-tailed ducks at Slapton Ley, avocets a very short time ago on the Kingsbridge estuary, and even since I began to write of the birds noticed here, a spoonbill has been killed at Aveton Giffard on the Avon by Mr. Ellis at the mill there, and is now in the collection of Mr. Elliot of Kingsbridge.

South Devon is just as fruitful in subjects of interest for the botanist and entomologist, as for the ornitholo-

gist. The luxuriance of the growth of flowers on the Devonshire banks is proverbial, and too well known to need description. From the white violets and snowdrops in February, to the foxglove as late as November, there is a constant and regular succession—the following being the most conspicuous and abundant as they come: oxalis, wood anemone, and stellaria, primrose, daffodil or Lent-lily, wild hyacinth, orchis, and rose campion; and last and longest of all, the foxglove. With all of these, in due order, every roadside bank is a perfect blaze. The cowslip is conspicuous by its entire absence from the list. There are thousands of others mixed in with these which are less noticeable, and even at Christmas, or in January, wild flowers are to be found in sheltered spots, and wild strawberries may be picked and eaten. And then the ferns—Hart's Tongue, Polypody, Hard Fern, Spleenwort, Bracken, and Shield Ferns of every variety in the greatest abundance, rocks and walls hung all over with the pretty little Common Maidenhair; the damp places in woods giving us the magnificent *Osmunda Regalis*, and some of the rivers affording the Tunbridge Fern, while many of the cliffs on the coast are beautifully green with the ever fresh *Asplenium Marinum*. No wonder that such a county is rich in the number of species which it affords to the entomologist.

One particular thing which I have noticed in South Devon is that these high roadside banks appear to have very much the character of woodlands, and a great many plants and butterflies which in other counties are only found in woods are here found on these banks. As an instance of this I may mention the Speckled Wood (*H. Egeria*), which I consider by far the most

abundant of all South Devon butterflies. The Silver-Washed Fritillary (*A. Paphia*) is another. Both of these are abundant by the roadside ; but the smaller fritillaries are only to be found in the woods or heaths, as the case may be :—*M. Euphrosyne*, Pearl-bordered Fritillary, in all woods ; *Athalia*, Pearl-bordered Likeness, in the Ivy-bridge woods ; *Selene*, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, on heaths and the borders of woods ; and *Artemis*, Greasy Fritillary, in its own peculiar localities.

The beautiful Clouded-Yellow (*C. Edusa*) is every year to be found, some years abundantly. I have taken the Wood-White (*L. Sinapis*) at Flete. The Holly Blue (*P. Argiolus*) is common in the spring. The Painted Lady is particularly abundant. I have never met with either the Large Tortoise-shell or Comma Butterfly in this neighbourhood. Of Hairstreaks, the Green (*T. Rubi*) is the commonest, and the Purple (*T. Quercus*) is to be found ; and I once took a specimen of the Brown Hairstreak (*T. Bætulæ*) by the roadside. Of Skippers I have taken four in this neighbourhood, the Large, the Small, the Grizzled, and the Dingy, but the latter very seldom. With regard to moths, I may observe that the Creamspot Tiger is far more common than the Common Tiger—once I have seen the Ruby Tiger. The Clouded-Buff is to be found on our heaths. The plain Golden-Y and beautiful Golden-Y are both frequently met with, and I was once very much surprised at the capture of a beautiful specimen of the Gold-spot (*P. Festucae*) hovering over a jasmine blossom, as I had always supposed this to be a fen insect, and we are a long distance from any very marshy ground. Of hawkmoths, by far the commonest is the Privet Hawkmoth. I have taken the Death's

Head, the Eyed, the Convolvulus, the Lime Hawkmoth (*once in my own garden*), the Large Elephant, the Humming-bird in great abundance, but never the Poplar, which is in most counties the commonest of all hawkmoths. But of all hawkmoths the rarest that I possess is the Rayed or Striped Hawkmoth (*Deilephila Livornica*), one of which I obtained, as I have mentioned before, by a great piece of good luck while a boy at Eton; and the way I obtained my second specimen in Devonshire was still more curious. One summer, soon after my coming into South Devon, on recovering from an illness, I went to stay with some friends in Plymouth for change of air. As I had never seen Mount Edgcombe, they took me over there one afternoon. As we were returning in a boat which we had hired, a little girl, the daughter of my hostess, exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Green, what a pretty butterfly!" and then I saw, transfixed with an enormous pin, on the side of the boat, but quite alive and flapping its wings up and down, a beautiful specimen of *D. Livornica*. I turned to the boatman and asked him how it came to be there, and he told me that when he came back from his dinner he found it sitting there, and knowing that gentlemen and ladies sometimes took an interest in those things, he impaled it where it was. I gave him a shilling and carried off the insect, and, as I had no entomological gear with me, Mr. Reading, the well-known entomologist, very kindly killed it and set it for me. It seemed to me a very remarkable thing that such a rare insect should choose, out of all the boats in the harbour, that very boat in which an entomologist was about to make a voyage. But of all the entomological treasures which South Devon produces, perhaps

the onemost worthy of notice is the Large Blue, *P. Arion*, which was discovered at the Bolt Head, near Salcombe, by a friend of mine, Mr. H. Young, shortly before my arrival in Devon. For many years an expedition to the Bolt Head in search of *Arion* was with me a regular holiday to be looked forward to every July. The chase was very difficult along the sides of this magnificent headland, and the gorse bushes were very thick. On a favourable day the insect was very abundant, and in spite of all difficulties I have taken as many as twenty before the sun went off the hill. And I knew that plenty were left. And as the caterpillar was unknown, and the place was so remote, I had little fear that their numbers would decrease. But, alas ! professional entomologists have found their way to Salcombe who know the money value of *Arion* ; and besides this, a great deal of the gorse has been burnt, and I found very few the last time I was there, which is now about three years ago. Still I hope that the inaccessible nature of the ground will prevent its ever becoming quite extinct there. Besides *Arion*, the Bolt Head produces a great number of insects. The Grayling (*H. Semele*) and the Dark Green Fritillary (*A. Aglaia*) swarm there, and I have taken *Adonis* there, as well as at Torquay, and the rare *Agrotis Lunigera* is very abundant.

But I think that enough has been said on entomology for this chapter. While I am so far on the coast, I cannot pass by without a word Slapton Ley, that remarkable fresh-water lake running parallel to the sea, from which it is only separated by a narrow strip of beach. It is very much overgrown in many places with rushes, and here are to be found thousands of coot, and

all kinds of wild-fowl as well. A public day's shooting here used to be a wonderful sight. A certain number of privileged persons went on the Ley in boats, and the shore was lined with shooters of all descriptions, who fired indiscriminately in every direction. But this, I believe, has been described by many others, and these days have been discontinued now for some years.

The Ley abounds with pike, perch, roach, and rudd. A day's fishing here in the summer is a very pleasant holiday, and the angler is pretty sure of quantity, if not of quality. My best day with pike here was when, with my brother-in-law, we caught ten of six pounds apiece, besides having many other runs. These were caught by spinning with a roach; but the Ley is now so weedy that it is difficult to find a clear place for spinning. At that time it was better.

The neighbourhood of Modbury is particularly productive of white moles. A season hardly ever passes without some being caught. And they are found at all times of the year, summer as well as winter. One year the mowers, while cutting our hay, found two in one field. My dog caught another in winter, when snow was on the ground. Burying-beetles are not uncommon in this locality. One year my wife and myself saw the whole operation of burying a dead mouse carried on under a fruit-wall in our kitchen garden. I myself have seen this three times; once in Northamptonshire, once here, and once near Loch Inver in Sutherlandshire. On the occasion of which I speak, the whole work occupied about an hour—and it was very interesting to watch the dead body moving in various parts, as if alive, but sinking gradually lower

and lower, till at last it disappeared altogether. The beetle kept so much underneath the mouse that it could not be seen except by taking the dead body away ; but the constant movement of the earth showed in what part the little insect was.

CHAPTER VIII.

Otter-hunting in Devon—Uncertainty of the sport—Its charm—
Good days—The Erme, Avon, Plym, and Tavy.

My recollections of sport in South Devon would be very incomplete if I did not say something on the subject of otter-hunting. There are not many counties in England where this sport is carried on at all, and where it is carried on, it is not always carried on in the same way in all places. In some places rough hounds, in some smooth ones, are used. In some places it is held to be legitimate to spear the otter; but in most parts of the country the otter-pole is only used to poke the holes in the bank for the purpose of making the animal bolt. I shall only attempt to describe the sport as I have seen it carried on in this neighbourhood with the pack that are now called the Dartmoor hounds, but which used to be called for many years Mr. Trelawny's, taking their name after that indefatigable sportsman who hunted them for so many years, and kept them up with such generous liberality.

This pack consists of foxhounds drafted from the regular pack and entered to the chase of the otter while they are quite young. Most of them are used with the rest for fox-hunting during the winter, and only employed for otter-hunting during the

summer. Very frequently one or two rough hounds of the regular old breed of otter-hounds, obtained from some other pack, are added to the number, but this is not considered an indispensable necessity. Some of the otter-hunters in this district are great advocates for their use, while others dislike them, as being too slow and too noisy. For myself, I think that their presence in a pack is most valuable, especially at the beginning of the season, when the young hounds have hardly had time thoroughly to learn their business. It is true that they are so ready to speak on the slightest possible indication of scent that sometimes they raise false expectations; but even this is a cheerful variety sometimes after a long silence, and it puts the others on the alert and gives encouragement and hope to all. And then they speak on a trail, which our Dartmoor foxhounds will not do as a rule, although Mr. Collier's hounds, which are all foxhounds, do so speak; but then they have been entered only to otter-hunting, and are never used for any other purpose. But the chief value of the rough otter-hound in the pack is for the first marking the otter. After he is once started, and is fairly on the swim, the foxhounds will be much quicker after him, with much more dash, and will press him very closely, and towards the end of the hunt will do most brilliant work; but in their excitement they are very apt to be carried a long way down the stream by hunting the wash, as it is termed. But for the first finding the otter, and for fresh finding him after he is lost for a time, as generally happens several times in the course of a good chase, the presence of one or two good rough hounds in a pack I consider to be in-

valuable. I recollect seeing this particularly exemplified one day on the river Erme. We had been hunting an otter for a short time down stream, when he turned, and took up his position under the roots of an old oak-tree. The entrance to the hole was almost under water, and it went back into the bank for some distance. The rest of the pack passed it by, and went down the stream with a merry chorus; but an old rough otter-hound, called Romulus, the only rough hound in the pack at that time, stopped there, and with his grand bass voice told us that he was sure our quarry was resting there. The pack was brought back, but they did not acknowledge it at all. In spite of all encouragement they soon left the place. The old hound was taken away several times, but he would return to the same place, and with trumpet-like notes tell us that "he knew he was right." The pack were brought back many times; much poking and stamping was tried, and most of the field declared that the otter must have gone down stream, and was probably at sea by that time. But the old dog persisted, and at last, as every one was about to give it up, out bolted the otter in full view, and in a very short time was hunted and killed. Without such a hound we should never have bolted that otter, for we should never have fresh found him; and had we been trying the river for the first time, without having any reason to feel sure that an otter was there, we should have gone by the place twenty times over with a pack of foxhounds only. This is one instance out of several when, I believe, that the death of the otter was mainly owing to the persistence of that splendid old Romulus.

In order to understand properly what is written

about otter-hunting, it is necessary to know something of the terms used by otter-hunters. These are sometimes different in different places. What is called in the north country a drag, is called in this neighbourhood a trail, and is used to imply that the hounds are hunting a line taken by an otter some time previously—it may have been many hours before, or it may be very recently. Sometimes a trail may be followed for a whole day and yet no otter be found, and sometimes an otter is found at once without any trail having given indication of his whereabouts. The rough hounds, and those which are used exclusively for otter-hunting, generally speak upon a trail—that is, they throw their tongue from time to time, although not all at once with that crash of music which bursts forth as soon as the game is found. The Dartmoor hounds, as I said before, do not, as a rule, speak upon a trail, but only show it by the working of their noses and their sterns; but this is perceptible enough for those who are accustomed to noticing such things. A mark is the sign which the hounds give of the presence of their game when they have discovered that he is lying up in a hole, or a drain, or under the roots of a tree. Instead of the “Tally-ho!” which the fox-hunter uses, and which otter-hunters use in many places, the Dartmoor otter-hunter calls out “Heu gaze!” whenever he catches a sight of his intended victim; and he utters this cry, whether he actually sees the body of the animal above or below water, or whether he only sees the chain of bubbles on the surface which he sends up to mark his course as he swims low in the deep water. This exclamation is generally understood to mean, “Ah, I see him!”

but what is the exact derivation of the term I will not undertake to say. The huntsman and all those who carry otter-poles, or are really going to hunt, are on foot, and in costume fit for going into the water; but there is generally a mixed crowd of pedestrians, horsemen, and carriages of every description on the banks of the river. The otter-pole is about six feet long, of stout ash, pointed at one end with iron. Those places which

No. 10.—Otter-hunting : a mark.

an otter generally chooses for his hiding-place, such as hollows among roots, stumps, palisades, or bushes, are called hovers, and several terriers are always taken with the pack to force the creature out of these places when the hounds give reason to suppose that he is resting there.

And now the only thing to put before a reader who has never seen otter-hunting is the usual method of proceeding. The hounds, having been taken to the lowest part of the river which the master intends to try, are sent with a cheer into the stream, and turned upwards. They are encouraged to examine

every bush, every rush-bed, every hollow, every creek on either bank, and the men who mean to work walk in the water, and follow behind them in a chain, as well as the depth of the water will allow them. Every likely-looking place is tried over and over again, and they advance but slowly, for an otter is very easy to pass unnoticed, and very difficult to find. Too much attention cannot be given to the working of each individual hound; nothing can be more fatal to the success of otter-hunting than hurry. The otter-hunter's keen eye watches every mud-bank, to see if a fresh footprint can be discovered. It is soon evident whether there is any trail, and then the next thing to look out for is a mark. As soon as ever there is any sign of a mark, the first cry that is heard is "Look out below!" and one or two trustworthy men betake themselves to the nearest shallow below to watch, for the otter is very likely to slip out unnoticed while the hounds are still marking, and will try to get away towards the sea. The otter is to be fairly hunted by the hounds, and may not be struck in any way with the otter-pole; but sometimes, after a long chase, leave is given for any one who can do it to tail the otter. This consists of grasping the otter by the tail as he passes in shallow water, lifting him out at arm's length, and throwing him to the hounds as soon as they are near enough. This is by no means an easy thing to do. An otter is a heavy animal and a slippery one, and the man who tries to tail him is probably standing on a very slippery foundation. All who are engaged are in a great state of excitement. The otter, when seized by the tail and held aloft, can turn his head upwards more than half the length

of his own body, and, if he can reach any part of the arm or body of the man who is holding him, will make his teeth meet in the flesh right to the bone. Still, there are plenty of men who can do this most successfully, and it is a practice which is resorted to, either when the hounds are tired after a very long chase, or when the otter is likely to escape into some place

No. 11.—Otter-hunting: tailing an otter.

where it would be impossible to follow him, or when blood is very much wanted.

As soon as the otter is killed, the next thing that is done is to tree him. He is taken from the hounds, and one of the men who has been most active in the hunt climbs the nearest tree which has an overhanging branch at a sufficient height. He

climbs out along the branch, and the otter is handed up to him, and he swings it by the tail above the pack, who are cheered to bay and leap at it, while the huntsman doubles his horn, and every man, woman, and child present uses his voice to the utmost to swell the chorus. After this has been continued long enough to work up the pack to a proper pitch of excitement, he is thrown down among them for a worry, and then he is taken away, that his skin may be preserved as a trophy of the day—and here I must call the reader's attention to the toughness of the skin of the otter. I have often seen one which had been worried by the whole pack for several minutes, till every bone in his body was broken in many places, and yet in no place had any tooth gone through his skin, which remained whole and untorn, and the animal was just as fit as ever, either to be stuffed, or to have his skin made into a waistcoat, a muff, or a jacket.

There is a glorious uncertainty about the sport of otter-hunting. Of course there is an uncertainty about all sport, but about none so much as otter-hunting. In the first place, although there are plenty of otters that frequent all our streams, still otters are never so plentiful as foxes, hares, and such like beasts of the chase. And where they do abound, they are so much more difficult to find; they are constantly changing their ground, and are very fond of going off to the sea for the whole day after coming up the river to feed at night. This is the reason for so often fixing such an early hour in the morning for the meet, so as to intercept them before they have left their feeding-ground. And when they remain by the river in the

daytime, they are generally lying hid far up in some drain or hollow place, quite inaccessible to anything so large as a hound. Then, besides this, it is impossible to hunt them if the river is at all swollen, or if the water is highly coloured. So that the chances of a blank day with otter-hounds are always considerably more than even, in this part of the country at any rate; and, if a man wishes to show his friend from a distance what the sport is like, it is very unlikely that he will be able to do so unless the friend can stay for several weeks and be content to be present at every meet until the lucky day shall come. In spite of all these difficulties I have often seen two or three otters hunted in a day, and on several occasions have seen two killed; and I have known four or five weeks to pass without a blank day. But much more often have I known many more weeks to pass without any sport at all. And yet, for all this, there is a charm in otter-hunting which draws those who have once felt its influence to follow it again and again, and always with a hope that something better is coming.

Its surroundings are so beautiful. It comes at a time of year when everything is bright and lovely. The river dashing among rocks. The woods, the hills, mountain and moorland, that form the background. The motley crowd of spectators in every costume—ladies and rustics, veterans and laughing urchins, the holiday aspect of the scene—and then when the sport does begin, where else is there such an opportunity for all of really seeing what the hounds are doing? The way they pick up the scent not only on bank or stone, but on the water itself; to see, as I have often done, a hound swimming or wading breast-deep, and turning

now to right and now to left, as the otter has turned, and seeming with his nose to be actually drinking in something that was floating like oil on the top of the water; and then the music of the pack as they joyfully swim together and throw their voices in an exulting chorus that invites all to join in their gladness; there certainly is to those who have once been brought under its influence a charm about this sport which would make up for even a greater uncertainty than the South Devon otter-hunter has to encounter.

How well I recollect my first day with these otter-hounds some five-and-twenty years ago! They met at the mouth of the river Avon, and very soon hit upon a strong trail, which they carried up the river for a mile or so, till, just after leaving Loddiswell Bridge, they marked very decidedly, or solidly, as it is called, under a large overhanging oak-tree, just below the place where I afterwards caught my salmon, as I described in the previous chapter. Oh! the excitement of that moment! The hounds were pressing and leaping over one another, and tearing at the bank as if they would tear the tree down.

We were not kept long in suspense. "Heu gaze," and then in another moment "Heu gaze" again sounded farther down. All was life and excitement in an instant, where but a few minutes before everything had been so quiet. We did not kill that otter. We hunted him for more than an hour, viewing him at first very frequently, but as the day wore on it became very hot, and the scent failed, and the water was too deep to be very favourable for us, so at last we were reluctantly obliged to leave him. We went up the river for many miles, but did not find another. But

I had seen enough to make me very anxious to embrace the next opportunity of seeing the sport.

It was not till I had been out several times that I actually saw an otter killed—and the seeing this was quite accidental. I was returning one day from an afternoon drive with my wife, not having heard that the otter-hounds were to be anywhere in the neighbourhood, when I saw on the banks of the Ludbrook, a small tributary to the river Erme, which ran by the side of the road along which we were travelling, a party of men and hounds, and I found on inquiry that they had been at Flete on the river Erme that morning, but being unable to find there on account of the unfavourable condition of the water, they had tried some distance up the brook, and were now returning to the river to see if they could meet with better fortune. I left our boy to drive my wife home in the carriage, and at once joined the hunters. We went back to the Otter Pool at Flete, and almost immediately found an otter. He gave us a very lively chase for rather more than an hour, when he began to show unmistakable signs of being beat, keeping constantly at the top of the water, and at last, as he was crossing a shoal, he was tailed by Mr. Gage Hodge, and at once killed by the pack.

The Erme being the nearest river to me, of course I have seen more sport on that than on any other; although I have visited the Avon, the Yealm, the Plym, and the Tavy, besides the Harberton Ford stream, and the Buckland Brook, and have known of good sport on all, though I myself have seen and heard of less on the Yealm than on any other river. The great charm of the Erme is that the hunting there is so easy. All the hovers and likely places for finding

are near together, in the grounds of Flete Park, so that if an otter is found at all, he is generally found very quickly, and there is no need for a long and wearisome tramp for many miles by the bank, which after all may end in disappointment. The celebrated Otter Pool, as it is called, is the water which surrounds a long island in the middle of the river, much overgrown with trees and underwood, and with large woods on the opposite bank also. More otters are found here than anywhere else; and if an otter be not actually found here, there is almost sure to be some indication, if there is an otter anywhere in the neighbourhood. As all the best part of the hunting-ground in this river is under the influence of the tide, it is absolutely necessary that the meets should be fixed as near as possible to the time of low water, and this very often causes the fixture to be at a later hour in the day than is usual elsewhere for otter-hunting, and makes a meet at Flete very popular with ladies and those who could not very well manage to be present at a very early hour in the morning.

In fact a meet of the otter-hounds at Flete very often resembles a gigantic picnic. But although this may not sound business-like to hunting-men, I have seen as good sport at Flete as anywhere, and as good as I ever wish to see. I have seen an otter found there before twelve o'clock in the day and hunted till half-past eight, being constantly in view for the greater part of the time, and at last killed. I have several times seen three otters found there in one day, and two killed; only this season, 1884, at the first meet there, we bolted two otters, both in full view together at the same moment, one of which we killed after a very

lively chase, and then hunted the other very briskly for some time, when we lost him, as was supposed, by his getting away unobserved to sea. The proximity of the sea to the hovers is the only drawback to Flete as a hunting-ground, but I think the advantages and disadvantages are pretty evenly balanced.

The otter, as a rule, does not often try to go very far from the place where he is first found. He is not in the habit of pursuing a course resolutely either down-stream or up-stream, but swims from side to side, seeking the well-known hiding-places under the banks. Sometimes, when he is hard pressed, where the water is shallow and hovers are scarce, he will slip out over the land to make a short cut to some deep water well known to him. I recollect a very good day on the Plym when this was done. We had already killed one large otter, and found another higher up the stream in Bickleigh Woods. After pressing him very much in some shallow water, we missed him for a minute or two, and then the hounds told us that he had landed; and there was a regular race, like a fox-hunt, those who had horses at hand jumping on them and galloping as fast as they could go through the woods up the side of the river, and those who were first were just in time to see the otter spring from a very high rock into a large, deep pool, with the leading hound jumping close behind him, and all the pack following suit. It was a very pretty sight. We killed that otter after a very exciting hunt.

Perhaps the best way to give any reader who has never seen an otter-hunt an idea of what the sport is like, will be to describe one particular otter-hunt from beginning to finish; so I will select one out of

many which I have recorded in the *Field*, which I think showed more variety, and more that will interest a general reader in the description than any other; and with that I will close this chapter.

I have said that otters will sometimes land, and there are some that seem particularly fond of trying this expedient, whilst others will hardly ever be tempted to show their backs above the water, even in crossing a shallow. This was never more exemplified than in two otter-hunts which took place in the same week in the month of June, 1874, the latter one of which is the one that I am about to describe. In the first hunt the otter was never for one second out of the water; in the second, he was, if anything, more on the land than in the water. On the Monday in that week the hounds had met on the river Tavy, and had hunted and killed, after a most exciting chase of between four and five hours, a very large dog-otter weighing twenty-four pounds, which during the chase had killed a most valuable terrier by carrying him down with him in a deep pool and drowning him just before the hounds. The same hounds, our Dartmoor pack, met on the Saturday in that week at Hatch Bridge, which is just above the tidal water in the river Avon. After having had such good sport on the Monday, it was thought that it was almost too much to expect that we should have very good fortune in store for us on another day in the same week. However, the hounds were put into the water, and we turned up-stream to try our luck. At first there seemed to be no sign of any trail. On we went to Loddiswell Bridge, past the village of Loddiswell, through the Woodleigh Woods, and so for two or three

miles as far as Topsam Bridge, and still no sign—every drain running into the river and near the river had been tried with no result, and our hopes were getting very low.

The river Avon through its whole course runs between very high hills, wooded in most places to the water's edge. Soon after leaving Topsam Bridge, when we came to some marshy ground, the hounds began to display a little more eagerness, as if an otter had been there on the previous night. We then came to the grounds of Hazelwood Park, where the river on one side is banked up for a long distance with a stone wall, and many drains run at regular intervals from the meadows above at right angles to the course of the stream into the river through openings in this wall. To the mouth of one of these openings several hounds swam across from the opposite side of the river, and hung about it for some time, but did not give tongue. A terrier was put in, and he went up directly, and in a few minutes we heard him giving tongue most lustily. But he could not move anything, and seemed to be unable to get on. The hounds took so very little notice that many believed it was a false alarm; but the huntsman had confidence in his terriers, and declared that the otter was there, only that he was very far up. It was therefore decided to dig a hole far back from the river, to get the terrier out from his present position, and try to put him in behind the otter. The first hole that was dug, which was dug in the course of the drain as it was pointed out to us by those who knew the place, was not far enough back to accomplish the purpose, but it was far enough back for us to catch a glimpse of an otter, but he was still

farther up. Another hole was dug, and terriers put in, and then at last our friend began to move. The hounds were taken back into the field above to leave him room to bolt; and all the spectators on the opposite bank were ordered to move out of sight of the opening into the river. We waited in breathless suspense. I lay at full length on the bank, with my head just looking over the stone embankment upon the aperture below. Soon I heard a whisper behind me that he had been seen to pass the hole which was first dug. In a few seconds more I saw him put his head out cautiously from the opening of the drain, draw it back again, and then plunge out in full view of us all into the river, and turn down-stream. As he went out, a fine half-pound trout leapt clean out of the water just in front of him. But the fish-pursuer was now himself the pursued, and he had no leisure to think of any dainty meal. "Heu gaze" was sounding on every side of him, and the hounds were greeting him with music delightful to them and to us, but which he felt no inclination to stop and listen to. The water here was very rapid and shallow, dashing among large stones and boulders, but affording no shelter for our friend, so after turning about for a short time in various parts of the stream, he crept out on to the land on the opposite bank, and ran through the grass and alder-bushes that fringed the river to a place above, about four hundred yards up, where the water was deeper and not so rapid, and where the neighbourhood of the Hazelwood boat-house seemed to promise a more secure place of refuge. The hounds were close behind him, but he gained his point, and here for some time we had some very steady

and pretty hunting, with an occasional view, as he was dislodged from one hover after another. After a time he landed again, and ran on land downwards towards the place where he had first left the water. The hounds were so close to him at this time that I could see him twisting and dodging among them through the long herbage, and once saw him actually double under the belly of Whimsey, one of the pack; but he got safe from them all, and instead of seeking the water again, slipped from before their very noses into a cleft among some very large rocks, where they could not possibly follow him. Terriers were put in, but no inducement would persuade him to bolt. The terriers came out occasionally, covered with blood, and then returned to the charge. Then pickaxes were brought to open the ground to his retreat, but this was a very hard task, and it was not till after an hour's unremitting labour, and not till those who were at work were actually touching his back with their tools, that he could be driven from his stronghold, and then in full sight of the whole field he came down the high bank to the river once more, and then the pack, which had been kept out of sight while the digging was going on, were once more cheered on to the pursuit. In a very short time he once more left the river, and pursued exactly the same tactics, going up on land to the Hazelwood boat-house. But here he could find no peace, so, after a time, he once more landed and ran back towards the cluster of rocks below where he had found shelter before. But these were now barred to him, so he made up his mind to a fresh move altogether. Instead of seeking the water, he turned right away from the river, and went directly up

the high and densely-wooded hill towards the mansion of Curtisknowle. Through the luxuriant herbage with his long lithe body he could travel for a time faster than either hound or man. The thicket was so dense that it was impossible for anything but the hounds to struggle after him; so the field could do nothing but remain below, and judge by the music what direction the chase was taking. Up and up they went, and farther and farther away. "He is making a cut for Gara Bridge weirpool," said Mr. S., and galloped away, followed by one or two more who were mounted, and they saw nothing more of the hunt. Some fancied he must really be intending to go overland to another stream. At last, when they were quite on the brow of the hill, as we could judge by the distant cry of the hounds, we ascertained that they had turned and were running fast along the ridge, still in the same wood, but in a direction parallel with the river and tending in the same course with the stream. And then at last we could hear that they were coming down the hill again towards the river. Louder and louder was the cry as they came nearer to us. Every one was wild with excitement. So much land-hunting in an otter-hunt had never been known before by any of us. At this time I was in the middle of the stream, and I saw a small brooklet coming down through the bushes from the hill above, and I judged that, if the otter made for the river, it was by that brooklet that he would come, so I kept my eyes fixed in that direction. Nearer and nearer are the sounds; louder and louder the crash. They must now be within twenty or thirty yards of me when—worra, worra, growls and scuffling instead of the

crash of music—"They must have got him." Up the brooklet I go, through every obstacle, and in a few seconds I see our game quarry struggling in his last throes with his enemies, who have come upon him just in time to prevent his regaining the river almost exactly opposite the place where he was first found. He, or rather she—for such proved to be her sex—was not a large otter, only weighing about sixteen pounds ; but a more active one I never saw hunted. With

No. 12.—Treeing the otter.

the exception of the hour spent in opening the rocks, there was never any time when the interest in the chase could flag for a minute, and even during that time we knew that our quarry was close to us, and was doing valiant battle with our terriers, though we could not see the conflict ; and during the time of the run through the woods the excitement was greater than anything that I have ever seen at an otter-hunt. There was a large field out. Mr.

Collier, the master of another pack of otter-hounds, was present, and every one had every opportunity of seeing the whole of the hunt. This otter must have run altogether more than two miles upon land, while closely hunted the whole time, and the chase lasted between three and four hours from the time that she was first bolted. Of course she was treed, with the usual honours ; and so ended a chase the description of which will, I think, give any one who has never had the opportunity of seeing such a thing as fair an idea as possible of the sport that is to be met with in otter-hunting.

CHAPTER IX.

Yachting reminiscences—The South Coast—The Channel Islands—St. Malo—An amusing adventure—Cherbourg—Havre—Dartmouth—Falmouth—A yachting cruise on the west coast of Scotland—Campbeltown, Oban, Portree, Gairloch, Stornoway, Lochinver, Arran.

AMONG my recollections of natural history and sport there come very forcibly to my mind many very bright days, aye, and nights too, spent on board a most charming yacht. My brother-in-law was very fond of yachting, and for many years kept a yacht, to cruise in which I was constantly invited, when I could get away for a summer holiday. We began with sailing about the coast in the neighbourhood of Torquay, but the first regular cruise which I took with him was to the Channel Islands in a little cutter of twenty-five tons. How I did enjoy that time!—the freedom of it, and the rest after much parish work! I found at once that I was a capital sailor, never ill, and always able to enjoy my meals and a pipe. I had never been out of the British Isles, and even such a Frenchified appearance as the Channel Islands and their inhabitants presented was a great change to me; but we did not limit our excursion to the Channel Islands, but determined to push on and see a little of the French coast. This was towards the end of the summer of

1870, and the Franco-Prussian war was then at its height; indeed Sedan was fought while we were on our voyage. We did not therefore care to go very far inland, as the French were very suspicious of strangers. Our first run was from St. Helier's, Jersey, to St. Malo, and here we stayed a day or two, and during our stay met with a most amusing adventure. We had been one day for a drive from St. Servan into the country, and had bought in a little village a number of delicious, white-fleshed, green figs, which were most abundant and were then full-ripe. The shop-keeper had put them up for us in a paper bag, the paper being, as usual there, of the very flimsiest kind, and we were on the way home.

Between St. Servan and St. Malo the sea runs in a little narrow bay which is dry at low water, and is crossed by ferry-boats at other times, steps running down to the sand from the high banks on either side. After leaving our carriage my brother-in-law was carrying the bag of figs, when, just as we got about half-way down the steps leading from St. Servan, the rotten paper broke, and down fell all the figs on the steps. They were so ripe that nearly every one of them was smashed to pieces by the fall, and hardly any were worth picking up. I could not restrain a loud burst of laughter at my brother's surprise and dismay, and he very heartily joined me in the laugh. However, there seemed to be nothing to be done. Our figs were gone—we could not replace them—so in a few minutes we walked on. We had not gone far, however, before we heard some one calling out very loudly behind us, and looking round we saw a tall, elderly Roman Catholic priest (I never knew such a place as St. Malo

for priests) shouting at us, gesticulating wildly and pointing to the place where the figs had fallen. We supposed that he was telling us that we had dropped our figs, imagining that we were not aware of it, so we called back to him that we knew of our loss, and that he was welcome to them, if he could find any that were worth picking up. However, he seemed to grow more and more angry, and soon came on after us as fast as he could walk, calling and jabbering at the top of his voice. We were by this time on the St. Malo steps, but when we saw that he had evidently got something which he wanted to say to us, we waited for him to come up. Directly he reached us, he assailed us with a torrent of abuse, sputtering and mixing up French execrations with broken English. We gathered from what he said that he imagined we had insulted him in some way, but for a long time we could not find out what he meant, till at last it appeared that he thought, or pretended to think, that we had dropped the figs on the steps on purpose to make a mess in which he might slip and fall. In vain my brother assured him that it was entirely an accident, and that we had considered that the loss was only on our own side, and affected no one but ourselves; he declared that our laughter had been at him and at his country, that he was not afraid of us, that we were no gentlemen; and then he went on to say that he believed we were Prussian spies.

Of course, by this time people were collecting around us, and our situation was becoming unpleasant. So we all went together to some *douanier*, or official of some sort, who was close at hand, and explained matters to him. He came to the head of the St. Malo steps to

see what had been done, and then, for the first time, we found out what the old priest wanted us to do by way of reparation for our fancied insult. This was, that we should go back again to the St. Servan steps and clear away every fragment of the figs and clean the steps. My brother then soon solved the difficulty. He called to him one out of a number of boys who were playing near, and gave him a few coppers on condition that he should go and clear away all the figs, and wipe up all the mess. The official declared that every one must be satisfied with this, and the old priest departed, muttering to himself, and we were glad to find ourselves on board our own boat again and on the way to the yacht, where we thought we could soon have taught our friend the priest a little more civility, had he ventured to accompany us. From St. Malo we went back to Jersey, and tried to get to Alderney ; but with wind and tide against us we were unable to accomplish our task, so, after beating about till past midnight, we ran into Cherbourg.

There was much to interest us here, but we were kept several days after we had seen all that we wanted to see by the stormy weather, which would have made it very imprudent for us to go on in such a small craft. Day after day did we see the broom, which was the storm-signal, hoisted at the pier. At last, on a Saturday afternoon, the weather seemed to have moderated, the sun shone out, and our skipper thought we might safely make a start for Havre. The broom was still up, but we thought it was only left as a sign of the gale which was now dying away. Everything went well, and we made a very rapid passage for about thirty miles, when we began to hear thunder in the distance.

This soon came nearer, and the wind increased, and the sea got up. However, the gale, though rather strong for so small a vessel, was in the right quarter for us, and we travelled onwards at a great pace, without any anxiety, only a great deal of tossing about. It was certainly rather startling to have the crack of the thunder and the flash of the lightning quite simultaneous, and sounding like the crack of a rifle, over in a minute, with no echo at all. And now I had the only opportunity I ever had in my life of seeing how instantaneously a sudden squall could cut down all the waves, and change a tumbling sea into a level plain. I was sitting on deck, when I heard the skipper sing out sharply to all hands to come on deck and shorten sail. I saw how smartly the hands on board a yacht could do their work, for in a very few seconds everything was taken in except a small storm-jib. It was not done a second too soon, however. On hearing the skipper's first exclamation, I had looked to windward, and seen on the horizon a white line. As I looked, I saw that this white line was spreading on all sides and coming towards us with fearful rapidity; and just as the change of sails had been completed, we were in the midst of it, and tearing away through a sea perfectly level, but as white as snow with foam. Not a rag more of sail would it have been safe for us to carry. However, the squall soon passed by, and we were as we were before, and in the early morning we reached Havre, but had to wait outside for some time, till the tide would allow us to enter the harbour. Directly we got in, we were horror-struck with the intelligence that in the same gale through which our little bark had ridden so safely, that gallant ship the

Captain had gone down off Cape Finisterre, carrying with her the flower of our navy. Most of her officers were known to me, and several of them were my dear personal friends. I had spent a great deal of time on board the ship only a few weeks before, during the time that she was at Plymouth, till she started on her ill-fated voyage, and this catastrophe cast a gloom over the rest of our trip. We were wind-bound at Havre for nearly a week, and then we came back at once by way of Ryde and Southampton. Many other cruises did I take with my brother. Some to the various regattas, Ryde, Cowes, Dartmouth, and Torbay. Some along the south-west coast as far as Falmouth. The Channel Islands and St. Malo were revisited. The yacht gradually grew larger, from a 25-ton cutter to a 40-ton schooner, till finally he took a yawl of ninety-six tons, and in this my last and best cruise was made.

It was nearly 8 p.m. on the 30th of July, 1878, when, after a long and tedious journey of more than twelve hours from Bristol to Holyhead, I set foot on the deck of the *Doris*, then lying off Holyhead pier. All the wearisomeness of the journey, however, was soon forgotten in the delightful feeling of the free holiday that was before me for several weeks to come. We were a merry party on board—my brother-in-law, his two sons, and two others, guests like myself. With two guns on board, fishing-rods and tackle for both salt and fresh water fishing, sketch-books and paint-boxes, packs of cards, plenty of provisions, a good crew, numbering ten in all, and, above all, light hearts and a determination to enjoy ourselves, what more could we require?

Time was no object to us. We were at sea for pleasure, with a bright sky overhead, and plenty to

amuse us, as we started in the very early morning. All the commoner sorts of birds were in abundance around us—puffins, guillemots, razor-bills, terns, and gulls of course of various plumage; and as we neared the Isle of Man gannets made their appearance. A stranger also was seen by us for the first time on this first day in the shape of a Richardson's skua (*Lestris Richardsonii*), his long, central tail-feathers attracting the notice of one of our party, who called my attention, and enabled me to identify it, although I was not looking as the vessel passed it. A calm evening, succeeded by a calm night, and a calm, hazy day, did not allow of very rapid progress or many observations; but the following evening found us anchored in Belfast Lough, off the little town of Bangor. We did not, however, stay to set foot on shore, but with daybreak were off again for the north. We came out of Belfast Lough with a nice breeze, but this soon died away, and as we were entirely dependent upon our sails, having no auxiliary steam-power, we were tossing about all day off the Copeland, and drifting towards Galloway, and did not reach Causewell Point till eight in the evening, and there, with the tide against us, and only a very light breeze, we could do no more than hold our own till bedtime. However, we had not long been in bed before a sudden change came upon us, of which we were made aware by being awoke from our sleep with the noise of creaking cordage, splashing waves, smashing of crockery, bustling and shouting amongst the crew; then a sudden lull, and before we were well awake we were informed that we were in Campbeltown Harbour, at 5 a.m. a very fresh breeze having sprung up which had carried us in gloriously

under double-reefed sails. We had to wait in Campbelltown over Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, in order to take a pilot on board, who came to us from Arran on the Tuesday morning. We sailed at midday and got off the Mull of Cantire by bedtime, and our next point of anchorage was off the island of Gigha, which we reached the following day, after a pleasant night at sea. The cliffs and rocks shone out fair in the sun as we passed the Isle of Cara, and the many birds to be seen about made me long to make further acquaintance with them; so not much time was lost after the anchor was down, before I was seated in the galley with two of our friends, and two of the crew to row us, two guns with us, and a lythe-line trailing behind the boat, bound on an exploring expedition round the rocks.

I had promised a friend who was just beginning a collection to get him some sea-birds, as I was pretty sure of falling in with something which would suit him, if I did not require it myself. During the last few days I had been very much struck with the great length and extreme forkedness of the tails of such terns as we had seen, and although I have had very little opportunity of observing the appearance of the common tern in the air, still I strongly suspected that these were not the common tern. However, as there were plenty of them about, I expected very soon to solve the difficulty; nor was I very long in doing so. After picking up for my friend a couple of turnstones in splendid summer plumage, I managed to knock down one of the terns, and then, as his companions swooped around him, I laid two more of them in the water by his side. They were all of them Arctic terns (*Sterna Arctica*).

During our voyage northward all the terns that we saw were of the same species, and on a subsequent occasion, when I was at Ullapool, I saw a number of terns laid out on a bench in front of the hotel, which had been shot by a gentleman staying there, and they were, every one of them, Arctic terns. It appears evident that the Arctic tern is the commoner of the two in these northern regions; and I should presume that this is to be accounted for from the fact of the common tern preferring, as Yarrell states, small, low, flat, sandy islands or marshes to breed on, while the shores of the north-western highlands are almost invariably rocky and high.

After securing the terns, the approach of a thunder-storm made us glad to get on board again, which we did, just in time to escape a wet skin.

The next day we had a glorious sail to Oban, with a fresh breeze and delightful alternations of sunshine and cloud, bringing out every variety of colour and shade on the caps of Jura, Scarba, Ben More of Mull, and Kerrara. During the five hours that we had to wait for the turn of the tide at the mouth of the Crinan Canal, besides skinning my birds shot the day before, I shot a very fine lesser black-backed gull for my friend. I noticed that of all the larger gulls—or indeed, I may say of all the gulls of any kind—this lesser black-backed gull is by far the most numerous along these north-western coasts. I saw a few herring gulls; but, in spite of the closest observation, I could not see one that I could make sure of as a great black-backed gull. Common gulls and kittiwakes were in abundance, and here and there I saw the black-headed gull, especially in the neighbourhood of Oban.

During the voyage I had had a good deal of conversation about birds with our pilot, who seemed to be a most intelligent old man, and to have had many opportunities for observation during previous voyages with ornithological yachtsmen, and to have made the best use of those opportunities. He told me exactly at what point of our trip we should fall in with the Manx Shearwater, and I found that he was quite right. After much talk about birds, many and various, that he had seen in his travels, he exclaimed, "But of all birds, sir, I wish I could show you an Arran auk." I thought at first that he was speaking of some kind of hawk, and had dropped the "h" in his pronunciation; but he soon convinced me that he meant something quite different. He said the bird in question was a sea-bird, as large as a goose or a turkey, much larger than a cormorant; that it was black above and white underneath; that it had a large, sharp bill; but that, in spite of its being so large, it only had wings of the size of a young chicken, and never flew.

There was only one bird that I could imagine which would answer to that description, but I could not believe it possible that that could be the bird. I brought "Yarrell's Birds" to him, and showed him the pictures of all the larger birds of that class—cormorants, divers, &c.—but he said he had seen all or most of these, and they did not answer to his description; but directly he saw the picture of the great auk, he pronounced that to be the bird. He declared that it was to be found on the coast of Arran, but only in the month of March, and assured me that he himself had shot it there several times.

We had many conversations on the subject during

the voyage, and he always maintained the same opinion so stoutly, and I found him so correct in his information about other birds, where I had the opportunity of testing it, that I did not know what to think. The excitement about the Arran auk became quite a joke to my companions. However, he undertook, if he was alive the following March, to procure me a specimen. Alas ! I never had the opportunity of properly testing the correctness of his statements. In the October after we left him the old man suddenly dropped down dead of heart disease one Sunday morning on his way home from church. He had not forgotten his promise to me, however, and had left instructions to his sons to try and procure me a specimen of the bird described ; and accordingly, one day in the following March, a hamper arrived from Lamlash containing a very fine specimen of the great northern diver, with a letter from the son, saying that, in accordance with his father's wishes, he had sent me a specimen of the auk found on those coasts.

Of course a great northern diver was not a great auk ; but I do not feel at all sure that, if the old man had lived, this bird would have been sent. He himself had several times pointed out to me the difference between the bill of the great auk and that of the diver, besides the very conspicuous fact of its having such very tiny wings. I cannot help thinking that at some time or other he had shot the great auk in that neighbourhood, and having, in subsequent seasons, seen large diving-birds about the same place, without the opportunity of examining them very closely, he had taken it for granted that they were of the same species. His son, not knowing the difference, sent the bird which

seemed nearest to answer to his father's description. And, after all, it was a handsome addition to my collection, and will always be especially valuable to me as recalling many a pleasant friendly chat with poor old James Ferguson, of Lamlash.

We found Oban a very pretty place for the few days of our stay, and especially charming on those lovely summer evenings when from the deck we looked towards the shore, studded with countless lights, and listened to the music of the band in front of the hotel, borne across the waters, varied with songs from boats, and other sounds from the numerous yachts in the bay. Here two of our guests left us, but our party was increased by the arrival of my sister and niece, as well as another sportsman, so that we were merrier than ever. We had a magnificent run of sixty miles in six hours from Oban to Eileau Ornsay, in Skye. Coming through the Sound of Mull, I caught my first sight of the shearwaters, which seemed to abound most, as the pilot had said would be the case, in the neighbourhood of those remarkable islands, Muck, Eig, and Rum. The whole of this region, rocky, wild, abounding in solitary fantastic cliffs rising out of the water, appeared to me likely to be a paradise for an ornithologist; and I thought that nothing would please me better, had I time and money to spare for it, than to cruise about in this district for one year, with a small steam-yacht at my disposal, and try thoroughly to investigate all the spots that are least visited, and ascertain what birds are to be found there in all the different seasons. We saw countless guillemots, razor-bills, and puffins, swimming and diving in the water, having now left their

breeding-places for the more open sea; and very pretty it was to see so many pairs, the parent and its young one, and to hear the affectionate croak with which the old one tried to lead its young out of our way as we approached. I noticed that, as a rule, we did not see all these three species mixed up indiscriminately, but each seemed to keep its own water. We saw a few of the black guillemot, the contrast between mother and young one here being very strong. Here, too, I saw, for the first time in my life, gannets in the act of fishing; a beautiful sight it is, and well worthy of a few words of description for the benefit of those who have never been fortunate enough to witness it. The glorious bird, so spotlessly white against the dark background of sky, steadily rises higher and higher, till at a great elevation the wings suddenly close, and like a shooting star the great white body flashes into the water with a velocity and force that almost takes away the breath of the beholder, and with a splash that sends the spray nearly to the clouds, and can be heard at a considerable distance. The bird rises, as Yarrell says, to such a height as experience shows is best calculated to carry it by a downward motion to the required depth at which the fish which it has discovered is swimming; and in a few seconds it reappears from its plunge, and rarely without a fish. As the shoals that attracted one, generally attracted many, the sight was frequently very grand indeed. Hardly had we seen one disappear before the cry was, "Look again! there! and there! and there!" Another and another went down, till the scene might fairly be likened to a shower of falling stars, with the addition of a flash of

white spray shooting up like a rocket to show where each had disappeared. I feel sure that no true lover of nature could fail to be powerfully impressed by such a sight, however often he might see it. I may mention that the gannet in his fishing is occasionally made to illustrate "the biter bit," for sometimes, when he catches a gurnard and tries to swallow it at once, the fish will extend his prickly dorsal fin and choke the

No. 13.—Gannets fishing.

bird, and both are occasionally taken together by the fishermen in their nets.

Just opposite to Eileau Ornsay is the entrance to Loch Hourn, the scenery of which is wonderfully magnificent, especially when seen as we saw it, and as, I understand, it generally is seen, under a stormy sky, making its depths and recesses look very fearful, and with a high wind cresting every wave in the foreground with foam. I managed to find time to bring away a sketch of this scene, as well as to have a

little shooting the next morning, before we started for Portree, which was to be our next point. With a smart breeze and the tide in our favour we raced through Kyle Rhea and Kyle Achin. The latter struck me as the best spot for an artist that I had ever visited, the mountains in the background being most various and fantastic in shape and colour, middle distances most charming, and plenty of objects, in the way of ruins or huts or stranded boats, for a foreground. From any spot selected, ten or more different pictures might be made. Little time, however, had I for making pictures, as we rapidly flew past each object on shore. Later on, in Loch Ailsh, and as we entered the narrows, our progress was slow enough. Here, however, we had some diversion in catching gurnards, which towards evening began to bite very freely at the lines which we put over as we were drifting along.

The calm continuing, did not allow us to get to Portree till the afternoon of the next day. An exciting chase after a black cormorant and a wounded curlew wound up the adventures of that day. As the ship was to be drawn up here on the shore to have her bottom cleaned, I had resolved to vary my amusement a little, and to try what I could do with the trout in a loch which, I had heard, was to be found on the mountain about five miles off. Accordingly, about ten o'clock, accompanied by one of our party—who was, however, no fisherman himself—and guided by a boy from the town, we started for the Storr Lochs. The boy recommended us to try the “far-off” loch, as being best for fishing from the shore, since we could not have access to the boat which lay on the

nearer one. He did not give me much encouragement as to the sport to be expected. There were plenty of trout there, but yachtsmen did not often catch them. The last party that he escorted there, consisting of three, only caught one small fish throughout the day. But then it leaked out that they sat down at every mile to rest, and to have a pull at the flask, and that a great part of the time was spent in the consumption of a sumptuous lunch. "Well," said I, "one fish will not content me; but I have no doubt, if there are fish there, that I shall catch more than that." He shook his head; he thought the day was a very unfavourable one, a dark day was bad for this loch: besides, the wind would be blowing from the wrong shore. However, in spite of this discouragement, my friend and I plodded on merrily. Grouse ran along in the heather by our side on the shore of the first lake to which we came, where also lay the remains of a mallard, apparently struck down by a peregrine. Here I saw a sight which astonished me; skimming over the water in every direction were a great number of house-martins. At first I thought that I must be deceived, and that they must be sand-martins; but I watched them very closely, and they were unmistakably house-martins. Besides the larger size of the bird, there was the blue-black of the back, so plainly distinguishable from the brown of the sand-martin, and the very conspicuous white patch on the rump, which, besides the shape of the tail, distinguishes it from the swallow. But such a locality for the house-martin! Not a human habitation for miles, except one shepherd's cot in the distance, entirely built of stones—no clay, no roofs, or eaves! The boy

himself who was with us was astonished at the birds, and asked if I knew what they were. I have often wondered if any one else has ever observed house-martins in a similar situation, on a high mountain loch, in a wild, desolate, moorland country.

However, the martins—strange visitors though they seemed—must be left, and here we are at last at the “far-off loch,” having passed by the nearer piece of water. The rod and tackle are soon put together, and a cast made at the first likely-looking spot. “Ha! there was a rise, and there another; and there is a fish on, and a pretty good one, too. Ah! he is off again.” However, now it was certain that there were fish, and that my Sutherlandshire flies had an attraction for them.

After trying the same place a few minutes longer, I moved on a little farther, and then the fun began. Very soon a beautiful trout of half a pound was in the basket. Another and another of the same size followed him. My desponding guide was now all smiles and delight, and gradually getting wild with excitement, as he skipped from stone to stone with the landing-net, in order to land, without wetting his feet, the fish which I from my wading-place guided to him. In the course of an hour, without moving from this spot, I had basketed eight or nine splendid trout, none of them less than half a pound in weight, and of course had had the excitement of rising and hooking many more. As the day was cold and damp, I thought it would be advisable to walk on a little now, and warm the blood with some exercise; so we went where a burn runs out from the loch, and followed the course of this with the intention of seeing the

waterfall which leaps down close to the entrance of what is called Prince Charlie's Cave, the hiding-place where the royal Charlie so long escaped the vigilance of his enemies. However, we found that to reach this would take longer time than we could spare, so we retraced our steps. I made a few casts in the burn, and rose a fish or two; but the water was too low for success here. The boy was very anxious to have a try; so I lent him my rod, and by hauling the line upstream in a rapid, he succeeded in catching a very small fish, greatly to his delight. We then returned to the same place where I had caught the fish before, and found them still ready to come. I fished on till I had placed sixteen in all in the basket, besides the little one the boy caught in the burn. Of these sixteen, only two were less than half a pound in weight, and that only by a very little, while two fish were fully a pound, and they were all very handsome and very strong fish. I can easily imagine that on a favourable day in June or July a splendid basketful might be caught from these lakes. I found that I had quite weight enough on my back for the long trudge homewards over the rough mountain road. However, these fish made a pleasing addition to our bill of fare for dinner on board; their flesh cut quite red, and although we had a beautiful salmon on the table, the trout were generally preferred.

From Portree, on the morning after my trout-fishing, we had a lovely sail to Gairloch. This is decidedly one of the most charming resting-places for a yacht on the whole of the west coast of Scotland. To artist, ornithologist, or fisherman it is equally attractive. We were here for four days, which we divided be-

tween shooting, lythe-fishing, and sketching. We secured some more Arctic terns, and having observed some black guillemots, I resolved to try and get one. So we started in the cutter for the purpose. I very soon saw one in lovely plumage, its jet-black body showing off the snow-white patch on the wing to the greatest advantage. But it was accompanied by a young one, and was showing such anxiety to secure the safety of its little charge, that I could not find it in my heart to take advantage of its parental affection, and so allowed the pretty pair to pass away unmolested. Soon afterwards, however, I secured a very clean-killed specimen in immature plumage, like the one figured in "Yarrell's Birds." Having sailed out very rapidly to the mouth of the bay, we had the hardest pull I ever had in my life of four miles against a very strong wind and tide to regain our vessel, and right glad was I to step on deck again. The sunset-effects here were some of the finest I had ever seen—the purple and gold of the sharp-peaked mountains and the reflections in the water combining to make a picture that must be seen to be realized.

From Gairloch we started with a fair breeze, intending to go to Loch Inver; but finding the wind more favourable for Stornoway, we changed our plan, and early in the afternoon found ourselves on the island so dear to the Princess of Thule.

Any words of mine would be wasted in describing the country which has been so admirably depicted by Mr. Black. Of course we visited Lewis Castle, and also, although Sir James and Lady Mathieson were away, were treated with their well-known and never-failing liberality and kindness to yachtsmen who visit

the place, receiving through the steward the same supplies of poultry and other welcome delicacies as if they had been at home. We had now reached our extreme northern limit, and the next day we pointed across for Loch Inver, and while sailing across had a sight of Cape Wrath, which we should have liked to have reached, had time permitted. We had a very lively time with the fishing-lines while sailing across, catching sixty-eight large gurnard and a mackerel in a little more than an hour. We were kept out of Loch Inver for one night by the wind falling calm, so that we had to wait for daylight to steer in through so intricate a passage; but in the morning we found ourselves close to the hotel, with Quinag and the remarkably-shaped Suil Ven looming through the mist. They brought back to my mind sunny days and glorious baskets of trout, caught during my former visit to Sutherlandshire twenty-three years before, as related already in these pages.

In the afternoon some of us strolled along the banks of the river towards Assynt. I saw two salmon in the Carpenter's Pool, and also I saw by the side of the road what I have described before as having seen in Devon, two burying-beetles burying a mouse. All were very much pleased with Loch Inver, and sorry to leave it, which we did rather suddenly, because a north-east wind sprang up, which was so favourable for our homeward journey that our plans were immediately altered to fall in with it. We had projected expeditions either to Innisnadamp, or the falls of the Kirkaig, or Skenaskink, if we could have stayed one day longer; but our time was limited, and as we had a very long sail southwards to accomplish, our skipper very wisely judged

that we ought not to lose so favourable a gale, and so we ran back to Gairloch, and the next day to Tobermory in Mull, our course being the same as in the northward journey, except that we came through Applecross Sound instead of Rona Sound. From Tobermory we made a vain attempt to sail to Staffa; but what little wind there was, was dead ahead of us, and we could not accomplish it; so we contented ourselves with catching a few fish, and stood on towards Oban, which we reached in the middle of the following day, finding the town in all the bustle and excitement of the contested election which resulted in the return of Lord Colin Campbell as member for Argyleshire.

During this our second visit to Oban we made one charming expedition in the cutter to Dunstaffnage Castle. We had a bright sunny day and most lovely scenery, besides the interest attaching to the old fortress itself; and another object of interest presented itself to me that day. I saw what at first we thought was a very large hawk, and then that it was a peregrine-falcon; but, as it came nearer, its size, its length of wing, and its colour and flight convinced me that it was an osprey; and as it sailed away towards Loch Linnhe, I was confirmed in my opinion, for we saw it swoop down and carry off a fish. I have seen the osprey before, both in Sutherland and at Killarney, but I never saw one fishing till that day.

The following day we bade farewell to Oban, and had rather an amusing time just off the Slate Islands, where we overtook the *Mabel* cutter, which had sailed out just before us, and had a sort of a race, with a very slack wind against a very strong tide, passing and repassing each other, till we parted company as we

bore up for the Crinan Canal, at the mouth of which we anchored for the night.

The next day we had the grandest sail of the whole cruise. Leaving the Crinan about 6 a.m., with a fine steady north-east breeze, we ran down the Cantire to the Mull, round it to Pladda, and on to Lamlash in Arran, which we reached in twelve hours from the time of starting. Our pilot reckoned that we had sailed fully 120 miles in the twelve hours; since, although we had the wind on our quarter to the Mull, from that point we had to beat the whole way to Lamlash. Near Pladda I had the opportunity of seeing what I had never seen before, although I had frequently heard it described, and that was a skua chasing a gull, and forcing him to disgorge the fish which he had caught, which this robber secured before it reached the water. Ailsa Crag looked very fine in the distance through the stormy sky as we passed it, though we were not near enough to see the birds which are generally so numerous there.

We stayed three days at Lamlash, and drove over to Brodich and saw some lovely views of Goatfell and various glens. One of the most astonishing things in Arran appeared to me to be the price paid for lodgings. Fishermen are able to let their cottages of only one floor at from 12*l.* to 20*l.* a month. The prices seemed to me to exceed anything that could be met with at Torquay or Bournemouth, though of course it is only for a short part of the year.

And now my voyage was at an end; from Arran I crossed to Ardrossan, from whence the iron horse landed me next morning in the bustle and smoke of London, so far from the blue mountains and invigorat-

ing breezes of the north that it seemed difficult to realize that not twenty hours had passed since I was in the midst of them. The land-locked nature of the greater part of this voyage makes it especially charming for ladies or indifferent sailors, as there is no possibility of a nasty tumbling sea, when they are so screened; and at the same time some glorious sailing, very fast and with plenty of wind, is to be had, as these pages have shown. A pilot is necessary, unless the skipper himself is very familiar with the whole course. But with a pilot, a more enjoyable cruise could not be had, delightful alike to the yachtsman, the sportsman, the naturalist, and the artist.

CHAPTER X.

Other tours in the north—Ullswater—Newcastle—Pallinsburn—Its gullery—Shooting over Flodden Field—Sutherland again—Rhiconich—Among the salmon—Garbet Beg—Trolling for lythe with phantom—Ferns—Cromarty—Loch Lurgan—A battle with a five-pound trout—Wild geese—Lochs Ganavich and Skenaskink.

MY recollections of natural history and sport carry me to the far north on three other separate occasions, besides those which I have already recounted. But I shall not relate any of these tours so circumstantially, confining myself strictly to the chief points of interest. In 1857 I stayed for a week at Pooley Bridge, at the upper end of Ullswater, and for a fortnight after that in Northumberland.

Ullswater is the only one of the English lakes that I have ever seen. Of the beauty of its scenery I cannot speak too highly, but the fishing there I found very disappointing. Certainly it must be allowed that the end of August, which was the time that I was there, is very late for trout-fishing. And I will freely confess that I saw a great many trout in the river Eamont; but with a bright sun and a low, clear water I could do little or nothing with them. I find no record of interest concerning ornithology or entomology during my short stay there. From thence I went to

Newcastle and spent a day with my friend, Dr. Charlton, whom I had met two years before at Loch Inver, and with him I went over the high-level bridge, and also passed a very pleasant time in the excellent museum there, admiring greatly the beautiful way in which so many of the birds had been set up by that first-rate taxidermist, Mr. Hancock. At Newcastle I was joined by my wife, and we went together to spend a delightful fortnight at Pallinsburn, the seat of my friend, Mr. Watson Askew.

This was a most interesting place, delightful both to the sportsman and naturalist. The ground was classical. The house was only a short distance from the place where the river Till joins the Tweed, and we approached it by the bridge over which the Earl of Surrey led his troops to fight King James of Scotland at the battle of Flodden.

Had I been inclined to fish, the river Till and a part of the Tweed were both at my disposal. But my mind at that time was intent upon partridge-shooting, and my friend was able to put before me some of the best partridge-shooting that I have ever had. I never saw turnip-fields so many or so large, or the turnips themselves so high as they were here. On wet days it was sometimes difficult to get the birds to rise at all; but in dry weather the single shots were endless, and the birds never flew far away.

I saw here the large piece of water which is mentioned by Yarrell as a favourite breeding-place of the black-headed gull, but of course in the month of September these birds were away at sea; but I saw a great many water-fowl there. I have always regretted that I did not accept, while I was at Pallinsburn, the

offer that was made me by Mr. Robertson, of Lady Kirk, my host's father-in-law, afterwards Lord Marjoribanks, of a day's salmon-fishing on some of the best water on the Tweed. Boats, tackle, and attendants were all placed at my disposal. But I was so well satisfied with my shooting that I never could find it in my heart to tear myself away from it. But partridge-shooting I could have had elsewhere and at all times ; whereas, I never had another opportunity of trying the salmon-fishing on the Tweed.

Nineteen years passed after my first expedition to Sutherlandshire before I had the opportunity of going to Scotland again. And then my brother and I had leave given us to fish for salmon for a fortnight in August on Loch Garbet Beg and the river Inchard at Rhiconich, Sutherland. The trouting both on loch and stream in that neighbourhood is almost illimitable in every direction, so we could reckon on a most enjoyable holiday for a month or five weeks. My journey thither was made in a different way from the route I had followed on the former occasion, for I went the whole way to Lairg in Sutherland by rail.

At Lairg I stayed for a couple of days and fished on Loch Shin in company with two young officers of the name of Anstey, one of whom, being in the 24th Regiment, was one of the unfortunate victims of the terrible catastrophe at Isandula two years afterwards. From Lairg I went to Rhiconich by mail-car, a fifty-mile drive along the shores of Loch Shin, Loch Merkland, Loch More, and Loch Stack. The wind and the rain for the greater part of the journey were something fearful ; but this exactly suited the magnificently grand and gloomy scenery through which we were passing.

We saw two curious half-waterspouts pass over Loch More. The water rose in a pyramid, apparently about twenty feet high, and whirled round with foam and spray towards the top, and travelled fast across the lake. The rain-cloud came down towards it, but I could not see that the two ever quite met. No boat could have lived there. While we were baiting our horses near the Duke of Westminster's shooting-lodge, we saw two black-throated divers on the lake, within twenty yards of the shore. They were quite tame, and took no notice of us, but kept playing about, diving and rising half out of the water, flapping their wings like tame ducks, as if on purpose to show their beauty. The duke never allows these, or any of the wild birds, eagles or falcons, to be shot or molested in any way, and they make this pleasing return for his kindness. Would that all our large landed proprietors would follow his example! I feel sure that they would not suffer any permanent loss in their game in consequence of so doing, as more harm is done to that by overstocking than by any depredations committed by the nobler birds of prey, so long as such robbers as the hooded crow and the ground vermin are kept within bounds. This question, however, has been well argued out in the pages of the *Field* over and over again.

Rhiconich, the little inn at which we were to spend a month, stands on the mouth of the river Inchard, just where it runs into Loch Inchard, a salt-water lake of about four miles in length, and rather more than half a mile in breadth at its widest part. The river has a very rapid course of rather more than a mile over a rocky bed from Loch Garbet Beg, a most beautiful sheet of water.

Above Loch Garbet Beg is Loch Garbet More, a large lake, but not so much in repute for salmon or any kind of fishing. Garbet Beg and the river below it were to be our happy hunting-grounds for salmon during our stay. The lake seemed always to be full of salmon, especially towards the upper end, where they were to be seen playing about in all directions. But they were "unco' shy," as we found, when we tried to make acquaintance with them. As a rule they did not run large, seldom exceeding twelve or fourteen pounds, but they were in splendid condition. There were also abundance of sea-trout, and many brown trout, but the latter were small. The salmon-flies most fancied were generally small, and rather sombre-coloured.

Besides the Garbet lakes and the river Inchard, we had access to a great number of trouting-lakes, some of them producing sea-trout as well; and the scenery on all sides was magnificent, the mountains ranging from 2000 to 3000 feet high, and assuming the most fantastic shapes. Foinaven and Arkles were the two which were nearest to us.

We were a merry party at the Inn, for two angling friends of my brother had joined us, S. and B., S. being accompanied by his wife and little boy. S. and B. had leave for a week's salmon-fishing on the same ground as ourselves, after we had finished, so we agreed to divide our days proportionately, instead of each taking our salmon-fishing all at once. We used to start in different directions after breakfast, meeting at a late dinner, and finishing the evening with whist and music. I cannot give a very successful record of my own salmon-fishing on that occasion. Our party killed altogether nine fish, but of these, only one was mine.

I was certainly not fortunate in the weather on the days which fell to my lot, and I lost many days through being laid up with a galled heel. I rose many fish, and hooked and played two, besides the one which I landed.

My first fish was lightly hooked and got away by jiggering after a few minutes' play. I had to wait many days before I hooked another. But when the day for that event did come, it was one to be marked with white chalk in my fishing-records. We had had a succession of gloomy, rainy days, with very indifferent sport all round; but this day was a lovely one, and we all started on our different fishing-expeditions, with our spirits much raised. My brother had declined the salmon-fishing, and had gone off to some distant mountain lochs for trout, so I had our gillie all to myself. I tried the river in going up, but had no rise. While rowing across the loch I rose two salmon, but failed to hook them, although I rose the second twice. I then landed, to fish a narrow part of the lake, which was generally the favourite spot for salmon, from the shore.

By this time the breeze had lulled for a time, so I waited and watched for both breeze and clouds, fishing a few casts, and then waiting. When I reached a large stone half-way up these narrows, as they were called, I rose a fish, and instantly found that I was fast in him, as my line went tearing through the water, and I followed as fast as my legs would carry me through the rocks and shallow water.

He made four rushes down-stream, and each time came back straight at me. As we had now reached the lower end of the narrows, and as there was a large bed of weeds a little way farther down, where the lake widened out, my gillie advised me to stop him, if

possible, from going any farther ; so I showed him the butt, and put on as much pressure as I dared.

At his third rush he had made a grand leap, otherwise we had not seen him at all. I recollect, when he did make that leap, how very much surprised I was at his position, as, in consequence of there being a great deal of line out, it had bagged down the stream, and he was not nearly so far down as I had supposed him to be. However, the tackle held well, and now he began to shake, and show his back-fin above the water. I now came well out upon the bank, as he was turning slightly upon his side, and began to press him still more, and very soon brought him to the side, and then, just as he was trying to recover himself for another rush, the gillie very cleverly dashed into the water, gaffed him, and flung him up upon the bank, to my intense delight. He was a beautiful, fresh-run fish, with the sea-lice upon him, and weighed just under eight pounds.

John and I had each of us "just the least taste in life" of whisky to drink to his memory, and then went to work again. I had one more rise on the lake, and tried all the ground over again, but the weather became so calm that we agreed that it was of no use to try any longer. My brother brought home a splendid dish of trout, and S. and B. had had some good sport among the lythe in Loch Inchard.

My only other adventure with a salmon was rather a remarkable one, and it happened on the very last day of our salmon-fishing. I had been laid up for many days with a galled heel, and was quite unable to walk ; but as it was a lovely day, I thought I would make the gillie row me about the lake. So I took my rod and a novel, and sat there reading and making an

occasional cast whenever there seemed to be the slightest puff of wind, but I had no expectation of catching anything on such a calm, bright day. However, late in the afternoon, while I was lazily flicking out my line from my seat, more for amusement than anything else, since the water was as smooth as glass, as the fly came close under the boat there was a bulge, and John McKensie exclaimed, "There he was, sir!" I made the best strike that I could, but the line was quite slack, and I felt nothing, and concluded that I had missed him. We determined to rest a few minutes and try him again, and I stood up to recover my line, when, to my amazement, John exclaimed, "He's on, sir, after all!" and I saw and felt my line rushing downwards; but the next minute, before I had nearly recovered my line, a beautiful grilse of about five or six pounds leapt high out of the water and freed himself.

I have never been able quite to make up my mind whether he did really hook himself at his first attempt, and that I did not feel him because the line was so loose; or whether he followed the fly afterwards, and took it a second time deep under water; but I am most inclined to the latter supposition. I was terribly disappointed, although I had had no expectation of catching a fish just before; but it would have been such a grand finish to such an unpromising day, and my last day of the season, too.

We had excellent sport with both sea-trout and brown trout in various lakes during our stay at Rhiconich. We did not catch so many as we did on our first visit to Sutherlandshire, as the trout do not rise so freely in August as they do in June. Besides this,

except on Loch Garbet, we had not the use of any boat, but fished from the shore, wading in as far as we could. But, as a rule, I prefer this method of fishing, which is much more independent. In addition to this loch-fishing from the shore, we had one day's burn-fishing for trout, the recollection of which stands out in my memory as one of the pleasantest that I ever experienced. I mentioned before that on the day that I caught my salmon my brother made an expedition to some distant lakes high up on the sides of Foinaven, and brought back a splendid dish of trout. He told me that these lakes were fed by a large burn, from which he had caught several of his trout, and that he thought that a good day's sport was to be had from this burn, if fished with fine tackle and small flies. Accordingly, on the following day, we started for this spot, and after a somewhat laborious climb of two hours reached it. My brother tried the worm, Stewart tackle, which he had found so successful the day before, and I put on small Devonshire flies; and as the river had gone down considerably during the night, these proved the more attractive bait of the two. The fishing was exactly like that on a mountain stream on Dartmoor, a succession of pools and runs among rocks, with this advantage, that the trout were larger and rose more freely. There were no bushes, and the walking was tolerably easy. I threw back about two dozen, all of which I should have considered quite worth keeping in South Devon, and basketed twenty-one, varying in weight from a quarter to three-quarters of a pound; and my brother caught thirteen of about the same size, besides throwing many back. We wasted a very long time in the middle of the day by walking

round the shores of another lake to reach a higher burn, which we found too small and bright for fishing, so we had to retrace our steps and fish our original burn over again, when we caught almost as many on our return journey as we had done while going up. We saw footprints of deer on the sandy shore of one of the lakes. We had glorious views on all sides of us, and returned well pleased with the result of our long walk, after a most delightful day.

But Rhiconich had another resource for us on days when salmon and trout fishing were unpropitious. I said that the hotel stood at the head of Loch Inchard, a salt-water lake of about four miles long, and the shores of this lake were high and rocky, and deep water came close to the rocks on either side. Here were to be found any amount of the fish which in Scotland is called lythe, but which is known on the English coast by the name of pollack, and here they ran to a great size. When the sun was very bright, or when for any reason we were prevented from fresh-water fishing, my brother and I used to take the gillie and make him row us in the boat belonging to the hotel on the waters of this lake. Our method of proceeding was this:—We each took a very large and strong salmon-rod, with a large reel, and more than a hundred yards of very strong line, well water-proofed, to the end of which we fastened a trace of either gimp or very strong gut, with a small lead upon it, and on this some spinning-tackle, with either a phantom minnow as large as a gudgeon or an artificial sand-eel. We let out about thirty yards of line, and then the gillie rowed us along at such a pace as to allow the bait to be at a depth of about six or seven

feet. We used to row close to the shore under the rocks on one side, going down the loch, and on the other, coming back. Directly either of us felt a fish, the other would reel in his line, and be ready with the gaff to strike the fish as soon as it was brought to the side of the boat. My very first day's experience of this kind of fishing was a very encouraging one, for I killed sixty-eight pounds' weight of fish to my own rod. My first fish was a cod of sixteen pounds, and I caught seven others; lythe varying in weight from seven to fourteen pounds, but nothing under seven pounds. I had all the luck that day, my brother only catching one lythe of eight pounds, besides a small codling and a selloch; but some days the luck was all the other way. I do not think, however, that there was any other day when our total quite came up to this. We generally varied from about fifty to seventy pounds' weight. The fish were always large, seldom under five pounds, and the sport they gave when hooked was grand, their strength for the first five minutes being prodigious. They made tremendous rushes straight downwards under the boat, fighting to reach the weeds at the bottom of the deep water. If they succeeded in this, we generally lost them, and sometimes lost our tackle also. But it was very pleasant fishing, and a great rest for our legs occasionally, as we drifted along, whiling the time with some vocal duets, which sounded well on the water under the high rocks, and with a store of pale ale and scones and oatmeal cakes to refresh the inner man whenever we felt so disposed. And the fish at this time were in splendid condition, and made a pleasing variety to our constant salmon and trout.

While we were fishing in this neighbourhood we constantly saw a Great Northern Diver pass and repass us to and from the sea. We were convinced that it had a nest on one of the lakes near us, but we were never able to find it; but the following year some gentleman, who was staying at the hotel, was more fortunate, and took two eggs, which he gave to the landlady, who gave them to my brother for me, and they are now in my possession.

Sutherlandshire produces some very good ferns. I found both the Beech Fern and the Holly Fern at Rhiconich, and at Innisnadampf the Oak Fern is also to be found. The Royal Fern (*Osmunda Regalis*) is to be found on the edge of some of the lakes, and I believe many much rarer ferns are to be met with, but I have not seen them.

One more expedition I made northwards in 1879. This time it was not to Sutherlandshire, but only to the borders thereof, in Cromarty, that my brother and I betook ourselves. It was to a district called Coigach, lying north-west of Ullapool, between Loch Broom and Enard Bay, which my brother had visited two years before, and of which he gave a very good report, as producing trout of a larger average size than the Assynt country. We were to be lodged at a farmhouse occupied by Mr. Mackenzie, who had been landlord of the hotel at Loch Inver when we first went to Sutherland, but who was now one of the Duke of Westminster's tenants on this farm. Our route was from Dingwall, by the Skye railway, to Garve, and thence by mail-car to Ullapool. The approach to Ullapool, looking out upon Loch Broom, as we came down the hill on a summer's evening, was most beautiful.

From thence we drove on the following day a thirty-mile drive to our intended quarters in a conveyance sent for us by our host on the evening before. The country was most beautiful, but what struck me more than anything else at that time was the extreme loveliness of the Scotch briars, which were then in their perfection. I had no idea before that any wild rose ever reached such a deep crimson, or that they were to be found in such profusion. They formed such a bright bit of colour to set off their surroundings. I was quite enchanted with them. Wet as the day was, we had a most enjoyable drive, and arrived well pleased at our destination. I found that our sitting-room on the first floor looked out on a bay where I saw the Summer Isles, which I remembered so well passing in the yacht the year before.

This excursion was entirely devoted to trout-fishing, pure and simple. We had no expectation of salmon in either loch or stream, and even sea-trout were hardly likely to come in our way. My brother did hook one of the latter, a fish of about two pounds, which parted company at its first somersault, but that was the only migratory salmo that we saw. However, the sport that we had with brown trout was sufficient to satisfy any but a very greedy fisherman. We had a great choice of lakes in all directions. Close to the house was a large lake called Loch Battachan, which produced very fine trout. Indeed, we hardly ever caught any much less than three-quarters of a pound, but they were very shy of rising or taking any bait, and we seldom caught more than nine or ten in a day. But these were all splendid fish to play, to look at,

and to eat. Immediately below this was Loch Raa, said to hold very good trout, but the shores were so shallow and so weedy that it was impossible to give it a fair trial without a boat. A little way further off was Glen Lurgan, through which there ran a chain of four large lakes, with a burn to connect them, viz. Loch Owskech, nearest to the sea, Loch Baddachyle, a nameless loch, smaller than the others, but holding the largest fish, and Loch Lurgan itself, at the head of all, reaching for ten miles up the valley. Then there were two lochs near together at a high elevation in one direction, and three equally high in another, and all of these abounded in trout. Indeed, in some of these lakes the trout were the reddest in flesh and the best in taste that I have ever eaten. All these lakes were within walking distance, although it was a good stretch to reach some of the farthest. But with the help of our host's conveyance, or "machine," as he called it, we made one or two longer excursions.

I said that the smallest of the four lochs in Glen Lurgan, the one which lies between Loch Lurgan and Loch Baddachyle, held the largest trout of any; and I soon had proof of the quality of its fish.

We reached our host's quarters on a Friday afternoon, and on Saturday we fished three of the mountain lakes near the house with very fair success, but on the Monday we struck across the mountain to a place well known to my brother, who had been here two years previously. This was where Loch Lurgan empties itself through a succession of rapids and a very fine fall into an enormous pool at the head of this nameless lake below. In the swirl of the water here there were always to be found fish rising, and a number of stones

and rocks were dotted about all across the water, so that almost every part of it could be fished, except in times of very heavy flood. We soon caught some nice fish here, and then, by way of variety, went further up the glen and fished the waters of Loch Lurgan itself. We caught many fish, but they were small, so we decided to return to the pool below the Lurgan Falls. By this time it was getting towards evening. I was fishing with my little, light Devonshire ten-foot rod.

No. 14.—Fall and pool at the foot of Loch Lurgan.

On reaching the pool I soon caught another ordinary-sized fish, and then after another cast or two, there was a dashing rise, and out went thirty or forty yards of my line in no time. I could feel at once that I had on a heavier fish than usual, and I called to my brother through the roaring water to come and be ready to help me with the landing-net when required. For several minutes the fish played towards the open lake, then he ran from side to side, and once showed his back splash-

ing on the top of the water. I was standing on a rock knee-deep in the water, and a step forward towards the pool would have taken me over my head. But now the fish began to come back towards me, and I thought that most of the danger was over as he drew nearer and nearer, when, to my horror, I found that my line was quite stationary among some rocks below my feet, and a terrible suspicion came over me that he had succeeded in getting my tackle hung up there, and would escape me after all. I waited for several minutes, putting on all the strain that I dared, and I fancied that I could still feel some movement at the end of the line. At last I thought I must put an end to this state of doubt, so I gave one or two jerks, and very shortly afterwards had the great satisfaction of seeing my line move away from the spot, and almost directly after that the fish came into view, and showed signs of giving in. Nothing but ordinary caution was now required to guide him among the rocks and rapid water, and place him within the reach of my brother's landing-net, when we both waded out of the stream together and carried him up the bank before we took him out. He weighed fully two pounds, as we found when we got home, and he was one of the handsomest in shape and most beautifully spotted trout that I ever saw. I longed to paint him as he lay there. That was my first introduction to the quality of the trout in this lake. In the following week my brother caught another two-pounder near the same place, and at the foot of this same lake he caught the largest fish that was taken during our holiday.

This lake at the lower end empties itself into Loch Baddachyle by a fall very much in the same way that

Loch Lurgan empties itself above. We had been fishing the upper part of Loch Baddachyle, and then went just above the fall towards this nameless lake. I had just killed a fish with a fly, when my brother, who was fishing with a worm, came up and waded to a small rock in the middle of the stream, by which the water was rushing out of the loch above. He threw his worm as far as he could towards the lake, and the next minute I heard him exclaim, "I've got a bite!" and then his reel screeched as sixty yards of line ran out at the first rush of the fish. I immediately put my own rod on one side, and went up to him to be ready with the landing-net, but there was no sign of that being wanted for some time. The fish kept very deep in the water, and did not show at all for nearly ten minutes. When we did see at last a large dark mass splashing at a long distance off, I thought that it must be a grilse. As yet, however, we could see nothing of his colour. Many times he came nearer, and then rushed off again for the deep water under the shade of the high rocks in the distance. He fought long and well, but there was plenty of room, and if the tackle would but hold, there was nothing to be afraid of. After a battle of ten minutes or so, which seemed rather a long time to us, we found that he was coming into shallower water, and was under the control of a shorter line, and then we could see a mass of bright gold coming gradually nearer to the surface, and now he was turning on his side, and we saw that he was indeed a yellow trout, but far larger than any we had caught before. And then came the greatest danger of all. In the waters of the open lake there was no stream; but where we were standing, the waters were

gathering for that rush which was to carry them over the fall below, and if once we let him get on the lower side of us, his own weight must have carried him away. Our landing-net was not equal in diameter to his length, and a mistake in securing him at the first trial must have been fatal. It required very delicate steering to bring him well within reach, although he was thoroughly beaten, in such a swift stream, but it was done, and in another minute I was thankful to find that I had him safe within the hoop of the net, although on lifting him from the water I saw that both his head and his tail were curled perilously near the edge; so, to guard against the possibility of a spring out of the net, I grasped the meshes with my left hand as close together as I could, and so walked out with him curled round very much in the form of a broiled whiting when sent up for breakfast with its tail in its mouth. My brother followed me to the shore, and then we laid our captive on the heather and had a good look at him. His colour was lovely; the deepest yellow on the sides and belly that I ever saw; very dark black on the back and all the upper parts; very thickly spotted, and all the spots were a most lovely crimson. He looked so dark that he seemed like an enormous specimen of those little dark trout that I have so often caught in the peaty waters on Dartmoor. He was very thick and was well shaped,

No. 15.

but he was villainously underhung and had two very projecting teeth on the edge of his under lip. When we got home we had him weighed, and found that he scaled exactly five pounds. We also took his dimensions at the time, but I have lost the record, although I think it was that his length was twenty-three inches, and his girth either twelve or thirteen inches.

I said before, that with the help of a conveyance we made one or two longer excursions, and these are worthy of a passing notice. The first that I will mention was one to Loch Skenaskink in Sutherland, a very large lake at a very high elevation, out of which issues the river Polly. It is a very wild and romantic lake, most fantastic in its shape, and is very much sought by anglers staying at Loch Inver, although it is difficult to reach from any place. Some of the largest trout in the district are said to have been caught there. Passing through Glen Lurgan on the way thither, we startled a flock of wild geese, as we often did about that spot. As far as I could judge, I should suppose them to have been either the Bean or the Pink-footed Goose, though they may have been the Grey-Lag Goose, but they were certainly one of the largest kinds of geese. It is a very beautiful sight to see these grand birds in their own homes in the summer—so quick and active, and so elegant in their movements on the water. We used to find them feeding on the grass among the rocks, and they generally flew towards one of the islands on Loch Baddachyle. It is not easy to fish Skenaskink without the aid of a boat, and much of our time was occupied in the drive to and from the lake, and in walking from bay to bay, and in such a

large and deep lake it was difficult to guess where it would be best to fish ; but we managed to catch sixteen very good fish, though none of the monsters of which we had heard. But the other long excursion which we made was, I think, the most enjoyable day of the whole trip. This was to a lake called Ganavich, or the Sandy Lake. We drove ten miles along Glen Lurgan, and then left our conveyance at a shepherd's cot, and had a climb over the mountains for a mile or two. On our way out we saw a peregrine-falcon as well as the wild geese again, and during the day we saw many Green Plovers, Golden Plovers, and grouse.

On reaching the lake I was quite enchanted. It lies under a very high, pointed mountain, Coul Beg, as far as I recollect. The shores are a constant succession of sandy bays, projecting rocks, green meadows, and in many places wooded slopes running down to the water's edge. It is shut in by mountains on all sides, and there are some pretty little streams running into it. There are several islands upon it, and a few beds of weeds here and there. It would be a paradise for an artist. He could make a different picture for every day of the year. It is not a large lake, for we made a complete circuit of it during the day. The geese were flying over our heads and making music to cheer us, and we saw many deer-tracks in the sand. With regard to the fish, I was afraid at first that we were going to be disappointed, for the first six that we caught were very small ; but after that I do not think there was anything that was less than half a pound. I know that in one sandy bay I was throwing out towards a bed of weeds, and kept pulling out fish after fish of a pound weight each. Towards the close

of the day I threw my fly over a rock which rose out of the water, and immediately hooked a larger fish, which with very little play I landed, and it proved to be the longest and thinnest trout that I ever caught. It weighed two pounds, but if it had been in proper condition, I think it ought to have weighed very nearly three.

When we gave up fishing, we found that I had got twenty trout and my brother seventeen, and of these, besides my two-pounder, there were twelve averaging a pound apiece, and only six that were less than half a pound—a better day's sport I never wish to have. This lake being so very little known, and so very difficult to reach, probably accounts for our success. As far as we could hear, no angler had visited it for years, except some of the natives, who do not often trouble themselves to meddle with the trouties. We had no opportunity of visiting it again, which I much regretted. During our stay in Cromarty we varied our proceedings with one day's sea-fishing, catching about a hundredweight of cod and codlings, and I made many sketches to carry home as reminiscences of our tour. I certainly think that the Coigach district produces the finest and best-flavoured trout of any that I have ever met with in Scotland, and I can imagine that in the month of June or beginning of July, with a fair amount of rain to favour the angler, the sport to be met with there would be superb.

CHAPTER XI.

Supplementary reminiscences, many and various—Golden Oriole's nest at Tiptofts in 1841—Remarkable shots—Taming of birds—Migration of birds—The charms of nature and the advantage to the man that can perceive and appreciate them.

MY recollections of natural history and sport, as called forth by looking at my collections of birds and butterflies, and the old diaries and notes connected therewith, have carried me on now very nearly to the present time. I have not made any expedition worthy of particular notice since the one to Cromarty in 1879, recorded in the last chapter. But I have found that in jotting down such things as I thought would interest a reader in the various scenes through which I have passed, I have unavoidably left unnoticed some things which are really quite as much worthy of notice as the things which I have mentioned. Sometimes this has happened because I did not think of them at the moment that I was writing the account of my doings at the time or place where they occurred; but very often I was obliged to pass them by, because I could not very well introduce them without interrupting the thread of my narrative with seemingly irrelevant matter. For instance, in the very last chapter, treating of Cromarty and the borders of Sutherlandshire, being carried away with the interest of my subject

while relating the battles fought with the lovely trout of that district, I made no mention at all of a fact which came under my observation, and which, I think, would be most highly interesting to an entomologist. That is that I found the Purple Hairstreak Butterfly (*T. Quercus*) flying about some low oak-trees by the roadside, close to Ullapool. The most northern locality which Newman mentions for this butterfly is Dunkeld in Perthshire. He says that it has been seen in Argyleshire and at Dumfries, but that it is rare in Scotland, even in the south. The day on which I saw the insect was the 4th of September, about midday, on a very bright day, just as we were leaving Ullapool, and I at once noted it in my diary. The caterpillar of the Emperor Moth is very frequently met with on the heath in these northern districts. While in Cromarty we used to see in great abundance a butterfly which might well be expected there, but which I, a southerner, had never had the opportunity of seeing before, viz. the Marsh Ringlet (*C. Davus*). On the mountains and shores of the lakes I saw many moths which appeared to be new to me, but not having any butterfly-net or collecting-boxes with me, I did not interfere with them.

A Hampshire fisherman, whose acquaintance with Mr. Trout has been limited to what he has seen of that gentleman's tastes and habits in the waters of the Test or the Itchen, could, I think, hardly be brought to believe the eccentricities of behaviour of the said gentleman's cousins in the north, until he had had ocular demonstration of it, as I have. What I have seen convinces me that the trout must be by nature a much more bold and inquisitive fish than is generally

supposed. I will now tell you why I think so. I myself am essentially a *fly*-fisherman, and hardly ever used any other bait when fishing either in the north or the south. But my brother, although he preferred the fly, was determined to catch fish with some bait or other whenever he went out. So, if the wind failed us when we were by the side of the lake, or if for any cause the fish persistently refused to rise, he used to take off his cast of flies and have recourse to the worm. And in worm-fishing in rivers or burns he pursued much the same tactics as anglers generally do in all parts of the country; but in worm-fishing in lakes he used to fish with a float in much the same fashion as people do for perch or roach, with a little lead wire twisted round a small part of the casting-line by way of a sinker. When he first began this style of fishing, he used to follow the custom adopted in perch-fishing and fish very near the bottom, but he soon found that this was not advisable in very deep water when fishing for trout, as the fish do not seem to feed so much near the bottom, so he rarely fished at a greater depth than four or five feet, even in the deepest lakes. And it was while fishing in this way that he discovered that extreme curiosity in the trout of which I spoke above. He had several times noticed his float bob and bob, apparently from a bite, but on striking had felt no fish, and on examining his worm found it untouched, when one day he happened to be on rather a higher bank than usual, so as to be able to look down on his float when it was bobbing in this mysterious way, and he discovered, to his astonishment, that a trout had come right up to the float and was biting and nibbling at that part of it which was under the water. He took

no notice of it, and the fish soon finding that there was nothing very nutritious in this little piece of wood or quill, went down lower to seek for better food, found the worm, and was caught. After having once discovered this curious proclivity in the trout, he noticed the same thing happen over and over again, and he told me of it when I joined him at Rhiconich, and I soon had the opportunity of seeing an instance of it myself. When the fish came up in this way to the float, they were sure, if the line was left undisturbed, to go down sooner or later to the worm and get themselves caught.

Oh, foolish Sutherland trouties! What would your aristocratic cousins in Hampshire say to such a lamentable deficiency in education? They would surely disown you as kinsmen, or else insist on a School Board being established amongst you. Long may it be, however, before the extension of railways and increase of tourists bring about any such calamitous improvement. "Fortunati nimium," rest happy in your ignorance!

I mentioned in the tenth chapter that I caught my first two-pound trout with a ten-foot rod, but I may as well mention here that a short, single-handed rod is not at all well suited for lake-fishing from the shore or by wading. The extra length of cast that a two-handed rod of sixteen feet will give makes all the difference between reaching the place where all the best fish lie, and not reaching it. I gave up my light rod after the first two days, only using it for fishing from a boat or in a small river or burn. Another thing I was surprised to find was that the Devon minnow seemed to be not at all effective in Sutherland, either in lake or stream. Perhaps we did not give it a sufficient

trial, as either fly or worm always produced for us such very good results.

Many anecdotes have been told by anglers about their luck, the said anecdotes being generally illustrative of *ill* luck. I can remember one, however, of a great instance of good luck to myself. I had been to the river early one morning in June without much success till I came to a place where there were one or two openings into which I could throw between bushes. I made a cast and let my fly float behind the bushes, when I hooked a good fish. At first he ran for the middle of the stream, but when he was getting tired he came towards the bank on which I stood, where the bushes grew. I tried as much as possible to keep him away, but in spite of all that I could do he managed to get in under me, and to hitch my dropper-fly in an overhanging alder close to the water. From the bank I could not disentangle it, so I proceeded to get down into the water, but as the bank was rather steep, I slipped, and with the jerk my casting-line gave way, close to the dropper-fly. I felt vexed at the loss of what seemed to be a good fish, but as I had seen where my fly was caught, I thought I would recover that at any rate ; so I stepped into the water, when, to my delight, I saw my fish still struggling and in difficulties, and reaching out for my landing-net I slipped it under him, and brought the fish, the broken piece of casting-line, and both flies safe to land. The bush in which the dropper-fly had caught was long and flexible and had given sufficient play to enable the rest of the cast to hold the already-tired fish, which was on the tail-fly. He was a fish of ten ounces and in capital condition, and a fish of this size is always a

sufficient prize on a Devon river to rejoice the heart of its captor at such an unexpected recovery. This is my anecdote of fisherman's luck.

From piscatorial reminiscences I will pass to ornithological. There are, I fancy, very few recorded instances of the Golden Oriole breeding in England, and few people have seen this bird upon its nest. My wife, however, can count herself among those privileged few. When she was quite a little girl she was living

No. 16.—Tiptofts, near Saffron Walden, Essex.

at Tiptofts, the house of her uncle, T. W. Gayton, Esq., about two miles from Saffron Walden, in Essex. It was a very old house, surrounded by a moat, and was in the midst of its own grounds, entirely away from all other habitations. It had once belonged to Tiptofts, Earl of Worcester, who was beheaded for high treason in the reign of Edward IV.; since that time it had been in the possession of Brasenose College, Oxford.

It was rather a celebrated place, having formerly been

attacked in vain for fourteen consecutive nights by Dick Turpin's gang. Near to the moat grew a clump of fir-trees, and in one of these in the year 1841 a pair of Golden Orioles built their nest. One of my wife's uncles was well acquainted with the names and habits of birds, and he soon discovered the presence of the illustrious strangers, and told his niece what they were, and the gardener used frequently to lift up "the little girl" to see the beautiful bird upon its nest. They were zealously guarded, and I have every reason to suppose that they brought off their young safely; but I was but a small boy myself at the time, and did not hear of the occurrence till many years afterwards. But it was well known to all my wife's family at the time, and I have heard it constantly spoken of by them ever since. They never appear to have returned in later years. This rare occurrence has never been recorded in any work on natural history, so I think it is well worthy of insertion in these notes.

From the consideration of ornithology my mind wanders by an easy transition to the gun, which is so frequently in the hands of the ornithologist. Some very remarkable shots have come under my observation at different times of my life, a brief notice of which may interest some of my readers. I am, generally speaking, a very indifferent shot myself, so that my own personal achievements will not contribute much to the list. I have already recorded in the fifth chapter of this book the heaviest shot I ever made in my life, when I killed with one barrel six shags in Bantry Bay. But it has twice been my good fortune to kill two snipe with one barrel, which, I think, is a performance that few sportsmen have had the chance

of accomplishing in England. The first of these occasions was a piece of extraordinary good luck for me, and bad luck for the snipe, and it happened in this way. I was walking across a small moor here in South Devon, accompanied by a man to carry the game-bag, when a snipe rose near me, and I fired, knocking it over at a distance of about five-and-twenty yards. "They're both down," said my man. "Both!" I exclaimed. "Why, I only fired at one, and I only saw one." "No, sir," said he, "I thought you did not know it; but as you fired, a second snipe rose about twenty yards beyond the first, exactly in the line of fire, and fell instantaneously, before he was a foot from the ground." And such I found to be the case, for we walked on and picked up both birds dead, the one about twenty yards beyond the other. This was, of course, pure luck, and reflected no credit on the shooter, and had I been alone, I should never have known anything about the second bird. The other occasion was rather a more creditable performance. I was walking across a wet meadow, when I flushed five snipe, which rose simultaneously, but not very near to each other. I saw, however, that two must probably cross each other, according to the turns they were taking, and I fired for the point of crossing, and knocked down both. I have talked to many who have had much experience in snipe-shooting, and they have told me that such a chance has never once happened to them.

Of partridges I have killed two and three at a shot many times; but of course that is not a thing to boast of when they are killed out of a covey. I recollect on one occasion when, having called on a friend I found him just starting off for a ramble with his gun, he

persuaded me to accompany him, lending me a single barrel as the only extra weapon which he had by him. We were beating a high stubble-field, when his dog made a point near the corner of the field. A covey rose, and my friend fired his first barrel, and I my only one. We saw several birds fall, and then two went away together over the hedge. My friend knocked them both down with his second barrel, and then we went and picked up five birds dead where we had fired our first shots; so that we bagged seven birds for the discharge of three barrels. This was in the old days of muzzle-loaders and high stubbles. But for a family-shot I never heard of anything to come up to one that was made by an old clergyman many years ago in the parish in which stood Mr. Gayton's house, Tiptofts, which I mentioned at an earlier part of this chapter. He was such a very bad shot that he hardly ever killed anything during a whole season, but he was very fond of taking a stroll with his gun. One day he was passing near a grove through which a ride had been cut. A covey of seven birds rose just before him, and flew at once to the grove, and went straight down the ride. The old gentleman fired after them down the ride, and killed all seven. This was a great boast for him, and a great joke for all his friends for the rest of his life.

But it was in this same neighbourhood that I saw the two most remarkable shots made in one day that have ever come under my observation. I was out with Mr. Gayton and his friend, Mr. H., both very good shots. In the early part of the day four birds rose close to a hedge in front of Mr. H.; they rose together, but flew two and two as they topped the

hedge. Mr. H. killed them all four, two with his first barrel and two with his second, picking out the time of their crossing. We went on and had a good day's shooting, and towards evening were returning by the same hedge where Mr. H. had killed his four birds, when, almost at the same spot, four birds rose before Mr. Gayton, going over the hedge in exactly the same manner, and Mr. Gayton served them exactly in the same way, killing two while crossing with his first barrel, and two with his second. Here there was no firing into the brown of a covey ; only four birds rose each time, and four were killed by deliberate calculation, two and two, each time. That such a chance should be given twice in one day, and that each time it should be turned to such good account, fully justifies me, I think, in saying that they were most remarkable shots, and well worthy of being recorded for the benefit of posterity. Of long shots I shall say nothing. I have made many long shots myself and seen many, and so, I suppose, has every sportsman, and they could all give instances of many quite as wonderful as anything that any one can relate. One more shot, however, I will record, which I call a remarkable one, which was made in this neighbourhood by Mr. Bulteel of Pamflete. I call it a remarkable shot because it will show the quickness with which a breech-loader can be reloaded and fired a second time. It was made many years ago, when breech-loaders had only lately come into use. Mr. Bulteel had gone to the mouth of the river Erme one morning to try for some wild ducks. He saw a few Pochards sitting on the water, far away, about the middle of the river. He then got into a hut of gorse which he had had made by the river-side,

and sent his keeper round to cross the river, and come down to the opposite bank and try to drive the birds over his head. This was done successfully, and, as they came towards him, Mr. Bulteel killed two right and left, took out the empty cartridges, and inserted two fresh ones while the birds were passing over him, and killed two more right and left before they were out of shot. This I call a far more creditable performance than any number of pheasants killed consecutively when a keeper is standing behind to hand a fresh-loaded gun as often as it is required. Mr. Bulteel had to do all his work himself, to kill his two birds, to open his gun, reload it, sight the birds again, and kill two more. I met him at dinner on the evening of the same day, and he told me of the occurrence himself.

While on the subject of shooting I will mention an anecdote connected therewith, showing the sagacity of a young setter. I had, during the previous spring and summer, been breaking a beautiful young red and white setter, and when he was ten months old I began to take him out with me for part of a day's shooting. I had taught him to drop to hand or gun, to seek dead, *but not* to carry. One day I was out shooting, and was beating along the side of a hedge which was on the top of one of our Devonshire banks, between two grass meadows. The dog made a steady point, and I told my man, who was in the meadow on the other side, to beat the hedge. A single partridge rose, and I knocked it down, and it fell on the other side. My man called to me to be quick and come over, for the bird was running away like a hare. The dog had dropped, of course, and I loaded my gun, and then

took him over with me, and put him on the scent where the bird had dropped. He took it on alongside the hedge till we came to a corner where another hedge and bank crossed this at right angles, and here it was evident the bird had gone right up on to the top of the bank. The dog went up there, and stood for a minute, and we scrambled into this place, which was very thick indeed with growth and herbage where the three hedges met. It seemed such a good shelter that I felt certain a wounded bird would not leave it, and kept hunting about on the ground; but the dog would not stay here, although I called to him often, but kept running on, and I lost sight of him altogether for a little while during my search. But presently I saw him come back again from the field beyond, where he had been hunting, and look up at me with a most beseeching air. I called him to come up to me, but this he declined, and his looks said as plainly as possible, "You come on with me!" So I went on, and directly he saw that I was following him he went away like the wind. He went alongside the hedge to a corner, then turned to the right and ran alongside another hedge which bounded the field, a very long one, for about a quarter of a mile, turned down the further hedge-side as soon as he came to it, went twice into and out of a little clump of trees which grew here, and continued his course down the hedge-side till I saw my bird flipping up and down just before his nose. He put his paw upon it, and thus held it, without touching it with his mouth, till I came up to him, and took it up alive from under his paw. It was evident to me that from the first he had discovered correctly the track of the bird, but thought that it would be of no use to find

the bird by himself, if I did not know where he was ; he wanted the bird for me and not for himself, so he came back to tell me which way to follow before he continued his search, and as soon as he was assured that my eye was upon him, he went away in full confidence, and never rested till he had secured me the bird.

I shot over that dog for ten seasons, and a better one I never had, nor wish to have. I could do *anything* with him. I could shoot over him in cover. He would lead me up to pheasant or woodcock and flush them when I wanted, and come out to a turnip-field outside and be as steady as if he had never known what spaniel's work was. He was particularly good at snipe, and for duck-shooting or any work by the side of the brook, would take the water in the coldest weather, and delighted in it. But his work was evidently done for the love of me, and I do not think he would have done nearly so much service for any one else, if I had ever lent him to a friend to take out, without being present myself, which I never did. He worked well up to the very last, and died of the yellows at the age of eleven, after only two or three days' illness, more mourned, I am afraid, than many Christians, by myself and all the members of my family.

I see that in my natural history records of South Devon in Chapter VII., I have not mentioned a very large bat which I saw on the river Erme about three or four years ago. I was in the middle of the river, fishing, about midday, when the said bat came flying just over my head, and kept turning round and flying close to me for a long time. It was so large that as it

first came up I thought it was a sandpiper, the spread of its wings appearing to be quite as large as those of that bird. There were many trees about, and it kept flying up and down the stream between them, about three or four feet above my head, and I thought that perhaps it would be caught by my fly. At last I caught a trout, and when I had landed my fish the bat had disappeared, and I never saw it again. I had often seen the Great Bat in Hampshire, and have had it in my possession; but this bat appeared to me to be larger still, and it is said that the Great Bat is never seen out except at night, whereas this bat was flying at midday, and the Great Bat flies particularly high, while this was very low all the time. Besides which, it is said that the Great Bat is never seen later in the year than July, and I saw my bat quite at the end of August. I had a close view of its face and colour, and I came to the conclusion that it was the Mouse-coloured Bat, which is half an inch longer in the body and an inch longer in the wings than the Great Bat. I have often caught bats with the fly while I was fishing of an evening, sometimes two or three of an evening, but this one, which I should have liked to have caught, would not take my fly.

When we were children, our tastes for natural history of course led to our keeping many pets, and there was hardly any kind of bird that ever is kept that we did not keep,—hawks, owls, magpies, starlings, *et hoc genus omne*. My youngest brother was particularly adept at taming birds, and it was surprising how many he tamed, and how very tame they became. I have heard it said that wood-pigeons cannot be tamed, but we certainly had two that were quite tame, and would

allow themselves to be caught, or would feed from our hand. My brother had a starling which he usually kept in a cage, but he could take it out of doors, and it would sit on his shoulder without attempting to escape, and on one or two occasions it roosted out at night with a flock of its own kind, having escaped from its cage, but when my brother went out the next morning and called it by its name—"Charlie"—it came out from a flock of starlings on the top of a tree, and flew down on to his shoulder, and allowed him to take it and replace it in its cage. A curious thing happened with regard to a pair of jackdaws which we had here a few years ago. We had had them from the nest, and during the first summer we had slightly clipped their wings, but after this their wings were allowed to grow, and they lived at full liberty in the garden. They were perfectly tame, and would come at call and feed out of our hand, would come into the house, and in the morning knock at the windows to ask for some breakfast. In the spring they used to fly away and join their wild companions, make their nests, and rear a family; but when this was over, they came back to the garden again, fed from our hand, and were as tame as ever. But the curious thing was that after one or two seasons they brought another jackdaw with them, presumably the young of one of them, which was just as tame as themselves, although we had never done anything to tame it, so that we could not tell which were our original favourites and which was the new one. And, moreover, when after a few years one of these jackdaws was accidentally killed, another was brought by the other two, so that they seemed resolved that we should always have three

tame jackdaws in the winter. Another curious pet that we had was a gannet, which was caught alive by some labourers in a ditch near Old Windsor, exhausted by its flight across the land, and I, as a boy at Eton, obtained possession of it and sent it home. The number of sprats it would devour at a meal was astonishing. We used to keep it in the farmyard, and drive it to the pond with the ducks. After keeping it a long time, it was killed by one of the servants, during our absence from home, giving it some salt beef to eat. It is now stuffed in my collection. I remember an amusing incident about a kestrel which was one of our pets. It had its wing slightly clipped, and was kept at liberty in the garden. One day I saw it on the roof of our house, sitting apparently asleep in the sun. Then I saw our cat coming along the roof, creeping cautiously towards the bird. On looking closely at the latter I saw that, although looking so sleepy and rather turned away from the cat, it was really watching the other's movements intently, out of the corner of its half-closed eye. I waited to see what would happen. When the cat got within distance she crouched and then sprang, when instantly the bird sprang also, more quickly, and to better purpose than its enemy, for it avoided *her* claws and then fastened its own on the back of her neck, attacking her head with its beak and wings. Such a scuffling and cater-wauling! The two rolled over down the sloping roof of the house, and came to the ground, the fall shaking them apart, when the cat jumped up and ran away as hard as she could go, and never could she be induced to go near that kestrel again.

As I look at the small migratory birds in my cases

it occurs to me that a few notes on my own observations as to their migrations may not be amiss. I have always been very careful in looking out for the first arrival of our spring visitors and noting them down. Generally speaking, as might be expected, the Chiff-Chaff has been the first and the Willow Warbler the second. I once heard the Chiff-Chaff on the 28th of February, but generally speaking, its arrival has taken place from the 13th to the 20th of March, and the Willow Warbler about a fortnight later,—the Black Cap, the Redstart, and other small birds much about the same time in the middle of April. In Northamptonshire I always heard the nightingale before the cuckoo, and at Cambridge I noticed that the hen birds of the nightingale arrived first. I do not think that I myself ever heard the cuckoo earlier than I have heard it this year (1885), having heard it this day, the 10th of April, just before writing this. The wryneck used to arrive about the same time as the cuckoo, which caused the country people to call it the cuckoo's mate. The latest arrivals of common birds have always been the Spotted Flycatcher and the Swift. Swallows, martins, and sand-martins I have frequently seen in Devonshire in considerable numbers during the last week in March, but in other counties I have never seen them before the second week in April, except once in Cambridgeshire, when, while shooting with a friend in the fens not far from Ely, we saw a large flock of sand-martins flying about overhead on the 28th of February, and my companion shot one to make sure of their identity. This would have been about the year 1852. I have noticed in Devon that I see all three species of the swallow tribe about the river and the brooks while I

am out fishing fully a fortnight before I see them in the town.

The arrival of our winter visitors has not been so regularly noticed by me. The time of year is not so favourable for making observations. When, while out shooting, I see flocks of redwings or fieldfares, I forget whether I have seen any before in that year or not. Of course, as a sportsman, I take notice of the first snipe or woodcock for the year. The earliest I ever saw killed was on the 2nd of October in Essex, at a place where they hardly ever find a woodcock throughout the season. I have seen one on the 5th of October, and have seen and killed them myself more than once on the 12th. But to me the great charm respecting migration is the spring migration. The first note of the chiff-chaff, the first sight of the swallow, the first butterfly, just like the first wild snowdrop or violet, the first primrose, the first blossom of the oxalis, speaks of a new life beginning, a bright, happy time, with every day growing brighter and happier, close at hand. To me at such a time it is an unspeakable delight simply to live, and I often feel almost overcome with the emotions called forth, and overpoweringly thankful to the kind God who has surrounded me with such delights, and given me such a keen sense to appreciate them. It seems astonishing to think of the many who have the same blessings close at hand, and yet are utterly unmoved by them, and probably unaware altogether of their presence. As I said at the beginning of my book, I have known many who have bitterly lamented the want of such tastes and perceptions, and it is because I have felt and seen so thoroughly the advantage of possessing such a

taste and cultivating it, the increased happiness that it will bring, and the improvement, spiritual as well as mental, that it is likely to effect, that I have been encouraged to write this book for the general public, which was at first begun only as notes for the amusement of my children, to preserve the recollection of some of the most noticeable incidents connected with the formation of my collections when they come into their possession ; and I hope that it may prove amusing to the young, who have all the opportunities before them of observing as much as, and more than, I have done ; and also to older persons, who, out of such a variety of subjects, may perchance find something to their taste ; and especially that it may lead parents to encourage those tastes for natural history in their children which will, I believe, prove of great service to them in after-life, besides adding materially to their resources of happiness. May it make them all as happy as it has made me ! I have said my say.

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