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the delegates
and humorous.

ambassador:—"X"
worthy to stand

Hall:—"The
interesting little
wishes, in which
the delegates

THE AMATEUR ANGLER IN DOVE DALE, 1884

OPINIONS of the Press were unanimously in praise of the little volume; and the personal letters received by the author were very numerous and gratifying. Only a few can be mentioned.

The late R. D. BLACKMORE :—"Your pretty fish need not have jumped from the frying-pan of criticism into the fire, for the finest cook must have been pleased with them—and found them a dainty morsel."

The late GEORGE BENTLEY :—"You must publish a new edition and call it *Phoenix* Edition."

The late N. MACCOLL, Editor of *The Athenæum* :—"I have read it with much interest, and congratulate you."

THOMAS HARDY :—"I am delighted to find that you are such a humorist."

The late WILLIAM BLACK :—"I have been quite delighted with the little volume; it is fresh and natural and humorous, and also *believable*."

The late J. R. LOWELL, American Ambassador :—"Many thanks for your delightful little book; 'worthy to stand on the same shelf with that of St. Izaak.'"

The late RIGHT HON. R. HANBURY, Ilam Hall :—"Thank you very cordially for the chatty and most interesting little volume on Dove Dale. Accept my thanks and the wishes, in which our friends of the *Izaak Walton* will join, that your first visit to this neighbourhood may not be your last by many."

The late MRS. CASHEL HOEY :—"Your delightful little book—it is in every way charming."

The Athenæum says :—"Written with much brightness and considerable literary skill."

The Standard, Dec. 24th, 1884 :—"A strong vein of quiet humour runs through the volume. It is one of the most pleasantly written little books which we have read for a long time."

The Pall Mall Gazette :—"This is a pleasant book to read 'now that the fields are dank and ways are mire.'"

The World says :—"Not merely by brethren of the rod, but by all who appreciate Nature in her prettiest haunts it will be found pleasant reading."

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS—(continued)

The Illustrated News says:—"This charming bit of personal narrative . . . will certainly be preserved on many a shelf where Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton hold the most honoured place."

The Graphic says:—"Written in a charming spirit, with plenty of quiet humour in it."

Harper's Magazine, Jan. 1885:—"He is *serus studiorum*, he is only learning to fish, but he can write, and has made a very charming though brief addition to angling literature."

The Field says:—" . . . The principal charm of the little work is that it will be equally interesting to anglers and non-anglers."

The St. James's Gazette:—"Every page of it is good—a bright little volume."

The Guardian, Nov. 19th, says:—"Tells in a very pleasant fashion how a delightful three weeks' holiday may be spent in beautiful Dove Dale."

Glasgow Herald:—"Decidedly interesting and amusing. It is gracefully and lightly written."

The Whitehall Review:—"This is one of the most charming little books we have met with for some time."

The St. Stephen's Review:—"No more charming little work than this has been published for many a day."

Army and Navy Gazette:—"A very pleasant little book."

Daily Chronicle:—"An entertaining little book."

Civil Service Gazette:—"This charming and interesting little book."

The Literary World:—"Others besides anglers will read with interest this pleasant record of a holiday."

The Sunday Times says:—"One of those charming little *quasi-extempore* books. . . . We have enjoyed a very pleasant hour in reading."

DOVE DALE REVISITED, 1902

This volume was equally well received by the Press, and approved by numberless personal letters.

DAYS IN DOVE DALE, 1884
DOVE DALE REVISITED, 1902.

“To enjoy the pleasure of doing nothing, we must do something. Idle people know nothing of the pleasures of idleness : it is a very difficult accomplishment to acquire in perfection.”

SYDNEY SMITH.

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THE AMATEUR ANGLER.
(In his eighty-sixth year.)

Frontispiece.

AN
AMATEUR ANGLER'S
DAYS IN DOVE DALE

(JULY 24TH—AUGUST 14TH, 1884)

PHŒNIX EDITION, 1910

TO WHICH IS NOW ADDED
DOVE DALE REVISITED
(1902)

WITH PORTRAIT OF "THE AMATEUR ANGLER"
AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

Edward Marston

LONDON
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & COMPANY, LD.

1910

“And they who roam beyond the sea
Shall think of childhood's careless day
And long hours passed in summer play
In the shade of the apple-tree.”

BRYANT.

SH605
M2813
1910

DEDICATORY LETTER

TO MY DAUGHTER AND MY GRANDDAUGHTER

*I*T was with you, my ALICE, that I had many a pleasant ramble in the woods and over the rocks which encompass the winding "Dove"; with you I climbed up steep Thorpe Cloud, and scrambled over Bunster; with you I caught glimpses of the sweetly flowing "Wye" at Haddon Hall and Rowsley; and it was with you, that together we explored its sources and encountered its noxious fumes at Buxton; and as for you, my little LORNA, this small book, if it serves no other purpose, may serve to remind you, when you grow older, that once upon a time, when you were not yet three years old, you romped with your old grandfather and the good dog "Rattler" on the green grass under the apple-trees; rode with him on the donkeys; and fished with him in the river! How you, like another amateur angler, were fully equipped with his walking-stick for your rod, two yards of twine for your line, a pin for your hook, and a battered metal minnow for your fish! How you laughed and crowed as you threw your line into the water, and how gleefully you landed your little tin "tout!" To you, my daughter, who sympathized with my disasters and laughed at my adventures, and so encouraged me to write and print these letters; and to you, my smallest of piscators, I dedicate this little volume, in remembrance of our pleasant holidays in Dove Dale.

E. M.

LONDON,
September 11th, 1884.

PREFATORY NOTE

TO ALL READERS, "BUT ESPECIALLY
TO THE HONEST ANGLER"

I *THINK* fit to tell thee these following truths, that I did neither undertake, nor write, nor publish, and much less own, this discourse, to please myself; and having been too easily drawn to do all to please others, as I proposed not the gaining of credit by this undertaking, so I would not willingly lose any part of that to which I had a just title before I begun it, and do therefore desire and hope, if I deserve not commendation, yet I may obtain pardon . . . and I wish the reader also to take notice that in writing of it I have made myself a recreation of a recreation."

I, an *amateur angler*, a humble disciple, venture to think I may, without too great presump-

tion, adopt these words of the great master, as my apology for making a little book of these very slight sketches of my three weeks' experiences as an angler in Dove Dale. "If thou be a severe, sour-complexioned man," or if thou be "a grave and busy man," thou wilt not care to read them; but whether thou be grave or busy, gentle or sour, if thou be an honest angler, I will wish "the east wind may never blow when thou goest a-fishing."

If thou, my critic, desirest to put thy hook into me, do it, I pray thee, as though thou lovest me—remembering how thy master taught thee to hook a live frog—harm me as little as thou canst, that I may live the longer.

E. M.

1884.

NOTE TO THE PRESENT EDITION

A*N Amateur Angler's Days in Dove Dale* was first published in 1884, twenty-six years ago ; it has been out of print for many years, and may be said to be *scarce*. The volume containing *Dove Dale Revisited* and other articles was published in 1902.

I have now slightly revised *Days in Dove Dale*, 1884, and called it the Phoenix Edition, for it now springs out of its own ashes. I have added to it the portion of *Dove Dale Revisited*, which has special reference to Dove Dale—being the first fifty-two pages of that work. The very flattering way in which both volumes were noticed by the Press and by many private correspondents justifies me in hoping that the

xii NOTE TO THE PRESENT EDITION

present work will be equally appreciated by a new generation of readers, to whom the first portion at least has never been accessible.

The whole of the Ilam Hall estate, including the Izaak Walton estate and Dove Dale Hill and Wood, was offered for sale by auction by Messrs. Knight, Frank & Rutley on July 19th, 1910. I felt flattered that in their elaborately illustrated catalogue they quoted freely from my *Days in Dove Dale*, 1884, as an extra temptation to purchasers. The reserved price was not reached in any of the lots, but the announcement will probably result in a sale by private contract. The spirit of the age is far too enterprising to leave the ancient hotel alone.

A grand hotel, replete with all modern conveniences, will probably replace it ere long, numerous fashionable visitors will be attracted, and the romance, the peaceful, quiet charm of the Dale, will have departed for ever.

A. A.

July, 1910.

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PART I

AN AMATEUR ANGLER'S
DAYS IN DOVE DALE

LETTER NO. I

I COMMENCE MY EDUCATION AS A FLY-FISHER

"*Pisc.* And now you shall see me try my skill to catch a trout. . . .

"*Ven.* Trust me, master, I see now it is a harder matter to catch a trout than a chub, for I have put on patience and followed you these two hours and not seen a fish stir."—*The Complete Angler.*

I AM here to *angle*, not to write letters about business. Though old in years, I am a young, and, therefore, most enthusiastic disciple of Master Izaak Walton. You will have a faint idea of my enthusiasm when I tell you that I started this morning in a steady down-pour, at a little after eight, to commence operations on the trout and the grayling of "The Dove."

I started equipped in the best style possible :

I had walked five miles yesterday to Ashbourne to buy me a mackintosh. I had a fly-book that Charles Cotton would have envied. Every fly that ever flew over the waters of "The Dove" is represented in that book. I have a rod of the newest pattern, and a crack reel, with patent self-acting machinery inside of it. I have a line so strong that nothing can break it, and yet so light and pliant that it is supposed to fall upon the water like the gentle zephyr. I have a landing net strong enough to land a 30-lb. salmon, and yet so light as to add no perceptible weight to my equipment.

Thus equipped I started, commencing operations at the lower end of my three miles of water—the southern entrance to the Dale. I had received verbal advice as to my method of procedure from one of the most deadly slayers of trout of modern days. I was told to fish with a *dry fly*, and with a dry fly I commenced.

First, however, I examined the water with a critical eye, to see what sort of fly the fish were taking; but after long and patient watching I could discover neither fish nor fly, so I selected

as a leader a blackish fly, with white wings, called, I believe, "The Coachman," then two others, a dun and a brown, whose names I forget.

Before I had thrown a dozen times, a man in velveteens turned up, and asked for my licence ; having satisfied him, and rewarded him besides for his kindness in demanding my passport to "The Dove," he asked to see my flies. He pronounced them splendid—deadly ; with such flies I may be sure of getting back to "The Izaak Walton" with a fine dish for dinner.

Thus encouraged I started afresh, and not forgetting the injunction of my piscatorial Cromwell to keep my flies dry—wet fly fishing being exploded—I began to thrash "The Dove."

How to keep your flies dry in a torrent of rain, and whilst throwing on the water, was a problem which puzzled me a good deal. The way to do it, I was told, was to swing the line backwards and forwards constantly, and then to drop your fly gently on the top of the water, and let him sail quietly down, looking as like nature as possible.

Bearing these instructions in mind, I swung

away splendidly, and got over half a mile of water in ten minutes, but not a rise could I get, not a fish could I see.

By this time I thought it as well just to examine my flies to see if I had kept them *dry* or not. To my surprise, when I drew the line up pretty close to my eyes, which are by no means what they were, not a fly was there to be seen. I suppose I must have swung them all off!

I resolved to be more circumspect in future, and after half an hour, in the still pouring rain, spent in adjusting a new and splendid cast of flies, I threw again; but unluckily I had not considered the spreading branches of an oak behind me—my leader was firmly fixed in a lofty bough. There was nothing for it but to tug away, and chance it.

I had found, by previous experience, that sometimes the boughs gave way—sometimes the flies. Alas! in this case my new cast was left floating to the breeze on the top of the oak, and I had to set to work once more, under the oak's friendly shelter, to construct a new cast. This feat being accomplished in course of time, again I commenced business.

It was now twelve o'clock. I had been at work more than three hours already without so much as a single bite or rise to afford me the slightest encouragement, and yet I believe I had done everything that an angler could do to insure success. I had been told to keep my eyes steadily on the flies when I threw them into the water so as to strike in about the sixtieth part of a second after the fish had given the slightest indication of a desire to swallow my fly, but I never once saw such an inclination on the part of any fish; in fact, I cannot honestly say that I *did* keep my eyes on my flies, for, although I tried my best, no sooner had I consigned them to the water than they disappeared from my ken altogether, so that whether or not any little fish ever came up to look at them I am quite unable to say.

Now, if you will believe me, on my first throw with my new cast my attention was distracted by a beautifully-plumaged bird, which flew up the stream, and whilst following this charming specimen of the feathered tribe, instead of watching my flies, I felt a tremendous tug at my line.

"Here you are at last," thought I, "perse-

verance is being rewarded—I at one end of the line and a vigorous trout at the other! That young fellow at ‘The Izaak’ who boasted to me this morning that, with his young bride to help him, he had *hooked* two tremendous big ones (which, however, somehow managed to ‘hook it’ from him), will no longer be able to crow over me.”

This, and many another exciting thought, rushed through my brain at this supreme moment. Here I am with my trout fast enough; but how am I to get him out? is now the problem which exercises me. I am quite aware that the landing net is the proper thing, but how am I to get it around him?

How can I manage my rod, my line, and my fish with one hand, and pass my net under the fish with the other, and at the same time prevent myself from tumbling down a steep bank into a deep hole?

This was a puzzle. I had been told, and I well remembered it, always to keep the point of my rod *up* when landing a fish, but how the deuce could I do all these things at once?

How could I wind up, let out, play my fish,

keep the rod up, have the net ready, and protect myself from slipping down the bank, the rain coming down worse than ever? How could one pair of hands attend to all these things?

Alas! I found myself sliding; down went the point of my rod, and when I lifted it again the line was no longer taut—my fish had broken his hold, and I was left disconsolate.

If this were not an isolated fact I should have been inclined to argue from it that, instead of keeping your eyes *on* the fly, it is better to keep them off it. The fish evidently has his eye on you and the fly, and the moment your eye is off, dash he goes at your fly!

I am sorry I have only this one fact to support my new theory; whilst against it I am bound to adduce the, perhaps, condemnatory fact that I tested my theory by subsequently perseveringly keeping my eyes off my flies; but I am sorry to say the trout of to-day would not be done by that deep ruse.

I should not have been a true disciple of Izaak had I given in. Hitherto I had fished and walked rapidly; now I decided to confine myself to one spot and fish that thoroughly.

Away across the stream I saw a trout on the look-out; the water was clear, and he was the first I had really seen *on the feed*. Now, thought I, for a battle royal. All the arts I have ever been taught and all the native skill I possess shall be brought to bear upon that trout. First, I will throw a yard or two above him and let the bait flow gently down into his mouth, as it were.

I threw, but somehow my three flies had got mixed up, and instead of reaching him, they fell in a heap far short of him.

It took me nearly half an hour to disentangle those precious flies—the way they have of hooking on to each other, of catching hold of a knot, of doubling up on themselves, and when at last fairly disentangled, of getting hold of your hat, or your arms, or your trousers, or your fingers, is something really wonderful; but using my most powerful glasses, I at last succeeded in fairly straightening them out, and got another throw at my friendly trout, who was still there waiting for me.

This time I did get above him, and it was really curious to see how he turned up his eye,

winked it, in fact, wagged his tail, and allowed my tempting flies to pass on.

I had been advised that it is an excellent plan sometimes, when the occasion serves, to cast your fly over to the opposite bank, and then humour it gently and innocently down off the bank, so that it may fall just like a natural fly softly on the water within a foot or two of your trout's nose—that is certain death; the wisest and most cautious old trout that ever was has been caught by such a stratagem as that.

Well, here the occasion did serve admirably. My trout was just a yard from a gently sloping bank, and all I had to do was to follow the above given advice.

I threw accordingly, and with my usual luck caught fast in a sturdy thistle! I did not wish to risk another cast by having a fight with the thistle and be worsted as I had been by the oak, so I took a quarter of a mile walk to some stepping-stones, and when I got up to my thistle, I was not a little chagrined to find that he had already let go my fly, which was quietly dangling down the water waiting my return.

I am sorry to say that I could do nothing to allure that sarcastic trout, though I persevered still for many anxious minutes. For the present, however, I have given him up, though I hope on another occasion to have a try at him again.

I must now give up. I have had from five to six hours of angling in a pelting, continuous storm of rain, and I begin to think myself a worthy disciple of the great master, especially as my courage is not a whit abated; but the inner man craves for what is not here.

So absorbed have I been in my occupation for the last five hours, that it only now strikes me that Nature and I are here alone together in the midst of her most lovely scenery. Here I could remain for hours were it not for the pelting rain and that inward monitor already mentioned.

—for beside that boist'rous brook
The mountains have all opened up themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own,
No habitation there is seen; but such
As journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky,
It is in truth an utter solitude.

WORDSWORTH.

So now I have reached "The Izaak." Luncheon waiting me for hours. I could not touch it. My feet as wet and sloppy as water could make them, my felt hat spoilt, myself shivering with cold, and with a feeling of collapse and congestion which entirely prevents my eating or doing anything but write these incoherent lines to you.

It is all very well for poets to talk about "taking one's ease at one's inn"; but it is not so easy a thing to feel comfortable even there, when the rain is pouring and everything is so depressing, from the draggled hens and geese outside to the grumbling of our better halves inside for bringing them to such a place and calling it a *holiday*!

I have just received a letter from my friend H. M. Stanley, from which, as it bears on angling, I venture to quote :

"No, I never went a fly-fishing ; it is not in my line ! I should certainly feel my time was being squandered." (Fly-fishing—time squandered ! what say ye to that, Piscators?) . . . "By the way, why don't you try the Congo country? There you may fish for crocodiles, or if you

are inclined to be ambitious, for a fine fat hippopotamus!" (Certainly, my friend, I will go, if thou canst tell me how to "draw out Leviathan with an hook," or to catch a crocodile with a fly!)

LETTER NO. II

MY FIRST ANGLING EXPERIENCES—ATTRACTIONS OF THE DALE—REYNARD'S CAVE

"I love the woods, the pleasant woods in spring,
In autumn when all round the tempests ring,
But most in summer, then love I green bowers,
And shaded mossy banks, inlaid with flowers."¹

ATURDAY, July 26th, the first
of my angling experiences, was
the wettest I have known for
many a day. I have already told
you how I fared on that, to me, very memor-
able occasion. It rained steadily from 8 a.m.
on Saturday till 11 a.m. on Sunday without
intermission.

The Dale, you know, is a centre of attraction

¹ I am quite sure that this is not a correct quotation,
but it is the best my treacherous memory will help
me to.

for all the country round, and Saturday always brings a number of visitors. They came in four-horse coaches, in "Derby dillies carrying six inside," in vans, and waggonettes, and traps, all soaked in rain, and in rain some of the most adventurous started off for the river; but most remained under the friendly shelter of the hotel.

Happy youths and maidens, what cared they for wind or weather! They departed as they came, in a steady downpour, happy and joyous as if in the brightest sunshine.

Yesterday afternoon, it being tolerably fine, I started off to survey, in sunshine, the scenes of my previous day's exploits in showers.

I was accompanied only by my umbrella, and having as suddenly become a lover of nature as I had become a disciple of Izaak Walton, I revelled in the beauties of the ever-changing scenery through which I rambled; but now a sad reflection was forced upon me. I have been a business man for nearly fifty years, alas!

"Hackney'd in business, wearied at the oar
Which thousands once fast chained to quit no
more!"

and during all that time Nature and I have been for the most part strangers to each other ; and now that I meet her in her most enchanting beauty, I feel like a bashful lover, unable to find a single phrase wherewith to address her, or to express my admiration.

I would advise all young people to study the language of Nature in their youth, and in old age they will be able to hold intelligent converse with her.

“Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old time is still a-flying ;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow may be dying.”

Here am I, an old man, wandering through lovely scenes with a sort of childish delight ; but with a feeling of mournful regret that, withal, Nature and I are strangers.

How have I neglected her in my youthful days ! And how she laughs at me now in my old age !

“Nigh threescore years employ’d with ceaseless care
In catching smoke, and feeding upon air.”

I long to be a botanist, an artist, a geologist, a fern collector, even a genuine piscator ! I

want to seize Nature by some one of her many glorious features, and be able to say, "Here, at least, thou art mine."

"Nature indeed looks prettily in rhyme,
Streams tinkle sweetly in poetic chime."

But she evades my grasp. I see around me green trees, and shrubs, and plants; at my feet, a limpid, rippling stream; far away above my head, bare rocks and wood-clad heights—but what are these to me?

Of ferns I could see none, and if I had seen them, how could I distinguish the rare from the common.

After all, it seems to me that if I knew the botanical names of all the plants, I know not but half my pleasure would be gone; I would rather know that pretty bloodred trailing flower as "Love-lies-bleeding" than by ever so fine a Latin name. "Ah! what ravages botany has made in the poetry of flowers! How many a tale of rustic love yet lives in some of their names! Who can doubt whence arose such as Mary-gold, None-so-pretty, Goldilock? and long delicious walks in the deep summer twilights, and lingerings before the old grey

cottage, and partings at the wicket—they all live in one little plant—*Kiss-me-at-the-garden-gate!* (*Hierologus*).

The prevailing plant on the water's margin was a large-leaved one—to my ignorant mind like rhubarb as one sees it in market gardens, and in Covent Garden. It must surely be wild rhubarb.

Thus I wandered through the winding vale in childish admiration of the new pictures ever opening up before me.

The most remarkable features of this wonderful valley seem to me to be the weird spires of grey rock,

“Whose silent finger points to heaven,”

every here and there standing up abruptly, some of them over a hundred feet above the green foliage which lines the hills on either side. It does not require much imagination to fancy these gigantic rocky pillars to be the ruins of some giant's fortress.

Looking upward I beheld an awful cavern about one hundred and fifty feet almost perpendicularly above me; but, like a trembling bird at the gaze of a serpent, I was fascinated.

I felt bound to ascend that terrible height, and be swallowed up by that fearful, widely-gaping mouth.

I scrambled up on my hands and knees, holding on now by tufts of grass, now by jutting rocks, until at length, breathless and exhausted, I tumbled headlong into that fearful monster's jaws !

After a lapse of 'time—I know not how long—I recovered my breath, and, looking round, it did not seem to me so grim a place as my excited imagination had painted it.

I observed here and there the ends of smoked cigars, fragments of tobacco pipes, and other mundane things, which sufficiently assured me that I was not "the first that ever burst " into that silent cave.

In my case, comparatively speaking, it had been "*facilis ascensus Averni*," but how to get down again "*hoc opus, hic labor, est !*" That was really a trying time for me, for, remember, I was alone.

I felt it was an easy matter to break my bones in scrambling down those slippery stones ; so I looked upwards and around, and at length I spied a side path which seemed to lead

Photo by]

ENTRANCE TO DOVE DALE, DERBYSHIRE.

[*G. N. Bankart.*

perpendicularly another hundred feet or so to the outside top or head of the giant's cave,¹ and as it presented jutting rocks, turfs of strong-looking grass, and here and there a tough young ash plant, I determined to try the ascent to the top, in the hope of finding my way down the other side of the mountain, rather than "retrograde" the way I had climbed so far; and accordingly I set to work, but I found this tougher work than the first ascent.

I had got nearly to the top when the terrible thought assailed me, "Suppose there is no outlet there!" To descend the way I had climbed, on looking down I felt to be quite beyond my powers.

In ascending I had prided myself on my alpine, youthful agility, but now my poor old limbs trembled violently beneath me; it was clear that I could not sleep on that little ledge, I scorned the idea of shouting for assistance, and if I had I do not quite see how anybody could come to me; so straining every nerve, I managed to reach a friendly young sapling at

¹ I am told that in the guide books this rock is called "Reynard's Cave," but I make a point of never looking at guide books.

the very top of the precipice, and I landed clear above it on the mountain's brow, triumphant, but exhausted in wind and limb.¹

After a short interval of rest, I descended gradually to the margin of the gently-flowing "Dove." In coming down I had heard some crashes in the woods on the opposite hills, and on reaching the bottom whom should I see on the other side but my old friend the keeper.

¹ "The Rev. Mr. Langton, Dean of Clogher, in Ireland, proposed to ascend on horseback a very steep precipice,* near Reynard's Hole, apparently between three and four hundred feet high; and Miss La Roche, a young lady of the dean's party, agreed to accompany him on the same horse. When they had climbed the rock to a considerable height, the poor animal, unable to sustain the fatigue of the task imposed upon him, fell under his burden and rolled down the steep. The dean was precipitated to the bottom, where he was taken up so bruised and mangled by the fall, that he expired a few days after, and was buried in Ashborne church; but the young lady, whose descent had been retarded by her hair entangling in a bramble bush, slowly recovered; though when disengaged she was insensible, and continued so for two days. The horse, more fortunate than its riders, was but very slightly injured."—*William Shipley's Art of Fly-Fishing*.

* This was the route by which I descended the mountain.—A. A.

“Well,” said he, “I *was* surprised to see *you* up there !”

There was just a little something in his tone not quite intelligible to me ; whether it meant sarcasm at my folly or admiration of my manly performance, I was uncertain.

“How on earth did you get on top of that hill ?” he added ; and when I told him I had got there through the Giant’s Cave, he only said, “I wouldn’t ’a’ done it for something !”

After this he waded across the stream, and we became quite friendly-like and confidential. He remarked that the river was in capital order, just a little discoloured, and the trout were rising famously.

“It’s a curious thing,” he said, “but I have often noticed, and other people have said the same, that fish do rise better on Sundays than on any other days. I suppose they get to know that people don’t fish on Sundays.”

This reminds me of what Master Izaak Walton tells us on the authority of Josephus, “that learned Jew,” that there is a river in Judea, “that runs swiftly all the six days of the week, and ” (reversing the conduct

of the fishes) "stands still and rests all their Sabbath."

A pretty bird flew up and skimmed along the water. It was the same kind of bird as the one which on Saturday caused me to lose my only fish.

"Is that a kingfisher?" said I.

"No," he replied, "that's a *water ouzel*."

I remarked that I had also seen a little bird, strange to me, about the size and colour of a lark, but with a white back, now skimming the water, and now pretending to pick up insects on the grass.

"I don't know the proper name of that bird, but from your description I should think it must be what I call a 'dipper.' And I believe that both he and the water ouzel are about the worst fish poachers we have in these parts. People in other parts wouldn't believe that we had water ousel here, and I remember some years ago a clergyman from Warwickshire sent a messenger specially to me to get him a brace of water ousels. I soon got him three, and he was so pleased that he made me a handsome present, but I have my ideas that it wasn't much to what he

got by those birds. I have heard that, notwithstanding his being a clergyman, he had made a bet of ten pounds with another man who declared there were no water ouzels on 'The Dove,' and of course he won it."¹

Thus we chatted along. I asked him if he could tell me how to get a good appetite, and he said that if I could not get a good appetite for dinner after such a climb as he had seen me perform, he could offer me no better prescription. For himself, he always did with one good meal a day; "but then," says he, "I generally take from five to six pints of beer a day, and I find it does me good. I am on my feet about these hills and dales from daylight to dark, and I don't know as there is ever anything the matter with me."

¹ There seems to be a speciality about the neck feathers of the real ouzel which mark its character; and these feathers are found on "The Dove" ouzel. Maunder identifies it with "The Dipper"; if so, the keeper was wrong as to that little white-backed bird. The other kind, I find, is called the *Ring ouzel*, of which "the breast of the male is distinguished by a crescent of pure white, which almost surrounds the neck; on the female this crescent is much less conspicuous, and in some birds it is wholly wanting": this is certainly not the ouzel of "The Dove,"

I should think not, indeed, for a more jolly, genial picture of good health I never came across in my life—a splendid example of what good air, good - ale, and outdoor exercise can make of a man. How I envy him ! For here am I, a poor valetudinarian (to say nothing of being a sexagenarian), who dare not touch a glass of ale ; and now after this six miles' walk and scramble over that awful cave without any appetite whatever.

They seem to get all sorts of people at this hotel. There are, I dare say, some like me, that “ha’e meat, an canna eat,” and also some “as can eat”—like a company of ladies (mostly foreigners, judging by their names), under whose inscriptions in the visitor’s book some wag has written :

“They ate so much, and they drank so much,
And so little they cared to pay ;
That it was well for this hotel
When this lot went away.”

But I must be off. The trout are waiting for me with open mouths ; the water is in better “fettle” than ever, so perhaps I shall tell you of my success in another letter.

LETTER NO. III

MY FIRST TROUT—BLOCKED FOR WANT OF KEY
—THE DONKEY-BOY HELPS—IN TROUBLE—
ASTONISHMENT AT HOTEL AT MY SUCCESS

“*North.* You never beat me at the fishing, sir, and never will beat me at the fishing, sir, while your name is Hogg. I killed that day—in half the time—double the number.

“*Shepherd.* But wecht, sir—wecht, sir—wecht—and every wean kens that in fushin’ for a wager, wecht wins—its aye decided by wecht.

“*North.* The weight of your basket was not nearly equal to mine. You—

“*Shepherd.* Confound me, gin, on an average, ane o’ my troots didna conteen mair cubic inches than three o’ yours . . . The fack o’ yours was mere fry—and some had the appearance o’ bein’ baggy mennons.”—*Noctes Ambrosianæ.*

THINK I told you in my last that the open-mouthed trout were waiting for me. They were! It had been a fine, bright morning; but when I got down to the water, the water came down on me, as usual, in torrents.

I started about three o'clock, well covered as to my back with my new mackintosh; but my poor feet and legs were badly off, and were soon in a sloppy, floppy state; but what cared I? I began down at the bridge, and worked up stream, casting three flies. I had a notion, derived, I believe, from such an experienced Mentor as yourself, that it was the proper thing to do.

Fish, you know, generally lie with their heads up stream; so if you throw a good way up and let your flies float gently down, they naturally fall into the open-mouthed trout. Well, I tried that plan all yesterday afternoon; this time I did not hurry along. I followed the great master's advice. Unlike Peveril of the Peak, I took heed to old Izaak Walton's recommendation to "fish the streams inch by inch"; but, nevertheless, I gave preference to the spots "where the stream broke sparkling over a stone, or where, gliding away from a rippling current to a still eddy, it streamed under the projecting bank, or dashed from the pool of some low cascade."

Ah! those "low cascades"—there are scores of them in the three miles winding of "The

Dove"; how fondly I fished those "rippling currents." I was not in the least discouraged by getting no nibble—not the least indication on the part of the fish that they were conscious of the tempting flies I put before them.

I had met a venerable old man with an immense fish basket, landing net, and all the other needful impedimenta. He might have been Izaak himself, so deftly did he handle his tools. He asked me how I fared, and I told him that I had caught nothing, but I meant to persevere. He, too, had not been blessed with a nibble.

Farther on I encountered that young fellow and his charming bride. They had fished all the morning and were now returning triumphant, having had four rises and two bites! But this successful young angler rather despises trout fishing.

"Salmon fishing is the sport I like," said he. "A thirty-pounder at the end of your line, you know, that's the sort of thing for me!"

I felt encouraged, determined, in spite of pelting rain, to persevere, and so I plodded on. I should tell you that my genial friend the keeper had put me up to a dodge.

You will remember that just above the point where the stepping-stones are, and opposite to where the old woman keeps her donkeys, the left side of the river is fenced off by a strong iron gate, with notice-board warning intruders to go away ; but I had the right (useless without the key) to pass this barrier at any time.

"The gate is not really locked," said he ; "it sticks in a peculiar way, and it can only be opened by a secret trick," which he imparted to me. Unluckily it happened that I had not quite learnt the trick. I thought he had told me to lift the gate lightly off its hinges and so pass through, deftly dropping it on again.

So I marched up to the gate and tried the little dodge ; but, alas ! the gate is made of iron, and must weigh, at least, half a ton ! I lifted and strained with all my might, but not a bit would it move.

I had imagined from the way the brawny keeper spoke of it that I had only to touch it with my little finger and up it would go ! But brawny and muscular as he is, I defy him and another man to boot to lift that gate off its hinges ; and yet he could not have intended to deceive me. I must have mislearnt my lesson.

Chagrined and disappointed, I had to return to the stepping-stones and recross the stream. I was disappointed, because that left side is level and easy travelling, whilst the right is rugged, rocky, and unequal; besides, on the left, the wind would have helped me to lay my flies just where I wanted them to go, whilst on the right it only baffled me.

In my perplexity the donkey-boy came to my assistance.

"If you want to go to the other side, I can open the gate," said he.

"Certainly I do," I replied. My donkey-boy, without key or other appliance, had only to cry "*open sesame*," and open it flew. I rewarded him so handsomely that he voluntarily exclaimed, "I shall be gone before you return, but I will leave it open for you," for which I thanked him, and went on my way,

Above all others, "The Dove" certainly is "the brook" which everlastingly sings—

"I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I flow on for ever."

Men do come here now as they did in

Izaak's time, and as he himself came ; and, alas ! men do go, as he has gone. I, too, must leave soon ; but before I go let me pause for a moment to inform those of my readers who know not this lovely spot, that "The Dove" is not like other rivers.¹

"It winds about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling."

It runs in a perfect zigzag—straight from each zag to each zig—then suddenly turning an abrupt corner straight on to another zag, and so on, each stretch running for two or three hundred yards, each side lined with limestone mossy rocks and steeple-like spires, or wood-clad hills coming sheer down to the water's edge, leaving only a narrow space varying from one to ten yards for Piscator's operations.

In each of these stretches are two or three cascades, which extend quite across the stream like natural mill-dams, forming pretty waterfalls of three feet or four feet deep. It is at the foot

¹ *Sir Oswald Mosley, Bart.*, says "The Dove" was so called from the British word "dwfr" (water). *Cotton* says it is so called from the swiftness of its current.

of these little cataracts that the hopes of the experienced angler lie : here, if anywhere, will you catch your wary trout.

It was here, in one of these musical swirls, that I, the youngest disciple, hooked and landed my *first trout*. Ah ! the excitement of that happy moment, when to my utter astonishment I felt a heavy tug at my rod ! “ Pooh ! another weed,” I cried.

But it moves—it dashes down the stream—it dashes up again to the cascade—it shows now and again in the frothing water a lovely pink and yellow belly.

It is *not* a weed, it is a splendid trout ! Shade of Izaak ! what shall I do ? How am I to keep hold of him ? He dashes away here and there, now under the rock, now away off, and for a second or two he lies under some thick flowering weeds, then off again ! What ought I to do ?

All my theoretical lessons have gone out of my head except this solitary one, “ Keep the point of your rod up.” I kept it up. I gradually wound up, but let out again as my fish displayed a disposition to come in or go away.

I had, on a previous occasion, found a landing net a quite unnecessary encumbrance, so now that I sorely needed it I had not brought it with me. By degrees my trout seemed to become exhausted by the unequal struggle, and for a moment lay up on a tuft of grass nearly out of the water, apparently to take breath.

I thought it best not to give him time to regain his strength, so I gently lifted him straight up from his grassy bed and threw him on to another not quite so congenial to him; but I had him safe.

I had got him only by the skin of his teeth, for he fell on *terra firma* freed from the hook, and I was puzzled to know which of my doughty flies had performed the deadly deed.

“Still fisheth he that catcheth one.”

G. HERBERT.

Thus encouraged—I may say, perhaps, unduly elated—inch by inch I flogged that pretty pool, but with no more success, so on I went to another cascade; and there, to my perfect bewilderment, I hooked and landed another trout, under circumstances so exactly like the

first that it would be waste of words to re-describe them. Need I say how proud I was? I felt like Sir Francis Chantrey with his two salmon.¹

I saw a party of ladies coming along on the opposite side in mackintoshes and under umbrellas (for rain does not keep ladies indoors in these parts), so with pardonable vanity I laid my brace of trout on a conspicuous bank where they could easily see them, and no doubt remark, "See, there is a true Waltonian; he knows how to do it."

Well, now I perceived a wet and dripping angler coming down the other side. "What sport, my friend?" cried I.

"I have toiled all day," he replied, "and have caught nothing. Not a rise, not a bite! How fares it with you?"

"Oh," said I, "poorly, very poorly, only these two half-pounders. Nice little fish, are they not?"

Then he asked the name of the fly I was

¹ Sir Walter Scott says that when Sir F. Chantrey caught two salmon in one morning, "his sense of self-importance exceeded twentyfold that which he felt on the production of any of the masterpieces which have immortalized him."

using, and I at once told him, for I am not selfish in such matters, that my little "honey dun bumble" had done these deeds, and I advised him to go over to Foster's, of Ashbourne, who would furnish him to his heart's content.

And now I started homewards; but—could one believe it?—that rascally donkey-boy had *not* left the iron gate open! What in the name of Izaak am I to do? I cannot get over it, it is lined with spikes. I cannot get round it, there is a high stone wall, and the water is 6 feet deep on one side, and the rock rises abruptly for a hundred feet on the other. I cannot get through it, for how am I, a weak old man, to lift a gate of half a ton? Why did I not pay more attention to the keeper's instruction? Why did I not watch that donkey-boy's "*open sesame*"?

I must puzzle out the secret for myself; and I did, after endless exertion, find it out. It is very simple when you know how. But I don't intend to betray my friendly keeper's secret—not I.

How I astonished my friends and my neighbours, and especially how I aroused the admiration—not to say the envy—of that young fellow and his charming bride, when I dangled

my beauties before their eyes, I need not relate. Two hours after my trout had been disporting themselves in "The Dove" were they placed before me at dinner, cooked in the way they only know how at "The Izaak."

I have tasted trout from all parts many a time, but never before have I tasted anything to equal the delicate, delicious flavour of these of my own catching.¹ I must say that the

¹ The flavour of "Dove" trout is noted far and wide, and presents, in this respect, a remarkable contrast to that of the trout in the neighbouring "Manifold," which cannot be compared with it for sweetness and delicacy—the latter has a somewhat earthy taste, probably derived from the long underground course of that river. What says our old friend Charles Cotton?—

"*Pisc.* And now, sir, what think you of our river 'Dove?'

"*Viat.* I think it to be the best trout river in England; and am so far in love with it, that if it were mine, and that I could keep it to myself, I would not exchange that water for all the land it runs over, to be totally debarred from it.

"*Pisc.* That compliment to the river speaks you a true lover of the art of angling. . . . And now, sir, I will dress you this dish of fish for your dinner. . . . Now, sir, what say you? am I a tolerable cook, or no?

"*Viat.* So good a one that I did never eat so good fish in my life. This fish is infinitely better than any I ever tasted of the kind in my life. 'Tis quite another thing than our trouts about London."

strangers in the hotel respected my prowess far more than did my own familiar friends; even the wife of my bosom slyly inquired if I had caught them with a "silver hook." I rejected the imputation with scorn.

LETTER NO. IV

WALK TO ILAM—WATER OUZEL—NETTLES AND
WASPS—BAT CAUGHT BY FLY.

“*Shepherd.* Hoo the swarm’s raging wud! The hummin’ heavens is ower het to haud them—and if ae leader chances to cast his ee hither, we are lost. For let but ane set the example, and in a moment there’ll be a charge o’ beggonets.”—*Noctes Ambrosianæ.*

LAST night I had another turn at the river, but nothing came of it more remarkable than the usual good wetting. I started, it is true, with sanguine expectations, inspired partly by my grand success of the day before, and partly by the advice of an aristocratic friend whom I met on the way.

On reaching the water where the wooden bridge crosses it, I saw a man leisurely reclining on the rails, and seemingly in blissful

contemplation of the lovely scenery around him. He quietly approached, and with that marked courtesy and civility which at once create good fellowship in all true disciples, he accosted me.

My first glance assured me that he was a man of substance. He was clad in a handsome suit of Scottish tweed, his cheek was bronzed, and he looked the embodiment of good health and substantiality.

"What sport?" said he.

"As yet I have not wet my line," I replied.

"May I, as an old sportsman, have a look at your flies? I am well acquainted with all the waters for many miles around here, and if you want a day's real sport I will gladly give you four miles of the very best water hereabouts."

"Thank you, very much indeed," said I—and to myself I said, "I was right in my first impression: this is truly a man of broad acres and generous impulses."

He examined my flies with the look of a master. "Pooh," said he, "those flies are perfectly useless for this water, the gut is too coarse, and such flies as these are never seen

Photo by]

ILAM, FROM THE LODGE GATES.
(Thorpe Cloud in the distance.)

[*R. & R. Bull, Ashbourne.*

here. You may fish till doomsday with such things and catch nothing."

I expressed my surprise with much humility that this should be so, seeing that they had been supplied by the most celebrated maker in this neighbourhood.

"Ah," said he, drawing out a large pocket-book, "look at these, my friend. That's the fly for grayling in the early morning, this for trout in the evening, and this for all-day fishing for either trout or grayling. Nothing can resist it."

He began to pack them up again, and I—how I coveted those wonderful flies.

"As I have remarked," said he, "if you want a real good day I'll give you my card. You can write to me and I'll fix it for you. Would you care to try a cast of my flies?" he continued.

I thanked him heartily, and said "I should."

"There's my card; and as I hope you will be a good customer another day, I will only charge you eighteenpence for this cast, and two shillings for a dozen of my choicest flies warranted to kill."

I looked at my friend's card, and then I

discovered that my great landed proprietor, "having made the gentle art his intense study for years," supplies the best of flies dressed from nature by himself at two shillings a dozen, etc.

I was rather sold, but still had confidence in these nature-copied flies, and I worked away with my new cast. I got two rises, and one 4-oz. trout, which I returned to his native element, and then I returned home with my usual wet feet ; and so my third day's angling was over.

This morning I decided to give the trout a rest, devoting it instead to a quiet, contemplative walk. I strolled over to the pretty village of Ilam, and sauntering by the margin of the river "Manifold," I again encountered my little friend the water ouzel ; this time he was not at all shy, he hopped along from stone to stone, now dipping his head into the water, now disappearing for a few seconds altogether, then emerging¹ he would make me a few pretty

¹ According to Maunder, Bewick says the little bird "possesses the power of walking in quest of prey on the pebbly bottom of a river." Waterton, commenting on this statement, says that from the specific gravity of

Photo by]

ENTRANCE TO PARADISE, ILAM. (THE MANIFOLD.)

[*R. & R. Bull, Ashbourne*

curtsies, displaying his white bib and tucker just like a national school-girl. What an industrious little chap he is—he works as hard and perseveringly as the starlings on my lawn or in my mulberry tree !

I calculate that if every time he pecks the moss-covered rocks in the river, or dips his head in the water, he kills an insect or a fish, he must have swallowed no less than 1,800 articles of food, insect or fish, in the half hour he gave me the pleasure of his company.

He not only went up the water with me from the point where the river touches the road up to the bridge, but he followed me back again to the same point, giving me every now and then his jerky little curtsey, which said plainly enough “I’m pleased to see you, stranger, in these parts. Good-bye !” and away he sailed, just skimming the water in his rapid flight.

No sooner had I parted with my pretty little

the bird this is as impossible as that human beings should rise into the air. Be this as it may, I distinctly aver that I saw the bird dive into the water and disappear for a few seconds on two or three occasions during my short observation.

companion than I heard a strange humming in the air that sounded like distant music. Looking up, I found myself beneath a wide-spreading sycamore, and looking down I was surprised to see the ground covered with dead and dying bumble-bees.

I wonder if any of my apiarian readers can explain to me the cause of this strange slaughter. Had they over-laden themselves with honey, or been surfeited or poisoned by it? Or, had some envious wasps or bees robbed them of their spoils, and then done them to death?

“*Sic vos non vobis mellificatis*, apes”—not for yourselves do ye gather honey, O ye foolish bumble-bees! Or—when ye consume it yourselves it seems you become intoxicated, tumble helplessly on the flinty road, break your backs or necks, and so perish!

You see, I have lived so long in the great city that all such little things as these, which are beneath the notice of country people, are novel and curious to me.

July 31st.—Now is the winter of my discontent made glorious summer; Jupiter Pluvius has given place to sunshine, and in the evening

I ventured forth once more, rod in hand, to allure if possible some stray denizen of "The Dove."

My record hitherto, as you know, has been, with one memorable exception, a record of utter failure. Again, I am sorry to say, it is not the story of success. I got one rise, that was all.

For a young and ardent disciple, my evening, I assure you, was not one to inspire enthusiasm. Canst thou feel very amiable, oh, gentlest of readers, after being caught seven times in seven successive throws in bush or bramble, tree or root?—and what if thy eighth throw lands thy "bumble" in the midst of a mass of young and stalwart nettles?

That fate and worse befell me in my evening's ramble. I have been told (indeed, it is an old axiom) to "grasp your nettle" if you would not be stung by it. As there seemed to be no other way of unhooking my unlucky hook, I did grasp my nettle with a vengeance, and never again will I believe in that old axiom; my belief now and evermore will be that the harder you grasp it the more vilely will it sting. My tingling, smarting fingers for many hours

after the event sufficiently attest the truth of this assertion.

But another and far more trying adventure befell me on this singular excursion.

"Why," I have been led to ask myself, "should things happen to me, a citizen of famous London town, in my rare country rambles, such as never in the lifetime of one in a hundred of country people happen to them?" Did you, my friend, ever, in your backward throw, hook your fly firmly into a tough twig on a wasps' nest?

By what strange fatality, then, is it that I of all piscators in the world should have come upon one in this strange way? "*Piscator ictus sapiet*," I remember the sting of wasps from my schoolboy days. I may be very green and innocent in things rural and piscatorial, but I do hope that not one of my readers has thought me such a fool as to walk up to that twig to release my hook. No; I did what any other sane person would do—I threw down my rod and ignominiously bolted across the meadow pursued by a dozen of these little winged beasts.

One by one they dropped off, five, four,

three, two; the last pursued me to the bitter end. I threw off my hat, hoping he would think that was *me*; not a bit of it.

Fortunately, it was more than six weeks since my head underwent the operations of a barber; consequently, my back hair was unusually long. I felt a fizzle-whizzle on the hollow which represents my bump of firmness; with all my might I struck that bump and smashed the little wretch before he had time to unsheath his horrid "beggonet."

But my difficulties are not yet over. How am I to regain my rod, my flies, and my net? I slowly returned to the neighbourhood of the nest, dodging cautiously behind the bushes till I approached the handle of the rod. I then noiselessly unwound a quantity of line, and then quietly withdrew the rod till I had got it full fifty feet from that horrid twig; then I gave a sharp tug, fully determined to sacrifice anything and everything. I tugged and pulled, and the wasps became angry again; neither twig nor fly, neither gut nor line, would give way. I pulled again, a long pull and a strong pull, and then came away a part of the twig with my bumble sticking in it.

I ought to have mentioned before, that on Wednesday evening, *Piscator major* arrived (he has been so named to distinguish him from the humble *minor* who writes these lines). On Thursday he made his first attack on "The Dove," and captured $2\frac{1}{2}$ brace of fine trout. On Friday the major and I started, filled with grand expectations, to fish the highly-preserved waters of "The Manifold;" but it is not wise

"To swallow gudgeons ere they're caught,
And count one's chickens ere they're hatched."

We had been told that that river swarms with grayling and trout. Probably it does, but this happened to be a Friday, a fast day with fishes—it is their day for being eaten, not to eat; at all events, they abstained from flies, and doubtless betook themselves to worms.

The major tried all the arts of which he is an easy master, he waded up and he waded down, but not a rise could he get—neither could I. It was rather tantalizing, for we could see fish in abundance, but, as I have said, they were on *the fast*. We returned in the evening somewhat crestfallen.

Let me here mention a very curious incident which happened to a brother angler, *Piscator major* by name. On his first expedition he lost his "collar" in the branches of an ash overhanging a deep hole; his second fly was hooked, and the leader was thus left hanging a few inches above the water.

That dangling bait attracted the attention of a wandering bat, and on revisiting the spot next morning, like Little Bo-Peep, "there we espied our *bat* all tied and hung in that tree to dry." We found him dead, suspended 'twixt wind and water to that little hook.

How that foolish little bat must have struggled and splashed and dashed before he finally succumbed! The gut is of the finest gossamer, and one would have thought he could easily have snapped it or the twig; but perhaps his death will be better explained by the pliancy of the bough just on the top of the water. He probably met the unusual fate of being drowned as well as hanged.

Since this happened a similar incident came under the major's notice in his own lake. He had left a rod and line with flies in a boat-house, and to one of the flies a rat somehow

got himself hooked by a foot ; he managed to break the gut above the flies, and got away trailing the flies after him. In this way he scrambled over the side of a boat which was lying at the lake side ; here one of the hooks caught in the side of the boat, and the poor rat was held suspended over the water,—he too must have been drowned as well as hanged.

LETTER NO. V

DRIVE ACROSS COUNTRY—"THE PEACOCK" AT
ROWSLEY—HADDON HALL, BUXTON, AND
"THE WYE"—"THE MANIFOLD."

"*Shepherd*. You beat the major! You might at baggy mennons, but he could gie ye a stane-wecht, either at trouts or fish. He's just a warld's winner wi' the sweevil, a warlock wi' the worm, and wi' the flee a feenisher. It's a pure pleesur to see him playin' a pounder wi' a single hair. After the first twa-three rushes are ower, he seems to wile them wi' a charm awa into the side, ontill the gerss or the grevvel, whar they lie in the sunshine as if they were asleep."—*Noctes Ambrosianæ*.

ATURDAY, August 2nd, was an off day with me as to angling. The major plied his art alone, and brought home five brace of fine trout. For my part, as I have become so confidential, you may like to know what

I do down here when I am not fishing. I will tell you.

Saturday was a lovely day, so I and my daughter took a drive across country, and a pleasant drive it was. Buoyant and light-hearted we drove over hill and dale till we came to "The Peacock" at Rowsley, hoping there to take up our abode till Monday, and leisurely explore the region round about.

Quaint old "Peacock," the paradise of anglers! but we were forbidden to rest in thy ancient chambers.

"Full, quite full!" was the somewhat stern reply to our modest inquiry. In truth, I thought the good landlady regarded me with some degree of suspicion; my personal appearance, perhaps, was not quite up to the aristocratic standard of "The Peacock."

Until that moment it had not occurred to me that my outer man was not attractive. You will remember how my felt hat was damaged, and my coat and trousers had a sort of moth-eaten appearance, from the numerous little circular holes out of which I had dug so many of my troublesome flies. I thought I had given my old hat an air of

respectability by twisting a couple of fly casts round it ; but on the whole I am afraid appearances were against me.

However, my daughter's pleasant face seemed to reassure our good hostess ; that stern, firm look about the lips gave way to pleasant smiles. She said we would be certain to find rooms at the "Edensor Hotel," and kindly advised us to drive on at once to Chatsworth, which on Saturdays is closed to the public at one. It was then half-past twelve, and the distance four miles. So we started, and got to the entrance just in time.

Whilst we explored that wonderful mansion and grounds, we sent our coachman on to Edensor to engage apartments ; but it being so close upon Bank Holiday, the "Edensor Hotel" had suddenly filled to overflowing, so we drove back to the picturesque, ivy-clad "Peacock"—a charming old hostelry, beloved by anglers, who make it their headquarters for fishing "The Wye" and other streams ; it is also a pleasant resting-place for visitors to Haddon Hall.

And just such another hotel is "The Eden-

sor" at Chatsworth, which, in like manner, commands the patronage of "The Derwent" anglers and Chatsworth sight-seers.

Of this inn Boswell, in his *Life of Dr. Johnson*, writes: "I cannot omit a curious circumstance which occurred at Edensor Inn, close by Chatsworth, to survey the magnificence of which I had gone considerably out of my road to Scotland. The inn was then kept by a very jolly landlord, whose name, I think, was Malton. He happened to mention that 'the celebrated Dr. Johnson had been in his house.' I inquired *who* this Dr. Johnson was. 'Sir,' said he, 'Johnson, the great writer; *Oddity*, as they call him. He's the greatest writer in England.' My friend . . . laughed a good deal at this representation of himself."

We lunched at "The Peacock," visited Haddon Hall, and of course were enchanted by that wonderful old mansion and its curious contents, and the lovely scenery with which it is surrounded. We had not time for a ramble by the beautiful "Wye," which there looked sweet and pellucid, as if nothing had happened to its head waters. (What a

different impression did those head waters convey to us when the next day we encountered them in the neighbourhood of Buxton !)

We intended to take train for Matlock, but on reaching the station at a quarter to five we found the four o'clock train for Buxton just starting with (as the exasperated passengers said) its usual punctuality. So we went to Buxton instead of Matlock, and there we remained till Monday. Buxton is a delightful place—that is all I need say about it.

Being interested in the lovely river we had caught a glimpse of at Haddon Hall, we here explored the sources of "The Wye," the chief of which is in a remarkable cavern called Poole's Hole. These are three in number, called respectively *I*, *Thou*, *He*, and when this trinity becomes unity its singular names becomes the plural *We*, now changed to *Wye*. At least that is the origin of its name as given to me by a gossiping neighbour at the hotel. I cannot vouch for its accuracy.

(I have omitted the few pages having reference to the insalubrity of "The Wye" as it was

twenty-six years ago, as I presume that nuisance has been removed long ago.—E. M.)

By Monday afternoon I began to think it time I had caught another fish! I had become rather tired—not to say ashamed—of constantly replying to kind inquiries, such as “What sport?” “Oh! nothing, nothing. Water too bright and low, you know; fish not on the feed, etc. Caught a fine brace” (first it was “yesterday,” then “two or three days ago,” but now that it is more than a week since I caught that precious couple, I think it is about time to let them drop).

In the evening we again invaded “The Manifold” waters. The major captured two and a half brace of good fish. I hooked half a brace, and lost him.

Yesterday we devoted to “The Dove,” but instead of carrying my rod I armed myself with a walking-stick, determined to take a lesson in fly-casting by watching the action of the major.

It was really a “pure pleesur” to see how tenderly he laid his flies on the water, in amongst the bushes and trees, between and over

the mossy stones and rocks—how daintily he handled his fish when he had firmly hooked him. He captured a fine grayling of 1 lb. 3 ozs. and a brace of trout after a morning of toil in the broiling sun.

My waning ardour was revived by this piscatorial lesson, as I thought how I would do the same, so in the evening we again attacked "The Manifold"; but I am singularly unfortunate. At my first throw to wet my line, I somehow got into a hopeless tangle which took me a quarter of an hour to undo. I then made another throw, and was firmly fixed a good way up in an overhanging beech tree; this was most unlucky just at a time when the trout were rising freely in front of me, and one of them I had intended to cover in that hapless throw. My gut gave way to the bough, so my fishing for the evening seemed to be over, for it was too dark to fix up again; but "necessity is the mother of invention." I invented a way of recovering flies suspended high up in an overhanging branch, and I give it for the benefit of my readers.

I drew out my strong line to a little more

than the length of my rod, and thus forming a loop of it, I swung the line over the bough, at the same time twisting it round the suspended flies. I felt sure that nothing worse could happen than the loss of my already lost flies, so I pulled vigorously, and down came the branch, and all my flies safe and sound.

Once again I set to work. By this time the full moon was shining brightly and most beautifully on the sparkling water. I threw and hooked a fish.

"My first trout by moonlight," I said to myself. He splashed about in the shallow water and amongst the rough stones, but I was fixed on the edge of a slanting rock, from which I could not move forward an inch without slipping into a hole, so I had to make the best of it.

I assure you, my reader, it is no easy travelling over the rocky sides of some parts of this picturesque river. I had no wading boots, so I had to keep to the bank, and you know how deceptive things are in twilight, how easy it is to mistake a piece of soft mud for firm rock. But, as the saying is, "there's no fishing for trout in dry breeches," I might

as well have waded as not, considering the many duckings I got off sliding stones and slippery banks, and all I can say as regards my trout is that I held on to him as long as I could under the difficult circumstances, but at last he broke away from me, and I fished no more.

The major meanwhile waded up the stream, and was rewarded with two brace of nice trout as the result of a good deal of hard work ; for if the sides of the river are rough, the shallow bed is abominable.

Even yet, with all my misfortunes and mishaps, I am unwilling to believe that I am not just as ardent a disciple as I was when I entered on this new career a fortnight ago ; if one can catch no fish, there is genuine pleasure to be got in walking by the side of a lovely stream ; and it is specially charming when the full moon is shining on the water, and in a spot where the pine woods crown the heights, and the beech, the elm, and the oak combine their undulating and many-tinted foliage on the hill sides and cast their shadows on the moonlit river, as it runs deep and slow in a semi-circular sweep beneath and

around the beautiful hall-of Ilam and the old churchyard.¹

But I am now beginning to think I can enjoy all such pleasures as these without encumbering myself with a fishing-rod, basket, and net, and uselessly whipping the stream.²

When I first thought of fly-fishing as a holiday amusement, my imagination had pictured to myself a walk by the side of a sweetly-flowing stream on a lovely summer's evening, when one had only to cast one's flies over the water and draw out the simple trout and grayling till one's basket required the aid of a strong boy

¹ "Dr. Johnson obligingly proposed to carry me to see Islam, a romantic scene, now belonging to a family of the name of Port, but formerly the seat of the Congreves. . . . I recollect a very fine amphitheatre, surrounded with hills, covered with woods, and walks neatly formed round the side of a rocky steep, on the quarter next the house, with recesses under projections of rock, overshadowed with trees; in one of which recesses, we were told, Congreve wrote his 'Old Bachelor.'"—*Boswell's Life of Johnson*.

² "I always consider the mere act of fishing as a secondary consideration. I connect with it the enjoyment of the country, the song of birds, the beauty of the day, the refreshment of mind, and the calmness of thought which these bring with them."—*Jesse's Rambles*.

to carry it. That was the sort of thing I looked for in fly-fishing.

How that pretty, imaginary picture has been dispelled by the reality! how I have been soaked and sodden, torn and scratched, stung by nettles, pursued by wasps, bitten by venomous insects, my fingers lacerated, and coat and trousers torn by my own hooks! how, weary and footsore, with my angelic temper tried to the utmost, I have returned to my hotel! All these things, friendly reader, thou already knowest.

Recollections such as these, I am bound to admit, have a tendency to lessen the ardour which first inspired me.

August 8th.—Of Wednesday, the 6th, I have nothing to record beyond the fact that the major—*Piscator major* I mean—started alone after luncheon up the Dale, and returned in the evening with the finest basket that has been taken in the low and bright waters of “The Dove” for many a day—viz. six and a half brace of trout and grayling. I, *Piscator minor*, took an evening stroll with my rod. I hooked one fish and lost him, and then I hooked my flies and lost them, and so returned home calm and resigned to my unlucky fate,

consoling myself with the Ettrick Shepherd's remark that :

"Sometimes a body may keep threshing the water for a week without seein' a snout—and sometimes a body hyucks a fish at the first thrau !"

Talking about "hooking" fish suggests to me a reason why "The Dove" trout are so markedly shy. "A burnt child dreads the fire." Every sportsman one encounters says he has caught none, but "hooked" a lot. Now, as this sort of thing is going on day after day, and week after week, I should think there can hardly be an adult trout in "The Dove" that has not some time or other been "hooked," and it can only be when his previous hooking has been so long ago that his piscine memory has forgotten it that he again permits himself to be deluded, and for the last time, by some such "artful dodger" as our major.¹

¹ On this point I note that learned piscators are not agreed. *Sir Humphry Davy* says: "If a pricked trout is chased into another pool, he will, I believe, soon again take the artificial fly"; whilst *Dr. W. C. Prime*, an American authority, says: "It is generally true that if a trout be pricked by a fly hook he will not rise to it again."

LETTER NO. VI

FISHING FROM HARTINGTON THROUGH THE
DALES—COTTON'S FISHING COTTAGE—PIS-
CATORIBUS SACRUM—PIKE POOL—FOUL
HOOKED—ALLSOPP'S FISH-CULTURE ESTAB-
LISHMENT—RAT CARRYING BABY RAT ON
HER BACK—DUCKS AND THUNDER.

“*Shepherd.* Wha wud hae expeckit a thunderstom on the eve o’ sic a day? But the heavens in the thundery airt were like a dungeon—and I saw the lightning playing like meteors athwat the blackness, lang before ony growl was in the gloom. Then a’ at ance, like a wauken’d lion, the thunder rose up in his den, and shakin’ his mane o’ brindled clouds, broke out into sic a roar, that the very sun shuddered in eclipse, and the grews (greyhounds) and collies that happened to be sitting beside me on a bit knowe, gaed whinin’ into the house, wi’ their tails atween their legs, just venturin’ a hafflin’ glance to the howling heavens.”—*Noctes Ambrosianæ.*

THURSDAY, August 7th, was a pleasant day for us; lovely and bright as an August day can sometimes be. We, the major and I, drove over from “The Izaak Walton” to “The

Charles Cotton" at Hartington, with the intention—which we carried out—of walking and fishing back through the Dales, a good ten miles or more the way we travelled.

Whilst luncheon was being prepared at "The Charles Cotton," not to lose time we started off to Hartington mill to commence operations. Arrived there, we found the road to the mill-dam entirely blocked by a row of old railway milk-cans filled with "wash," and on getting over the side stile we were landed in a paradise of pigs. Half a dozen fat hogs were lolling against the stile, and stoutly disputed our right (in spite of our tickets) to pass over or through them.

On the little triangular island formed by the mill, the mill-dam, and the stream, I counted forty full-grown, happy porkers, some huddled together in the sun, some lazily sleeping under the broad leaves of the wild rhubarb, others wallowing and rollicking in the stream—it was, indeed, a scene of Arcadian felicity; surely never before had pigs such a jolly time of it; but there was no fishing in this once-noted spot. The scent upon the island was not quite like the dew of Hermon; still it was preferable,

Photo by]

WALTON AND COTTON FISHING HOUSE, BERESFORD DALE.

[*G. N. Bankart.*

infinitely preferable, to "The Wye" below Buxton.

We returned to our inn, and, luncheon over, we sallied forth down Beresford Dale, a delightful walk in a very hot sun; but the odour of that piggery haunted us for many a mile.

We had only two faults to find with the worthy miller of Hartington, both of them of quite a personal and selfish character—for what right have *we* to complain if he manufactures beautiful bacon where formerly was a bit of capital fishing ground? And why should we grumble because just at the time we were sweltering down Beresford Dale, he had stopped his mill and turned the already meagre water of "The Dove" into his exhausted mill pond? The result to us, however, was that we had no water to fish in, and the fish had very little to swim in.

If we got no fish, we did not the less enjoy that charming walk. We rested awhile outside Cotton's fishing cottage. This cottage consists of one square room only, with windows on each side; it is built entirely of stone, is charmingly situated on a bend of the river; it bears the date 1674, and although it is,

therefore, over two hundred years old, time, the destroyer, has dealt very gently with it.¹ Over the door we noticed the inscription, "Piscatoribus sacrum."

Here, many a time, had Cotton and his venerable friend Izaak Walton rested from their labours, smoked their pipes, and fought their piscatorial battles o'er again.² And here are we genuine piscators excluded by lock and key from this sacred abode! ³

Surely the executors and administrators of

¹ I find it has been rebuilt more than once.

² See "Dove Dale Revisited," p. 132, for correction of this error.

³ "*Piscator*. And now, sir, you are come to the door; pray walk in, and there we'll sit and talk as long as you please.

"*Viator*.—Stay, what's here, over the door? '*Piscatoribus sacrum*.' Why, then, I perceive I have some title here; for I am one of them, though one of the worst. . . . But I am the most pleased with this little house, of any thing I ever saw; it stands in a kind of peninsula too, with a delicate clear river about it; I dare hardly go in lest I should not like it so well within as without, but by your leave I'll try . . . all exceeding neat, with a marble table and all in the middle.

"*Piscator*. . . . Come, boy, set two chairs; and whilst I am taking a pipe of tobacco, which is always my breakfast, we will, if you please, talk of some other subject."—*Compleat Angler*.

Charles Cotton are not carrying out his wishes in thus excluding true disciples !

The entrance to this sacred edifice is guarded by two lofty limes, beneath which are circular seats, and on these we sheltered from the burning sun, and thought how much more we should have respected the blessed memory of Charles Cotton had he left within that pretty asylum a constant stoup of "spicy nut-brown ale," and eke a cup of tea, for weary and thirsty piscators.

Peering through the lattice windows, we could see a round table and six comfortable old armchairs ; surely a cool and pleasant resting-place, and made specially for such as *we* ! Why, oh ! heartless successors of the genial Cotton, are we so ruthlessly shut out ?

Why ? Because, as a notice-board informs us, stupid and unmannerly tourists will insist upon scratching their names on window-panes and carving them upon doors and lintels, besides committing other nuisances.

On leaving the cottage, we suddenly came upon as lovely a bit of the river as is to be found anywhere. Here nature has at some

not very recent period been helped by art; here are rustic stiles and seats,

“For talking age and whispering lovers made,”

and here and there beds of rhododendrons, *lignum-vitæ*, and others shrubs and plants tastefully arranged, though now neglected.

These artificial aids do but little to enhance the enchanting beauty of this little dell. Here one sees, standing right in the middle of the water, a very curious limestone moss-covered spire,¹ which has given an ugly name to a lovely spot. It is called “Pike Pool,” not because the stream contains pike, but from this remarkable column.

Here, under overhanging branches, “The Dove” runs deep and slow from one cascade to another. Here it was that Cotton’s *Viator* caught his first grayling.

“I have him now,” says *Viator*, “but he

¹ “*Viator*. But what have we got here? a rock springing up in the middle of the river! This is one of the oddest sights that ever I saw.

“*Pisc.* Why, sir, from that Pike that you see standing up there distant from the rock, this is called ‘Pike Pool.’ ’Tis a rock in the fashion of a spire-steeple, and almost as big.”—*Walton and Cotton’s Compleat Angler.*

is gone down towards the bottom. I cannot see what he is, yet he should be a good fish by his weight ; but he makes no great stir."

Piscator: "Why, then, by what you say, I dare venture to assure you 'tis a grayling, who is one of the deadest-hearted fishes in the world, and the bigger he is the more easily taken."

Our *Piscator major* does not agree with Cotton's *Piscator* in this defamation of the grayling. His game qualities vary in different streams and at different seasons ; but on the whole, the major assures me, he will give as much sport as the trout, and the bigger he is the better he will fight.

Naturally, the major paid special attention to this classic spot. Near the end of the dell I suddenly heard a heavy splash, and on nearing him I found him struggling with a big fish, which he fairly landed ; but to my surprise, no sooner had he got his hook out of him, than he threw him back into the water ! He was a grayling of over a pound.

"What do you mean by such an insane act as that ?" I cried,

"Foul hooked ; I caught him by the back fin," said he.

"Well," said I, "what does it matter whether you caught him by that, or the head, or the tail, so long as you had him in your net?"

"Unsportsmanlike and illegal," he replied.

I said no more. I only wondered if this superfine doctrine prevailed in Izaak Walton's days. I have my suspicion that *that* was the way in which the inexperienced "Viator" hooked his first grayling. I only know that if *I* had caught him—— but I am not going to encourage young anglers to break the law.

This grayling certainly fought splendidly, but perhaps one cannot fairly judge from this what he would have done had the hook been in his throat instead of his back fin.

It was here I met again that little white-bibbed sister of mercy, my pretty water ouzel. She came and rested on a point of rock, and made me half a dozen of her prettiest curtsies. "Where are you going to, sir?" she said. "I'm going a-fishing, my pretty maid." "I'll go with you, sir," said she, "and tell you where the fishes be."

And so she hopped along from stone to

stone to the end of the little dell, and then with a few graceful bends over her white bib and tucker, she bade me good-bye.¹

Piscator major marched along regardless of these small matters. He was intent on fishing; but I forgot to say in the beginning that I was not—I was only accompanied by my walking-stick. I wanted to gain experience by watching the major's movements.

We plodded on, without fish and almost without water, till we came to "Load Mill."

It was now nearly six o'clock, and we were very thirsty, so instead of pursuing the river down to Mill Dale, we took to the turnpike-road, and climbed a terribly tough hill for a very long mile till we came to "The George" at Alstonefield, where we refreshed ourselves with most grateful tea and bread and butter, and then wended our way back by another route past Alstonefield Church, and down a

¹ I am reminded by P. D. that my first ouzel was a *He*. . . . Well, so he was, my critical friend; but this one is a *She*! I know it by her white lappets—and her lady-like conduct. *He* thought of nothing but stuffing himself, and only pretended to be polite. *She* was intent only on showing me the way down the Dell!

very steep and narrow pathway to Mill Dale. We there pursued the stream, passing the new fish-culture establishment just erected by Sir Henry Allsopp in the Dale.

There we saw hundreds of young fry disporting in the well-built tanks ; but as the hot sun was streaming down upon these open tanks, it seemed rather desirable that the little fishes should have been protected by some covering above, or hollows underneath. Probably at this season the young fry would be grayling—in which case a shading from above would be preferable.

I may here remark that if during my piscatorial holiday I have not caught many fish, I have at least learnt something of their manners and customs in these streams.

For example, in walking quietly along the banks of “The Dove” or “The Manifold,” I have occasionally seen a solitary trout “on the feed” which would allow me to approach within a yard and shake my stick at him without budging.

“Surely,” I have thought, “either that fish is paralysed by fear, or else he is one of those rare ones which has never yet been

pricked by the villainous hook which the deceptive fly conceals.

As a rule, you cannot approach within six or eight yards of a feeding trout in these bright waters but he is off like a shot, and conceals himself under bank or stone or grass—

“The trout within yon whimpling burn
Glides swift, a silver dart,
And, safe beneath the shady thorn,
Defies the angler’s art” (BURNS) ;

but this is not so with the grayling.

Never have I seen a grayling rush away and hide himself like a trout under grass or rocks ; one generally finds them in little flocks, and when disturbed they scuttle about, up and down, and round and round, but never do they seem to be endowed with sufficient sense to hide themselves, or, metaphorically speaking, “to go in when it rains.”

That is why I have suggested that the young grayling fry should be protected from the sun by a covering from above rather than by overhanging banks or shady rocks under the water, which they have not the sense to avail themselves of.

We now approached our own ground, the

Dove Holes, three monstrous caverns, which may be regarded as the entrance to Dove Dale from the north, and just here we witnessed a curious instance of motherly affection.

We saw a rat swimming down the stream with a young one nearly as big as herself in her mouth. I fancy she had been giving her son a lesson in swimming. How lovingly she carried him up the bank into her hole !

The major now began in earnest. Here he donned his wading-boots, which had been brought up the Dale to meet us.

It was now half-past seven, and, with the exception of the castaway grayling, only one fish had been taken.

Piscator had long despaired of rivalling his feat of the day before ; but he was not likely to give in. The trout came into the basket slowly, and at long intervals, as he toiled down the river, now wading in the stream, and now casting from rocky banks—past *Pickering Tor* and *The Grey Mare's Nest*—past *The Lion Rock* and that terrible cavern described in an earlier letter and known as *Reynard's Cave*—past *The*

Photo by]

THE LION ROCK, DOVE DALE.

[R. & R. Bull, Ashbourne.

P. 74.

Watchbox and *Tissington Spires*—until at length we reached the Sharplo w Cliff.

There the major waded across to the Staffordshire side, whilst I was compelled to follow the path and climb over the cliff, and an ugly climb it is in the dark.

It was now quite dark, and we could only guess at each other's whereabouts by *cooeing* after the Australian fashion, and whistling ; and when we emerged on the open green, called Sedgy Pool, we could not distinguish each other across the river, for although the full, round moon looked down upon us from the V-shaped opening to this pleasant glade (formed by the slanting sides of Thorpe Cloud on one side, and The Hazels on the other, the moon occupying the upper centre of the V), there was such a heavy mist surrounding us that our figures cast no shadows.

Still the major fished on, and ever and anon I heard a loud flop and splash (for the fish seemed to rise with more noise and dash in the dark), and the words came across to me, "hooked him," "lost him !" or "hooked him," "got him !" till at last we met at the Stepping-stones.

We reached the pleasant old "Izaak Walton" by a little after ten, and although the major counted out but three brace of trout—good heavy ones—still we felt we had not lost a day.

Here I should like to offer a valuable hint to rod-makers: I noticed alike in the bright sunshine, in the evening twilight, and when all else was dark, that I could distinguish the flashing of Piscator's bright rod at a very considerable distance.

Now, if I could see this, I fancy the bright-eyed fishes would frequently be scared by it.

Why, ye makers, do you not make plain, unvarnished rods? There is a fortune in this hint for any rod-maker who will take it and make an "invisible rod."

What is wanted in this wide-awake little "Dove" is a visible fly attached to an invisible hook, on an invisible line, thrown with an invisible rod by an invisible piscator.

Had I been thus equipped, I am certain my tale would not have been, as in truth it has been, one of perpetual and disastrous failure. I should constantly have filled my basket. I have discovered the major's great secret, he

has the power of making himself invisible ; but then his shining rod frequently betrays even him !— *Verbum sap.*

August 11th.—Since the memorable walk on Thursday above recorded I have not much to report. I did not fish on Friday, but the major could not be restrained. He brought home in the evening one brace of grayling, weighing together $2\frac{1}{4}$ lb., and three and a half brace of fine trout, thus upsetting my little theory of fasting fish.

Saturday morning was the most close and sultry time we have yet had. In the afternoon the rumbling of distant thunder was heard, and in a short time the sky was black all round with heavy rain clouds.

Presently the surrounding hills resounded with crashing peals ; but the rain only skirted our valley, and we did not get much of it.

The manner of *dogs* in thunder is graphically described by the *Ettrick Shepherd* at the head of this chapter. I was curious to see how *ducks* really did behave in thunder weather.

"Like a duck at thunder" is a vulgar expression for astonishment, which I wished to witness with my own eyes; so I strolled round to the farmyard, where there were a score or so of waddlers, some sleeping contentedly on the bank with their heads tucked under their wings, others on the pool, some with their heads in the water and their tails in the air, and some swimming about and fighting and snatching from each other a nasty piece of offal.

Suddenly came a tremendous crash right overhead, "sic a roar" that it certainly startled me for a moment, and it was a comical sight to see how all their heads simultaneously shot out from under their wings, straight up, like the sudden spring of jack-in-the-box—how they all turned up their eyes with "a hafflin glance at the howling heavens," and then those on land dashed into the water, and those on the water scrambled in their awkward, wobbling way to shore—it was for me a novel and amusing sight.

There is, I believe, a theory abroad that fish won't rise in a thunderstorm. We tested that theory with a very remarkable result.

I once more donned my mackintosh and wading-boots, and betook me to "The Dove."

It looked ominous: not a rise could I see. I fished away for three hours, and I got but one solitary rise. I hooked my fish well, but he twisted himself round a bit of rock, and snapped off my most promising fly—my usual luck. I returned to the hotel fully satisfied that fish do not bite in thunder weather!

Meanwhile, Piscator major went to "The Manifold," and returned shortly after me with—ye powers! more fish than his usual bag would hold.¹ That was filled, and a bundle tied up in his handkerchief as well! He counted out *nineteen trout*, some of them more than a pound, and the whole lot, weighed together, nearly turned the scales at ten pounds, or more than an average of half a pound each!

Now, what am I to think of this?

Do fish bite in a thunderstorm, or do they not?

Here, you see, is my own experience dead

¹ The major during this broiling weather carries a light leather bag instead of his usual creel. It sits more comfortably on the back.

against it ; but, then, here is the experience of the major as dead in its favour.

The only solution which occurs to me is, that they *don't* bite in " The Dove," and they *do* bite in " The Manifold."

I make no allowance for my want of skill and experience, for I maintain that in that perfectly calm weather I threw my flies very cleverly indeed. If the fish had been on the feed, I certainly must have caught some ; but the fates were against me.

Had I accompanied the major, as I at first thought of doing, I am sure I should have done almost as well as he.

There are a good many other piscators here whose success about equals mine.

What a display was this which our major spread out before them ! How they envied his skill, and venerated his prowess !

LETTER NO. VII

SCORCHING WEATHER—THREE BRACE BEFORE
LUNCH—FIELD-MOUSE OR SHREW—SMALL
ARMY OF NUNS—DESCRIPTION OF “IZAAK
WALTON ” HOTEL—FAREWELL.

“All pleasures but the angler’s bring
I’ the tail repentance, like a sting.
Then on the banks let me sit down,
Free from the toilsome sword and gown ;
And pity those that do affect
To conquer nations and protect.
My rod affords such true content,
Delights so sweet and innocent,
As seldom fall unto the lot
Of sceptres, though they’re justly got.”

THOS. WEAVER, M^r. OF ARTS.

MONDAY, August 11th, was not an
uninteresting day for us. In the
morning I walked down to the water
with the major ; he piscatorially
equipped ; I with my walking-stick.

The sun was scorching, and the water bright and low and glistening; and yet, with these things against him, the major captured three brace of fine trout before luncheon; whilst the success of other piscators at "The Izaak" was thus querulously recorded by one of them in the visitors' book:

"The sun was burning in the skies,
And de'il a bit would the fishes rise:
We fished from half-past ten till four,
And de'il a bit would we fish any more!"

The afternoon we devoted to a small picnic in the woods on the Staffordshire side of the river, returning home to dinner—that is, all of our party except the major; he, with a packet of sandwiches, pursued his calling up "The Dove."

Let me mention here that as I was strolling through the wood, I saw a poor little field-mouse right in the middle of the grassy road, making the most curious contortions: first it would stand up on its hind legs with the two forepaws resting on its breast, and its tiny nose peering upwards and around—one could almost fancy it was saying its prayers; then

suddenly it would twirl round like a whirligig, then fall down and roll over and over as if in agony ; it would then hide under the grass, perfectly quiet, as if dead. It did not seem to mind my presence at all.

“ Wee, sleekit, cowerin’, timorous beastie,
Oh, what a panic’s in thy breastie ! ”

I fancied it must have been stung or injured in some way, so I took it up in my hand, where it seemed to be contented and easy for a time ; then it would resume those curious contortions, then rush up my sleeve, then lie perfectly still, with its little cheek huddled against the palm of my hand.

I examined it as carefully and tenderly as I could ; but I could discover no injury. I carried it in this way on the palm of my hand for a considerable distance, till I met the old donkey-women, who told me it was called a *shrew* in those parts, that it gives out a musk-like smell, and that cats would not touch it ; but I still maintain that it was a field-mouse, for a *shrew*, I find, is insectivorous, which I soon discovered my mouse was not.

On stroking its fur once or twice the wrong

way, with my best spectacles on, I think I discovered the cause of its misery ; the little wretch was swarming with an active little insect, the scientific name of which I believe is *pulex irritans*, but it is more commonly known as the bed flea !

It is, perhaps, needless to say that my tender sympathy for my little mouse received a severe shock, and without more ado I hastily deposited it in the hedge-row out of harm's way from wheel or hoof. There, alas ! it may be still scratching, and all for the want of a little *Keating's powder*, which I do not usually carry about me.

I have heard of swallows being thus inhabited ; but until now I was quite unaware that this interesting insect is common alike to "mice and men." Doubtless this is another example of my crass ignorance ; a well-educated countryman would have passed him by on the other side for fear of the fleas ! but

" I would not enter on my list of friends "

the man who would needlessly set foot upon him.

After dinner, I once again sallied forth with my rod, and I fished till it was too dark for me to fish any longer, but nothing happened ; and then I waited under the grey rocks the return of the major.

About half-past eight I dimly discerned across the water, and descending "The Sharp-low Bank," a fisherman, with rod, net, and basket. "Here at last is the major," said I ; and I shouted, "Is that you, *Piscator* ?"

"No, sir," came the reply, "my name is Taylor."

"All right," said I.

It grew darker and darker, and walking very slowly under the grey cliffs, my grey suit must have rendered me quite invisible across the water, where I could just discern two dark moving figures.

"Probably night poachers," I said ; and when I shouted "Cooey ! cooey !" with a hoarse and rather cracked tone of voice, my two friends took to their heels like madmen, and I could soon distinguish their dark figures 'twixt sky and hill as they disappeared over the top. I guess them to have been a couple of cockney tourists scared by the unearthly

sounds which reached them from across the water.

It had now become quite dark, and I began to feel anxious for the return of the adventurous major, who would have to walk two or three miles after leaving off fishing at dusk.

I sat upon a gate for half an hour or more, constantly whistling and cooeing, but no response came out of those weird and ghostly valleys.

I had waited and whistled so long that at last I had worked myself into a state of morbid terror lest some untoward accident should have befallen him in those slippery, dark, and most dangerous places.

At last, to my great relief, a responsive whistle came up out of the dark, and we soon reached home, when the major turned eleven fine trout out of his bag, making, with the three brace caught in the morning, eight and a half brace as the result of his day's work.

By the way, I wonder if there is a nunnery hereabout. The river was invaded yesterday by a small army of nuns, or sisters of mercy,

old and young—many of them very pretty ; and it was really quite amusing to see them paddling about with their naked feet in the water,

“ Some of them washing with the liquid dew
From off their dainty limbs the dusty sweat
And soil, which did defile their lovely hue ;
Others lay shaded from the scorching heat ”

(SPENSER),

not in the least abashed by the knowledge that they were “ the cynosures of neighb’ring eyes.”

Farther down the Dale I saw a troop of donkeys, all with side-saddles. Were they waiting the return of the nuns? If so, I should have liked to see them mounted. What a grotesque cavalcade it must have been ! We might have fancied ourselves in Spain, to see these stately dames in their closely-fitting hoods, white kerchiefs round their bonny cheeks, and flowing snowy lappets, ambling down the Dale, or scrambling in double file over the rocky banks.

August 13th.—Now our pleasant holiday is drawing to a close ; this is our last day. Alas ! to-morrow must we quit these pleasant hills

and lovely dales, and return to the land of Egypt and the house of bondage.

I came here three weeks ago a dyspeptic old man ; I return considerably improved in health. But it just occurs to me that to complete the cure I require another month at least !

What if I call on the doctor in Ashbourne, and get his certificate to that effect ? No, it cannot be ; men must work and women must weep, for there's work to do, and babies to keep !

“Can fancy's fairy hands no veil create
To hide the sad realities of fate ?”

Pleasures of Hope.

Before I go, let me sit under this wide-spreading beech, on the banks of “The Manifold,” and tell my friendly readers, if I can, what “The Izaak Walton” is like.

As “The Dove” is not like other rivers, so is “The Izaak” unlike all other hostelries. It does not stand by the roadside inviting

“Each passing stranger that can pay.”

If you wish to visit this hotel, you must

Photo by]

[R. & R. Bull, Ashbourne.

THE IZAAK WALTON HOTEL, DOVE DALE.

leave the turnpike road, pass through a handsome park-like gate with stone pillars, surmounted by an escutcheon bearing the Walton and Cotton monogram, and the date 1660, and follow an open coach drive for an eighth of a mile or so, which winds upwards through a pleasant green and banky meadow; and when you reach "The Izaak Walton" you will find little or nothing to indicate that it is an hotel; it has more the look of a substantial rose and clematis-clad farmhouse.

There is no outward signboard to invite your entrance; it is too well known to need such commonplace insignia.

It stands on a gentle eminence, backed up by the handsome hill called Bunster, and flanked on the left by green meadows leading down to "The Dove" and the entrance to the Dale, and beyond that, by the most conspicuous of all the hills, the well-known Thorpe Cloud, and on the right by more meadows and a spur or angle of the Bunster.

Looking southward from the front is the green meadow already mentioned, at foot of which runs the road leading to the pretty village of Ilam, and beyond this road at a

meadow's breadth, and parallel with it, runs the river "Manifold"; which curious river oozes from its many miles of subterranean travelling, a short distance higher up in the grounds of beautiful Ilam Hall.¹

Part of "The Izaak Walton" is as old as, or older than, its name, for there is a tradition that in this old farmhouse the great piscator himself used to take up his abode when he had fished down the dales from Beresford

¹ The seat of R. Hanbury, Esq., to whose great kindness we are indebted for the unusual privilege of fishing in "The Manifold."

"We viewed a remarkable natural curiosity at Islam, two rivers bursting near each other from the rock, not from immediate springs, but after having been for many miles underground. Plott, in his 'History of Staffordshire,' gives an account of this curiosity; but Johnson would not believe it, though we had the attestation of the gardener, who said he had put in corks where the river 'Manifold' sinks into the ground, and had caught them in a net, placed before one of the openings where the water bursts out."—*Boswell's Life of Johnson*.

The incident of the corks seems to have been quite forgotten in the neighbourhood. I was told, as though it was a new discovery, that the underground course of "The Manifold" had been proved—only a few years ago—by some one throwing *chaff* in its upper waters, which came out at Ilam.

Hall with his friend Charles Cotton. My chief authority for this tradition is the chatty old woman, whom I have already mentioned, who used to keep the donkeys for tourists up the Dale, but who now politely opens the gate for all comers.

The tradition is so probable that it may be taken for absolute truth, for where else could dear old Izaak Walton have more comfortably taken his ease and smoked his evening pipe than in that cosy old parlour, which still affords a welcome resting-place to weary piscators ?

When the old farmhouse was converted into an hotel, now many years ago, a new wing was added to it facing Thorpe Cloud, so that now the house forms a right angle with stables and farm buildings at the back.

I will only add that the inside of "The Izaak Walton" is as pleasant as its outside is unpretentious and picturesque.

It is five miles away from the nearest railway, and thus "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife" may it long remain !

Here, on such a spot as this, one of those brand-new palatial hotels which seem always

to spring up with railways, would be entirely out of character with the surrounding scenery ; here, if you have not the showy appearance of modern days, you have the comfortable realities.

The house is presided over by a pleasant hostess, who, now in her eightieth year, rises early, and late takes rest, and looks well after the affairs of her household.

She is an active, energetic, and very genial, bright old lady, and I hear that at the annual ball at the Hall she dances with the best of them.

Then there are her good son and daughter-in-law, as popular as she, for they spare no pains to please, and give "the warmest welcome" to their numerous guests.

If "The Izaak Walton" were twice its present size, it would still be filled with guests, for it is unique in its management, its position, and its surroundings.

You may suppose from its name that "The Izaak Walton" is chiefly the resort of anglers ; but this is not so. Here come all sorts of people—young men and maidens, old men and children, artists, and lovers of the picturesque ;

clergy and laity, field naturalists and butterfly-catchers, tutors and students.

This is the very place for honeymoonists: four sets of them have been here during our short stay, and how they did moon about and enjoy themselves! How they would pretend to fish, and catch nothing but sly kisses behind the bushes! Happy young people! It does one good to see you so bright, and so unconscious of the troubles to come.

“In the blythe days of honeymoon,
With Kate’s allurements smitten,
I loved her late, I loved her soon,
And called her dearest kitten.”¹

Whilst I am thus engaged in trying to bring “The Izaak Walton” home to you, my brother angler, *piscator major*, is bidding a last and lingering farewell to the trout and grayling of “The Dove.”

I must now add, as my final record, that

¹ I give the second verse as a footnote; its sudden sequence to the first would be too cruel!

“But now my kitten’s grown a cat,
And cross like other wives,
Alas! alas! my honest Mat,
I fear she has nine lives.”

yesterday he brought home nine brace of splendid trout.

During our holiday we, the major and I, caught one hundred and ten well-fed trout and four grayling; or, if I must needs be more explicit, the major caught one hundred and twelve fish in ten days, and I caught *two* in three weeks; but I no longer envy him. I am humbly content to be regarded as "an amateur angler," as *piscator minor*; or, if you please, no piscator at all.

"I have now discovered that angling is an art," as says Cotton's *Piscator*. "Is it not an art to deceive a trout with an artificial fly? A trout! that is more sharp-sighted than any hawk you have named, and more watchful and timorous than your high-mettled merlin is bold? And yet I doubt not to catch a brace or two to-morrow for a friend's breakfast; doubt not, therefore, sir, but that angling is an art, an art worth your learning. The question is rather whether you be capable of learning it, for angling is somewhat like poetry, men are to be born so."

I have had a pleasant time, and it has given me pleasure to record it. If I have wearied

thee, gentle reader, I regret it, and now I bid thee a hearty farewell. If thou be an honest angler, I will end as I began, by wishing, in the words of thy master, "the east wind may never blow when thou goest a-fishing."

PART II
DOVE DALE REVISITED

CHAPTER I

FROM "THE IZAAK WALTON" TO THE WALTON
AND COTTON FISHING HOUSE, BERESFORD
DALE.

"Grey sky, green trees, a shadowed stream,
A gilded spire-top's distant gleam,
A rod, a reel, a book of flies,
A dozen pleasant memories.

"A homeward trudge thro' mist-wrapt night,
A heart and creel, in common, light ;
Complete content—the day has brought it—
He fished for pleasure—and he caught it!"
(From *The Optimist*, by H. J. WISE.)

THESE lines, very aptly sent to me
by a friend, appropriately head
and represent the experiences I
am now about to put on record.

On asking my fair correspondent who Mr.
H. J. Wise is, or was, she replied : "No *mere*

man was ever half so charming! The lines were by Hilda Johnson Wise, who died, alas! December 13th, 1899."

The nineteenth century was in the youth of its old age, and had yet much of its work to do, and many have been the "choppings and changings in this mortal life" which it has witnessed since last I visited Dove Dale and "The Izaak Walton," in the summer of 1884, eighteen years ago and more. Outwardly the old inn has experienced no change at all. The old handsome gateway, with its stone pillars surmounted by the Walton and Cotton cipher, is just as it was. The cipher is wrongly drawn by the artist thus:

the first C should have been reversed thus—C. The cipher is evidently taken from that on the Fishing House in Beresford Dale, but the artist forgot to reverse the C, and he seems also to have trusted to his memory for the date 1666, which has no reference to any

particular event in Walton's life unless it may have been the Great Fire of London, which, however, did not reach his residence in Fleet Street (near the west corner of Chancery Lane); the date on the Fishing House is 1674, which is doubtless the date of its erection. Walton had left Fleet Street, as well as his subsequent residence on the west side of Chancery Lane, a few doors from Fleet Street, before that period.

It is a pity the old signboard is not perfectly accurate in this respect, but it sufficiently indicates the proper route for weary travellers to take from the turnpike road up the coach drive which winds itself pleasantly through the green meadow to the door of "The Izaak Walton," and lands them comfortably in the tavern where it is good to be. This is surely the kind of inn that Shenstone had in his mind when he scratched these well-known lines on the window of an inn :

"Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
Whate'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
His warmest welcome at an inn."

And our host of "The Izaak Walton" has very

appropriately quoted on his prospectus Dr. Johnson's reply to Boswell:

"No, sir, there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn."

In all these things time has wrought no change, nor has the interior of the house undergone any material alteration, except that as regards its accommodation it has moved prudently with the times, still preserving much of its ancient simplicity.

Looking up to it from the Manifold meadows on a bright afternoon it presents a most charming and restful picture to the eye, backed up as it is by the imposing green hill called Bunster. On its eastern side it looks down upon the green meadows which descend by a steep grade to the winding river Dove, and beyond it looks up to and smiles on the most picturesque of hills called Thorpe Cloud. The everlasting hills are the same, the old rivers Dove and Manifold are just as they were eighteen years ago. "The Izaak Walton" has the same familiar look; and may the

time be very far off in the dim and distant future when the speculative builder shall turn his greedy eyes upon it with a view to converting the old and unique simplicity of "The Izaak Walton" into a gorgeous and fashionable hotel.

"*Host.* Give me leave to tell you, sir, the pasturage hereabouts is very fertile, and you may remember how Mr. Cotton declares 'these hills breed and feed good beef and mutton.'

"*Angler.* Aye, and make the best cheese that goes to Derby market." — *The River Dove*, Pickering, 1847.

Our hostess of "The Izaak Walton" goes a step beyond this, for she makes the best butter in England, and has taken the prize at the Dairy Show at the Agricultural Hall.

"Dove Dale is the very paradise of gipsy parties. High-born and accomplished ladies, with well-bred gallants, and their liveried attendants; pleasant family parties with heaps of children; smiling papas and staid elder daughters with their most attentive young gentlemen; noisy country lots of a dozen youths and red-cheeked maidens are to be seen every bright

day the summer through. . . . Oh, that *we* were young again !”—THORNE'S *Rambles by Rivers*.

When I was last here it was in the bright summer time ; the place was alive with visitors coming and going—just as described above, fifty years ago and more ; now the holiday season is almost over, and it has the more business-like look of an anglers' resort. There are still lingering here some tourists who stay on account of the salubrity of the climate and the beauty of the surroundings. Here are six or seven anglers, enthusiasts who ply the long-suffering Dove and Manifold with admirable care and patience, and with varying success. The learned professions are fairly represented just now by a barrister (whom, if I should have occasion to mention again, I shall designate as the “Master,” on account of his great experience and his exquisite skill), a parson, a doctor, a major (a real one, not “Piscator Major”), a poet, and the humble amateur who pens these lines.

It would be easy, but it would not be interesting, to become sentimental on the changes in our own personalities which have taken place

since our last visit ; but sentiment leads to melancholy, and I came not here to make myself miserable, but to drive dull care away and be happy.

All this by way of introduction to the charms and the beauties of Dove Dale and the attractions of its lovely river.¹

“The silver *Dove*, how pleasant is the name !”

C. COTTON.

¹ The following appeared in the *Fishing Gazette*, July 23rd, 1910 :

“THE IZAAK WALTON HOTEL, DOVEDALE, TO BE
SOLD BY AUCTION.

“On Tuesday, July 26th, at 2 p.m., at the Royal Hotel, Derby, Messrs. Knight, Frank & Rutley, of 20, Hanover Square, London, will offer by auction, in one or three lots, the beautiful country seat of Ilam Hall, Dovedale, with some 1,140 acres, and including the well-known Izaak Walton Hotel, Dovedale Hill and Wood, and the valuable trout and grayling fishing. In connection with this interesting offer by auction a most attractively illustrated brochure, giving views, particulars, and plans, has been got out. A great many readers of the *Fishing Gazette*, including the ‘Amateur Angler,’ who have fished in delightful Dovedale, will be much interested in this announcement. On the first page is given a long extract from a charming brochure, entitled ‘An Amateur Angler’s Days in Dovedale.’”

(This sale did not come off, the reserve price not having been reached in any of the lots.—A. A.)

Before entering on my own little excursions on the Dove I will give a brief account of its beginning and ending.

From its source to its union with the Trent the Dove serves as a boundary to the counties of Staffordshire and Derbyshire; its whole length is about forty-five miles. The source is in Axe-edge, not far from the little village of Dovehead.

The water bubbles up through a little well, whose sides are protected by a couple of flag-stones.

“Here springs the *Dove* ! and with a grateful zest
I drink its waters.”

REV. J. EDWARDS.

In Mr. J. P. Sheldon’s “Tour of the Dove, etc.,” 1894, he says at Dovehead “they will find on a stone laid over the spring the monogram of Walton and Cotton which some reverent hand has carved.”

The “reverent hand” I find explained in “The River Dove,” Pickering, 1847, thus :

“*Angler*. And now by your leave, I’ll grave the two first letters of their names in cipher on this very stone that is over the fountain.

“*Painter.* How mean you?

“*Angler.* Here are tools . . . so I’ll make a rude copy of the cipher which is over the door of the fishing house.”¹

For some distance from its source it is of small size and not very picturesque. It finds its way to Hartington, and thence pursues its course down the Dales with which I am more or less familiar, and which piscatorially will engage my attention for a few days. Beyond the Dales it strays as it lists through broad and fertile valleys. It passes through Okeover to Ashbourne, thence past Snelston and Norbury, near to Uttoxeter, by Sudbury to Tutbury. It passes Eggington, and opposite Bladon Castle it joins

“The crystal Trent, for fords and fish renowned.”

It is not perhaps generally known that the country is indebted to our charming Dove for one of its sweetest lyrics: for if Tom Moore had never resided on its banks, the song “Those Evening Bells” might never have been written.

I was reminded of the fact by Mr. Joseph

¹ This, however, is an imaginary conversation in Cotton’s time, though written in 1847.

Hatton, who has just published a bright little book entitled "Cigarette Papers" (Treherne), in which he says, prettily enough : "Tom Moore lived a lonely but happy life on the banks of the Dove near Ashbourne. He set the music of the local bells to immortal verse."

At the present writing I know not, any more than you, what each day may bring forth, but I propose to jot down day by day whatever little incidents may seem to have any, even very trifling, interest, for one's life is made up of little things. I shall have, I fear, much to say about the weather.

Tuesday, September 30th.—I arrived here in very discouraging weather—a persistent east wind, frequent sudden showers.

I strolled down in the evening to take a first glance at the river at the bottom of the meadow which adjoins the house. There is the identical pool overhung seemingly by the identical branch on which it seems but yesterday that I left my cast and fly. A leatherbat more venturesome than the trout was attracted by the barbed betrayer swinging in the wind, had seized it, and I found him next morning with the fly still in his mouth, floating dead on the

water, but still suspended to the branch, hanged and drowned !

Wednesday, October 1st.—I commenced angling operations, and never was an adventurous old angler more thoughtfully or more kindly guided and guarded than was I by my good friend, our host of "The Izaak Walton," who is an expert fisherman, knowing most things about angling. We carried our luncheon with us, and fished up the Dale as far as my old acquaintance, "Reynard's Cave," which has the same old look (not possible fully to convey by photographs). On my last visit I was tempted to climb up to the kitchen, and thence on to the top of the hill ; there was no rope to help me then as there is now, and I was young and active, having barely turned three score ; but now, although I could just as easily do it—*le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*. We fished all day, but with no success ; mine host got a brace of very small trout and I got nothing.

In the smoke-room our various daily adventures were duly discussed, and it was rather consoling to find that not one of the experts, these experienced hands, had done much better

than ourselves. That smoke-room is as cosy as it is old-fashioned, with a large recess in the window, forming a comfortable seat for three or four people. Above it is a row of a dozen pewter-plates, polished as bright as silver, and in the middle is a big bright pewter-dish, kept there as a reminder of the jolly times of long ago, and not for use in these degenerate days :

“While broken teacups, wisely kept for show,
Rang’d o’er the chimney, glisten’d in a row.”

The Master laid down the law in a big arm-chair; the Doctor told stories in the window-seat; the Parson read interesting bits from “The Compleat Angler”; the Poet was argumentative and facetious. It was soon fully understood between us that our failure to catch any fish was due entirely to the weather, and not to our want of perseverance, of pluck, of energy, or of consummate skill and knowledge. We all agreed in this, that there *are* trout and grayling both in the Dove and the Manifold, and in the united rivers, and big ones too, but they will not be caught until they choose to do so by deigning to rise at a fly, for we are all *dry fly* fishermen here.

Thursday, October 2nd.—This was also a cold and windy day. The Master, the Parson, the Major, the Doctor, the Doctor's wife, and the Poet went forth to fish, full as usual of bright hope, some to the Manifold, others to the Dove. To the latter went I, and my *fidus Achates*, the landlord, went with me, he in waders, I only in my knee boots. I found myself in much the same predicament as *Painter* in the following scene :

“*Painter*. Halt, good sir ; you do not expect me to walk into the river !

“*Angler*. If you are resolved against it here you may stay ; for you see how the river washes the very basement of this perpendicular rock, and climb you cannot. Come, sir, follow me bravely, it is but ‘a spit and a stride’ ; or I’ll carry you pick-back.”—*The River Dove*.

We wanted to cross the river at a certain point, and as it was a long way up to the bridge, he made nothing of taking me on his back, and, like Friar Tuck and Robin Hood crossing the river, we must have made a pretty picture, had one of our young ladies chanced to have been there with her Kodak. He landed me safely.

There was a well-known pool where big grayling lie, but they took little notice of a fair rise of fly on the water and floating over them. An occasional rise amid-stream drew my attention. I soon had fast hold of a big fish and landed him. Of course I thought I had hold of a grayling. I fished for a grayling, with a grayling fly, in a noted grayling hole; and yet when I landed my fish he proved to be a lovely trout, and this, be it remembered, was on October 2nd.

Mine host and I discussed the various merits of this fish—its lovely complexion, its fat and beautiful condition, its length, its breadth, its height, and its weight—and the dispute ran high on some points, I maintaining his weight to be 16 oz. at least, and mine host that he was not more than 12 oz.; during this long discussion my lovely trout,

“Cast on the bank, he dies with gasping pains,
And trickling blood his silver mail distains.”

JOHN GAY.

We agreed in this, that it is a cruel law which forbids the taking of trout at such an early date.

Not long afterwards the same thing occurred

again. I fished for a grayling, and again I hooked what turned out to be a beautiful trout; and so it was all the time; we could catch nothing but pesky trout, when we wanted grayling.

Sir Humphry Davy was fishing in the Teme near Leintwardine, in the month of October, when the following conversation occurs :

“*Poiet.* I have basketed (to coin a word) three trouts and six graylings.

“*Phys.* And I have taken seven graylings. I caught trout likewise, but not considering them in proper season I returned them to the river.”
—*Salmonia.*

In those early days of the nineteenth century—probably about 1825—the angler was a law unto himself as regards *close* time, and the foregoing conversation shows how that moral law operated—one “baskets” his trout, and the other returns his to the river.

F. C. Hofland, writing in 1839 in reference to Dove Dale, says :

“Thirty years since, in company with two brother artists and anglers, I enjoyed in this enchanting valley some of the happiest days of my life. . . . We sallied forth every morning,

carrying with us provisions for the day, and two or three bottles of Mr. Wood's brisk, light bottled ale, together with our fishing tackle and sketching apparatus, and there we spent eight successive days (Sunday excepted) in alternately sketching, painting, fishing, and rabbit-shooting. We generally broke our meal at one o'clock in the day, either at Reynard's Hall, a picturesque cave in the rocks, or under the shade of the alder trees. . . . At this period (*circa* 1809) fishing in Dove Dale was as free as it had formerly been to our father Walton and his disciples, but the water is now strictly preserved by Jesse Watts Russel, Esq., of Ilam Hall." —*Angler's Manual*, 1839.

Friday, October 3rd, was as usual a very bad day. I did not fish, but took a walk with my landlord to see Ilam Hall and the lovely scenery surrounding it.

The village of Ilam is well worth seeing. It is, as Walton says of one of his Lea scenes, "too pretty to look on but only on holidays." We saw it on a damp, cloudy day—it was not brightened up by a solitary glimpse of sunshine; but even under such disadvantages it has a most attractive appearance. In the midst of the village stands a very beautiful cross, erected

Photo by]

CROSS AND FOUNTAIN, ILAM.

[R. & R. Bull, Ashbourne.

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by Jesse Watts Russell, Esq., to the memory of his wife. It is in imitation of the Waltham Cross, elaborately and beautifully carved, and with statues of excellent workmanship in the niches. At the foot of the cross flows a fountain of clear, pure water. An inscription in red and black letters tells of her virtues to whom the cross is raised, and, in allusion to the fountain, adds these lines :

“Dried is that fount, but long may this endure
To be a well of comfort to the poor.”

Ilam Hall is a handsome building in the Tudor style, with a flag tower, and the grounds surrounding it are charmingly laid out, bordered as they are by the river, and above that a most lovely background of woodland scenery—just now in full foliage, and only beginning to show the autumnal tints ; it will be still more lovely when the approaching Indian summer occurs, if such a season should occur in this hitherto gloomy autumn.

There it is that the river Manifold oozes out of the earth after a subterraneous journey of about five miles, and a few yards above it emerges another river, the Hamps. The latter

sinks into the earth a little above the bridge at Leek, six miles west of Ilam. The Manifold disappears near Wetton Mill, five miles northward. The waters of the two rivers differ in temperature at their emergence by about two degrees; so that they do not anywhere intermingle. In flood-time, I am told, the Manifold and Hamps unite about four miles above Ilam, and, despite their underground courses, rush down the old original bed, which at other times is quite dry.

On the side of the hill, just above where the two rivers issue from it, is a little grotto, in which Congreve is said to have written his comedy of "The Old Bachelor" and a part of his "Mourning Bride."

Ilam Church stands in the grounds close to the Hall. It is ivy-covered, and very picturesque. On the north side is a mausoleum, which contains Chantrey's monumental group to the memory of Pike Watts, Esq. Mr. Thorne says of it:

"It is one of the finest works of Chantrey, and probably no other of that great artist's production is so fortunately placed. The venerable man is represented raising himself from his

deathbed and stretching forth his arm in the act of imploring a blessing on his only daughter and her children, who surround his couch. The effect of this touching scene is undisturbed by any surrounding objects: it is alone in the chapel, whose sides and floor are of a sober tone, whilst the light is subdued by the stained glass through which it passes."

There is, or was, in the church a monument bearing an epitaph by Charles Cotton. It is thus given in his "Poems," 1689 :

"AN EPITAPH ON ROBERT PORT, Esq., design'd for a monument and now set up in Elum Church in the County of Stafford."

There are twenty-six lines in all ; of these the twelve following are the last :

"Here, Reader, here a Port's sad Reliques lye
To teach the careless World Mortality ;
Who while he Mortal was unrivall'd stood
The Crown, and Glory of his Antient blood :
Fit for his Princes, and his Countries trust,
Pious to God, and to his Neighbour just.
A loyal Husband to his latest end,
A gracious Father, and a faithfull Friend.
Belov'd he liv'd and dy'd o'recharg'd with Years,
Fuller of Honour than of Silver Hairs.
And, to sum up his Vertues, this was he
Who was what all we should, but cannot be."

This Robert Port was a former owner of Ilam Hall. A descendant of his, the Rev. Robert Port, D.D., is now the much-respected vicar of St. Matthew's, Denmark Hill.

With the Manifold river above Ilam I have no personal acquaintance, but "Piscator Major" has drawn my attention to an interesting monograph on the Dove and Manifold valleys by Mr. J. P. Sheldon, whose name I have already mentioned. His volume is illustrated by a series of charming drawings by Edward Roper, F.R.G.S. Some of them convey equally accurate and far more picturesque views of the scenery than even the finest photographs.

From this work I learn that the sources of the two rivers, identical as to locality, are yet distinct. That of the Dove I have already mentioned. The source of the Manifold is found up by Badger's Croft and Boar's Grove, in the hills which run to the north-west, while the Dove pursues its course to the east, and after many miles of divergence they come together again below Ilam, as already noted.

Any one really desirous of exploring the upper Manifold will do well to take Mr.

Sheldon's book for his guide.* During my short visit I found no opportunity of consulting it, or of visiting the upper portions of the river.

Thor's Cave is mentioned as being one of the most remarkable objects in the Manifold valley.

The Poet caught a fine grayling and rejoiced over it; the Parson got two trout and piously put them back; the Doctor and the Major were not successful; and the Master, disdainingly trout, caught no grayling.

Saturday, October 4th.—Bitterly cold, windy, wet morning, blowing and blustering right down the stream, for whether the wind comes over Thorpe Cloud, or down from The Hazels, or round the corner from the Twelve Apostles and the Lover's Leap, or from over the heights of Bunster, down stream it rushes to the detriment of all fishing, and especially from our side. The sun has not been seen in these regions for many a day. I caught one large trout and one small grayling—both went back to their native element, the first because he was a trout, and the second because he was not big enough for breakfast. The Master, I

think, was mainly engaged in swearing at the trout that would come at him, and at the grayling that would not, and so his bag was empty.

The Parson, who is a good fisherman, went away for his Sunday duties. The Major departed, sadly bemoaning his bad luck, which, however, was only common to all of us. The Poet (I call him Poet, because I am unable otherwise to classify him—I have seen none of his poetry, but he sings divinely) came here six weeks ago a great invalid—he left this day in vigorous health. This was his first attempt at fishing, which his doctor had advised him to practise ; he proved to be such an apt pupil of the Master that he left us an accomplished angler. The Doctor, a young Irishman, six feet two in his stockings, a fellow of infinite wit and humour, left us this day with his young wife, also an enthusiastic angler.

This day I fished alone up the Dale. Our hostess sent my lunch up to me by Jack, our boy. He came mounted on a big white donkey, and in front of him was Master three-year-old Bobby ; Miss Daisy, a bright, dark-eyed girl of ten, came with them. They found

me plying my avocation at the feet of the "Twelve Apostles." These grand, lichen-mantled, steeple-like rocks stand as guardians at the entrance of the Dale, browbeaten, as it were, by an enormous projecting rock on the opposite side of the river, from the top of which a despairing lover (or perhaps a despairing pair of them) is said to have leaped and buried his or their sorrows in the waters below—hence the rock is called the Lover's Leap. Daisy soon disappeared, scrambling up the rocky sides like a young gazelle, up and up amongst the hazel bushes, where, as she well knew, nuts were plentifully hidden up behind the inaccessible rocks.

No sooner had she disappeared than I, making a long cast over a rising fish, hung my fly on the topmost branch of a young hawthorn bush away up among the rocks. I sent Jack up to get the fly, and so I was left alone with the baby. He was sitting sturdily on the donkey, holding the reins tight, and presently he managed to pull his head round towards home while I was adjusting my fly. I did not see the start, but Bobby was shouting "Dee-up, donkey!" and working his little legs on the

donkey's side, and off the donkey went at a brisk walk.

As soon as I saw them, I walked as quietly and as fast as I could, so as not to start him off, but as I got up just near enough to put my hand on the bridle, off he bolted full gallop, Master Bobby clinging like a little man to his neck ; he soon came tumbling down, to my no small alarm. Luckily he fell easily on the soft grass. After a jolly good roar, he was for a time pacified, but when he saw the donkey disappearing round the rocky corner he set up another hullabaloo, and I could do nothing to pacify him. There were a dozen excursionists on the other side who witnessed the whole of the tragedy, evidently with much amusement. I shouted for Jack till I was hoarse, but in vain : no Jack appeared for a long time. He eventually came along, quite alarmed when he saw the donkey had disappeared.

He said that somehow he had lost his way and couldn't get down nohow. I said, "You young scamp, you've been nutting." This he stoutly denied, but as I heard him cracking nuts all the evening afterwards I

was obliged to doubt the truth of his assertion. Daisy turned up soon with a bag full of nuts, and as the donkey couldn't get through the iron gate, and was not fool enough to try to get over it, nor yet to swim across the river, he was soon captured. Bobby and Daisy and donkey started for home, and reached it without further disaster.

Monday, October 6th.—Bad as all the days have hitherto been (except yesterday, being Sunday, which was fine), this Monday was the worst of all. It began to rain early and it rained steadily all day, a cold, drifting drizzle. I fished all day in it and my labours were not rewarded. I may say, however, that I reached home at five o'clock, outwardly dripping with wet but inwardly as dry as a dry fly. I wore my india-rubber knee boots, and I was covered over by that really most valuable and useful article of apparel, "Burberry's Patent Slip-On." It is as light as a feather almost, it presents no impediment in fishing, and this day certainly tested its impenetrability. I wore it all day in a steady downpour, and I finished up as dry as when I went out in the morning.

Mine host accompanied me this day up the Dale. The Master had preceeded us; he had the key of the iron gate, and when he got through he carefully locked it, to keep out excursionists, as he said, and put the key in his pocket. He assumed that we had a duplicate key, which we had not. What could we do? Here we had to face that iron gate again, as I had done in the olden time. My friend, a giant in strength, strove with all his might to lift that great iron gate off its hinges, but it was not to be done. There was nothing for it but to climb over or to wade round the end of the wall in water almost up to my chin. To climb over the gate itself is impossible, but on the left of it and between it and the precipitous rock is a stone wall (as seen in the picture), and it is surmounted by a frieze of iron spikes six inches long. "Stone walls do not a prison make" for such adventurers as we are, nor are we inclined to regard iron bars as a cage. The landlord scrambled over the spikes and I followed. We landed safe, and we fished away up the Dale. I caught a brace of very fine trout by a mighty long cast at the

Photo by

[R. & R. Bull, Ashbourne.]

ABOVE THE STEPPING-STONES, DOVE DALE. (THE IRON GATE.)

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back of the island near the Twelve Apostles, and regretfully returned them to their native element.

The Master also had not been fortunate, and when we came back to the gate he found himself "hoist with his own petard." The key would not unlock the gate, and so while these two were pottering at the lock, the Amateur Angler, with his usual juvenile agility, climbed over the spiked wall. This wall presents a somewhat formidable difficulty to climbers less agile than myself. My companions did not care to face it, and being encased in waterproof waders, they preferred to take to the water; but I am not sure that the water did not over-top their waders, though they made no confession to me.

CHAPTER II

DOWN THE DALES FROM BERESFORD AND THE
FISHING HOUSE TO THE STEPPING-STONES,
AND FAREWELL !

“And some delight it is the while,
Though nature now does weep in rain,
To think that I have seen her smile,
And haply may I do again.”

CHARLES COTTON.

Tuesday, October 7th.

I HAVE now been here a week,
and during the whole of the time
the weather has been abominable
—as bad for fishing as it could
be—the wind always blowing down stream,
howling round rocky corners, and more fre-
quently than not accompanied by scudding
showers ; really fishing has been a farce ; but
we murmur not !

By way of diversifying our incessant labours

and almost fruitless toils on the river, our good landlord volunteered to drive me and my son-in-law over to Hartington. We did not go into the village, but stopped short at the old mill, where they kept so many pigs as recorded in my old volume.

Jack drove the carriage back home, and we started on our ten-mile walk down the dales. Ah! what a delightful walk it was—for me at least—and the others, though they may perhaps have felt the fatigue a little more than I, yet seemed to enjoy it. If the sun did not shine on us, the wind at least had toned itself down to a pleasant breeze: the sky was leaden, and the tops of the precipitous hills, now wood-clad and now bare and rocky, were but dimly outlined in a hazy mist.

When I last plodded down these glorious dales, many years ago, it was in the gay summer time, and all their charms were enhanced by brilliant sunshine; now the scenery has a sober, not to say sombre, aspect. But it has its compensations: then we had to contend with sweltering heat, now we can saunter by the river-side, cool and calm and contented.

It was with a feeling of delight, almost akin

to veneration, that I was permitted once again to see and to introduce my friends to the outside of the Walton and Cotton Fishing House at the head of Beresford Dale, for strange to say our host of "The Izaak Walton" had never seen this remarkable temple sacred to all anglers, and yet he has shot rooks in the woods overhanging this spot and adjoining Beresford Hall (now pulled down).

I am glad to say that we found the little temple in a state of excellent preservation. Of course the door was locked, but we did not feel that we were guilty of impertinent curiosity when we strove to look into the sanctum through the windows. The motto above the door sufficiently justified us, "Piscatoribus Sacrum," and are we not piscators? Could we not say with "Viator," "Why then I perceive I have some title here, for I am one of them, though one of the worst"? There we could see the old circular marble table, and the same half-a-dozen old armchairs, and the old oak settee—all of which I presume are the same as those seen by me in 1884, but assuredly not those mentioned by "Viator," "all exceeding neat, with a marble table and all in the middle."

Photo by]

IN BERESFORD DALE.

[G. N. Bankart.

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James Thorne quotes from some old British geography book an account of a visit to this *sanctum sanctorum*; the house was described as "being in ruins, the roof decayed, the inscription illegible, the table broken, and, instead of being 'all exceeding neat,' all overgrown with dank moss and weeds; while, to crown all, the only access was through a broken window."

When Thorne himself visited it he found it "as perfect and as neat as when 'Viator' stepped into it." It was rebuilt early in the nineteenth century.

With regard to the Fishing House it may be a surprise to some to learn that, so far as I can discover, Izaak Walton *never saw it*—as is partly shown in the following conversation between "Piscator" and "Viator" ("Piscator" is Charles Cotton).

"*Pisc.* I will tell you that my house stands upon the margin of one of the finest rivers for Trouts and Grayling in England; that I have lately built a little Fishing House upon it, dedicated to anglers: over the door of which you will see the two first letters of my Father Walton's name and mine twisted in cypher; that

you shall lye in the same bed he has sometimes been contented with.

“*Viator*. Stay ; what’s here over the door? —*piscatoribus sacrum*—why then I perceive I have some title here, for I am one of them, though one of the worst ; and here below it is the Cifer, too, you spoke of, and ’tis prettily contrived. Has my Master Walton ever been here to see it, for it seems new built?

“*Pisc*. Yes, he saw it cut in the stone before it was set up ; but never in the posture it now stands ; for the house was but in building when he was last here, and not raised so high as the arch of the Dore, and I am afraid he will not see it yet, for he has lately writ me word he doubts his coming down this summer, which, I assure you, was the worst news he could possibly have sent me.”

The date on the building is 1674. In that singular letter of Walton to Cotton, thanking him for his “very pleasant useful discourse,” it will be seen that he refers to the Fishing House. The letter is so interesting and *à propos* that I make no apology for giving it in full. It was written in 1676, when Walton was in his eighty-third year.

“To my most Honoured Friend, Charles Cotton, Esq.

“Sir, You now see, I have return’d you your very pleasant, and useful discourse of the art of *Flie fishing*. Printed just as ’twas sent me : for I have been so obedient to your desires, as to endure all the praises you have ventur’d to fix upon me in it, and when I have thank’t you for them, as the efforts of an undissembled love ; then let me tell you, *Sir*, that I will really endeavour to live up to the character you have given of me, if there were no other reason ; yet for this alone, that you, that love me so well ; and always think what you speak may not, for my sake, suffer by a mistake in your judgment.

“And, Sir, I have ventur’d to fill a part of your Margin, by way of Paraphrase, for the Readers clearer understanding the situation both of your *Fishing House* and the pleasantness of that you dwell in. And I have ventur’d also to give him a Copy of Verses, that you were pleas’d to send me, now some Years past ; in which, he may see a good Picture of both ; and, so much of your own mind too, as will make any Reader that is blest with a Generous Soul, to love you the better. I confess, that for doing this, you may justly Judg me too bold : if you do, I will say so too ; and so far

commute for my offence, that, though I be more than a hundred Miles from you, and in the eighty-third Year of my age, yet I will forget both, and next Month begin a Pilgrimage to beg your pardon, for, I would dye in your favour : and till then will live,

“ Sir,

“ Your most affectionate

“ Father and Friend,

“ IZAAK WALTON.

“ LONDON, *April 29th*, 1676.”

There is no evidence in either volume to show that Walton ever did perform this pilgrimage.¹ One of the marginal notes that Walton mentions is about the Fishing House : “ There is under this Motto, the Cifer mentioned in the Title-page, and some part of the Fishing House has been described, but, the pleasantness of the river, Mountains and Meadows about it, cannot ; unless Sir Philip Sidney, or Mr. Cotton’s father were again alive to do it.”

In that delightful book, “ The River Dove,”² published by William Pickering, 1847, the

¹ See page 66.

² “ The River Dove, with some Quiet Thoughts on the Happy Practice of Angling.” The Note to the Reader is signed J. L. A. These are the initials of

author seems to have been impressed with the idea that Walton and Cotton had been together in this house, and he gives the following fanciful description of the interior of the house (as supposed to have been seen by them in Cotton's lifetime).

"*Host*. Gentlemen, the door is open !

"*Angler*. This is marvellously contrived ; what a delight for fishers ! all the wainscoting covered with landscapes, and cheerful anglers on the banks of the river, sitting in the shade of rocks, or casting their flies into the stream.

"*Painter*. And fishes most delicately painted on the oak wainscoting.

"*Angler*. Aye, spotted trouts, and graylings done to the life.

"*Host*. And here are the portraits of Mr. Walton and Mr. Cotton, on the panels of the beaufet.

"*Angler*. And indeed very handsome and becoming figures.

"*Host*. Nor could they be more resembling ; there is Mr. Walton in his 'sad coloured suit,' leaning against a rock, who is now going to bait

Mr. John Lavecount Anderson. He afterwards published a series of views of the river Dove and Beresford Hall, 1866.

his hooks ; and Mr. Cotton has his fly rod in his hand, and a waiting boy behind with his landing net.

"*Angler.* Is this the portrait of Mr. Walton, designed by the gentleman architect from Nottingham ?

"*Host.* The same ; then Mr. Rolston undertook to paint this of Mr. Cotton, to be a companion picture to him he loves so dearly.

"*Painter.* I declare I have never seen anything to please me more. They are worthy of each other."

The following notes indicate its progress towards total destruction and its restoration :

In 1784 Mr. White of Crickhowel supplied Sir John Hawkins with the following description : "It had in the centre a square black marble table. . . . In the right-hand corner stood a large beaufet with folding doors on which were painted the portraits of Walton and Cotton attended by a servant boy. It was then considerably decayed, especially in the wainscoting and the paintings."

In 1811 Mr. Major gives an account of it

written by Mr. W. H. Pepys, in which he says "it was fast going to decay. . . . Against the door on the inside were three large fragments of the table itself, which were of the Black Dove Dale marble."

In 1814 Mr. Bagster found it "much dilapidated, the windows unglazed, and the wainscot and pavement gone."

In 1824 another writer says: "The windows are destroyed, the doors decayed and without fastenings . . . and the vane nodding to its fall."

In 1825 Mr. Jesse informs us that "the manor-hall and eighty-four acres of land were sold to Viscount Beresford for £5,500. About that time it was restored."

In 1838 it was reported by Shipley and Fitzgibbon as being "nearly in the same state as when the original constructor described it."

In 1844 (or thereabout) Mr. James Thorne says: "There it stands as fresh, as perfect and neat as when he (Viator) stepped into it. . . . There is something quite charming about its new-old look."

In 1884 the "Amateur Angler" had something to say about it, and now

In 1902 he ventures to put forth the preceding and following remarks.

Perhaps it is not sacrilegious to say that we saw within also a modern split-cane fishing rod and other utensils which suggested the desirability of keeping the door locked. I was sorry to see, however, that not only was the door locked, but the wicket gate which leads to the enclosure has just now had a new lock attached to it ; it did not appear quite finished, and so luckily for us it was not locked, and we had the pleasure of sitting on the seats that surround the two lime trees that guard the entrance to rest our weary limbs and to eat our luncheon in peace and contentment.

I suppose there is something to be said in favour of locking this approach, and so excluding excursionists on the ground of possible damage to the property. My own impression is that excursionists are generally very harmless, and damage is far more likely to arise from resentment caused by too rigid exclusiveness than by letting things remain as they were. I own I should have felt myself wronged, and I should have been cruelly disappointed, had I found

that gate locked, and so have been shut out from even an outside view of this venerable shrine.

It is pleasant to see that the present proprietor is again planting trees and shrubs and flowers in the surrounding grounds, and when another summer comes they will present a bright and comely appearance to scenes already so grand and imposing in their natural beauty.

The sight and the scene brought vividly to my mind the memory of days gone by, and on departing I took off my hat and saluted, as all good anglers should, with a conviction that I may never look on the enchanting picture again.

In Part I. I have described the scene as follows :

“ On leaving the cottage we suddenly came upon as lovely a bit of the river as is to be found anywhere. Here nature has at some not very recent period been helped by art ; here are rustic stiles and seats,

‘ For talking age and whispering lovers made,

and here and there beds of rhododendron, *lignum-vitæ*, and other shrubs and plants tastefully arranged, though now neglected.”

The scene is altered now; the neglect I noticed then seems to have been perpetuated, but there is now an indication of a revival.

Next on our pilgrimage down Beresford Dale we came upon Pike Pool. The Pike stands in the midst of its pool, more covered with moss, and its head now overshadowed by the branches of trees which at the time of my last visit were not so prominent.

On the Staffordshire side, high up among the rocks, is a cleft called Cotton's Cave, and not far away is "Lover's Leap," a sheer and awful precipice much grander than that in Dove Dale. On the top of it is what was once, perhaps, a garden where the two anglers sat and smoked their pipes (so says Mr. Sheldon).

In the fifth edition of "The Compleat Angler" it was delightful to find the following paragraph written by Izaak Walton himself in a marginal note to *Cotton's volume* :

"It is a rock in the fashion of a spire steeple, and almost as big. It stands in the midst of the river Dove, and not far from Mr. Cotton's house, below which place this delicate river takes a swift career betwixt many mighty rocks,

much higher and bigger than St. Paul's Church before it was burnt."

And then Walton goes on :

"And this Dove, being opposed by one of the highest of them, has at last forced itself a way through it, and *after a mile's concealment* appears again with more glory and beauty than before that opposition, running through the most pleasant valleys and most fruitful meadows that this nation can justly boast of."

"This," says Mr. Thorne, "is an entire mistake. The Dove is nowhere *concealed*, and it is not easy to tell how Walton could have so erred."

My impression is, that in using the word *concealment* Walton did not mean hidden underground like the Manifold, but that it is obscured by those "mighty rocks" and woods between which its sinuous course is hidden.

Beresford Dale possesses beauties of its own, which have been so often described by more gifted pens than mine, that I need not make an attempt which could only end in failure. The only incident that interrupted our walk down

this dale was the shriek of a rabbit on the other side of the river. A stoat had seized and was clinging to his throat. One of us threw a stone at him, and the stoat quitted his prey, and was off like a shot into the river-bank, but the rabbit lay dead on the green grass.

"Beneath the quaint little manor-house of Wolfscote Grange," says Mr. Sheldon, "stands one of the boldest bluffs of rock, and at the foot of it is a cavern named 'Frank's i' the Rock,' and so called on account of a man bearing that name, who lived in it many years with his wife, and had eleven children there." This is elsewhere called Franklin Rock (see illustration).

A little farther down we found the Staffordshire side impassable, and so crossed over by a very picturesque bridge called Wolfscote Bridge to the Peak of Derbyshire side. It forms a delightful picture when viewed from the open meadow below, overhung as it is by the green foliage of large trees forming a lovely background.

On our left, as we pass down the dale, we come upon an enormous rough-looking mountain with a horse-road leading from it to the

Photo by

WOLFSKOTE BRIDGE AND FRANKLIN ROCK, BERESFORD DALE.

(The angler here represented is the celebrated John Fosbrooke.)

[G. N. Bankart.

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bridge. This is called HANSON TOOT ; it is the mountain down which, on their way from Ashbourne to Beresford, came "Piscator" and "Viator" :

"*Pisc.* You will like it worse presently when you come to the brow of the Hill, and now we are there, what think you ?

"*Viat.* What do I think ? Why I think it is the strangest place that ever sure Men, and Horses went down, and that (if there be any safety at all) the safest way is to alight.

"*Pisc.* I think so too for you, who are mounted upon a Beast not acquainted with these slippery stones. . . . If you please, my Man shall lead your Horse.

"*Viat.* Marry, Sir, and I thank you too, for I am afraid I shall have enough to do to look to my self ; and with my Horse in my hand should be in a double fear, both of breaking my neck, and my Horse's falling on me, for it is as steep as a penthouse.

"*Pisc.* To look down from hence it appears so, I confess, but the path winds and turns, and will not be found so troublesom.

"*Viat.* Would I were well down, though ! Hoist thee ! there's one fair slip ! these stones are so slippery I cannot stand ! Yet again ! I think I may best lay my heeles in my neck

and tumble down. . . . Pray, what do you call this Hill we come down ?

“ *Pisc.* We call it *Hanson Toot*.

“ *Viat.* Why, farewell, *Hanson Toot*. I’ll no more on thee. I’ll go twenty miles first.”

Passing down Narrow Dale, which extends from Beresford Dale to Load Mill and Mill Dale, and is truly a barren, wild-looking place with steep and craggy hills, we came upon the Fish Hatchery, which on my last visit was quite new, having only just been erected by Sir Henry Allsopp, and was in full working order. Now, alas ! it is in a state of absolute ruin, the tanks broken and rotten, the beds overgrown with weeds, altogether presenting an appearance of desolation.

Having refreshed ourselves with tea at Hambleton’s newly-built, very pretty little temperance hotel in Mill Dale, Alstonefield, we proceeded onwards. Here Lord Hindlip, since our last visit, has erected some picturesque cottages for his keepers. Mr. J. P. Sheldon, writing in 1894, says :

“ Immense numbers of young fry have been turned into the river in Lord Hindlip’s domain ;

but of course they soon become free to riparian owners outside its limits, as they migrate up or down stream. The fishing hereabout is excellent."

We met Mr. Lock, the keeper, a friend of all at our hotel. He is a first-rate fly fisherman, and maker of the particular flies to which the Dove trout and grayling are most partial. He astonished us by saying that three days ago he had caught seven brace of fine grayling, whilst we experts of the I. W. could catch none. On telling this to the Master he fully explained the mystery to our entire satisfaction, for we had begun to doubt our own infallibility.

"Pooh!" said he, "anybody can catch those tame fish! They are so strictly preserved up in those wilds that, unlike our wild and preternaturally cautious fish down in the lower waters of the Dove and the Manifold, these highlanders will go madly at anything that is put before them." Thus did the Master seek to soothe our minds and restore our equanimity.

As we approached Dove Holes, the northern entrance to Dove Dale, the shades of evening

began to close over us, leaving us just sufficient light to bring out the magnificent rock on the right, and show with distinctness the grim outline of a lion's head, which gives it its name, "The Lion Rock." "The Dove Holes" are two immense caverns in the rocks on the left. We explored one of them, and found it to be a convenient cave for shelter in a storm.

"Ilam Rock" is seen farther on, with the singular stone block called "The Watchbox," seated on the highest pinnacle of the rock and overhanging it. Our companion once saw a foolhardy fellow standing and waving his arms on the top of this pulpit. Here the Dale takes a turn, and we come upon that huge rocky pillar which is called "Pickering Tor."

The path at best was slippery, and oftentimes rocky. We had hoped by way of diversion to run up to "Reynard's Cave," but when we got to the foot we thought better of it, and so we passed on, and it grew darker and darker. The cave known as the "Kitchen" I take to be the cave which is not visible until you have ascended and passed through the enormous arch which is at least

Photo by]

[R. & R. Bull, Ashbourne.

NEAR THE LOVER'S LEAP, DOVE DALE.

forty feet high; then you come upon the "Kitchen," which is a very cosy little place. And there it was that Reynard, the robber, used to broil his chop and stew his potatoes.

The path grew rougher and steeper; we had frequently to cling to each other for support; and by the time we had reached the top of the Sharplow Cliff (I think it is so called), above the Lover's Leap, it was pitch dark and the owls were flitting about on their noiseless wings, now and again hooting their weird shrill notes. It was there I saw in the distance a glimmering white light, which I at once pronounced to be "Will o' the Wisp" (*ignis fatuus*) or "Jack o' Lantern." I was undeceived, however, as we advanced, feeling our way foot by foot along the brow of the hill, because it just as slowly and steadily approached us instead of receding (as "Will o' the Wisps" generally do). When at last it came up to us, or we came up to it, we found it was a sheet of white notepaper stuck on the end of a stake. On striking a light we read these ominous words:

"We have waited here till six o'clock to help

carry you home. Couldn't wait any longer.
Do take care of yourselves.

(Signed) "DAISY E."

The "Will o' the Wisp" proved to be our little friend Daisy, who had come to meet us with her great friend, the Master; they returned before it became very dark, leaving this note of warning behind them.

The descent of this Sharplow Cliff is dangerous by daylight, for a false step may send you rolling down over the rocks and into the river. Our guide, knowing every step and stone, helped me along, and we soon found ourselves safe and well in the welcome shelter of "The Izaak Walton." And so, for me, ended a memorable day.

The mention of owls in the woods reminds me of a delightful article on owls in "The Nineteenth Century" for this month, November, 1902, by Mr. R. Bosworth Smith. He tells us that there are "three varieties of the bird which are to be found in England: the white, the brown, and the long-eared owl."

The white owl is also known as the barn-owl, the screech owl because of his rasping,

piercing shriek. The brown or tawny owl is the one whose "most musical, most melancholy" tu-who-oo we heard in the woods. The following lines from Tennyson are quoted by Mr. Smith :

"I would mock thy chant anew ;
But I cannot mimic it ;
Not a whit of thy tu-whoo,
Thee to woo to thy tu-whit,
Thee to woo to thy tu-whit,
With a lengthen'd loud halloo,
Tu-whoo, tu-whit, tu-whit, tu-whoo-o-o."

Mr. Smith plainly shows in his charming essay that these three kinds of owls, all of which are most destructive of rats and mice, are wholly innocent of the crimes of which all gamekeepers accuse them. He concludes by a strong appeal for their strict preservation.

Meanwhile, during our absence, the Master had gone forth to fish in the lower waters of the Dove, down Okeover way, and there met with adventure after adventure, piled on each other like Ossa upon Pelion. I cannot remember them all, but I think his first loss was his pipe, then his tobacco pouch, and then he lost his lunch, a packet of sandwiches, which fell into

the water—which, by the way, might possibly have been the cause of the marvellous adventure which befell him lower down. He was wading, when all of a sudden he came upon the most extraordinary rise of fishes in a pool that he had ever seen in the most rampant May Fly season—scores of them were bobbing up on all sides of him, and “ne’er a graylin’ amang ’em,” as said the keeper who witnessed the scene from the bank. It occurred to me—that this packet of sandwiches, gradually swept down by the stream into this trout pool, might have been the true cause of the commotion among them—who knows? Let some one try the experiment by throwing away his own lunch into the stream and watch for results! But the most extraordinary event that happened to the Master on that eventful day was that, struggling among the slippery stones in the deep, he fell headlong into the water. He scrambled out filled up with water, and nothing dry but his hat, which he picked up, peacefully floating on the surface. He was more than two miles from home. He reached there with all the speed he could muster, slipped into the bathroom, had a hot bath and a change of

raiment, and was in a very short time off to the river again, for he discovered that in his haste he had somewhere lost his waterproof cape. He found it awaiting him, hanging on a bush, and he returned home a happy man, not a bit the worse for his many mishaps.

Wednesday, October 8th.—The only fine day I have had since I came to Dove Dale, and I am glad to be able to report it. My fishing only resulted in a fine trout, which, in obedience to inexorable law, I put back.

Thursday, October 9th.—The very worst day of all—incessant rain all day without cessation. We fished through it all. Result: two small grayling; the Master still vexed by the persistent trout, of which he caught several and threw them back. He also brought home a brace of fine grayling.

Friday, October 10th.—My last fishing day, and a woeful wet one it was. The editor of "The Fishing Gazette," for some purposes of his own, asked me to send him a Dove grayling of a pound or upwards. I tried all I could to get one, but failed to catch one big enough. Our good Master came to the rescue. He hurried off down to the river, and soon returned

with a lovely grayling, weight 1 lb. 3 oz., which he was good enough to present to me, and it was immediately despatched to Mr. Editor.

On Saturday, October 11th, I was obliged reluctantly to say farewell to "The Izaak Walton" and Dove Dale. I conclude this sketch by a brief retrospect of my visit. I had been there for about ten days. My foreboding about the weather was amply justified. It was bad for angling, bad for cycling, bad for touring; but in spite of it all I had during my visit revived so many pleasant associations with the past and found so much enjoyment in the present, I had been treated with so much kindness and attention by mine host and hostess and by all with whom I had been brought in contact, that I must always regard this visit as one which will dwell in my memory as a very agreeable episode in my life.

It should be borne in mind that this, like all my other sketches, is but the record of a few brief holidays snatched from the anxieties and worries incident to all who are involved

"In the hodge-podge of business and money, and care,
And care, and money, and trouble."

The Angler's Song,

It is to such holidays as these that I owe the elasticity of spirit and vigour of bodily health which they have always renewed in me. I have not dared to intermingle my light sketches with moral reflections, because I know that I could not have made them interesting to my readers. I hope, however, I am not devoid of a true spirit of gratitude and thankfulness to the Giver of all good gifts for the measure of good health and other blessings which have accompanied me all the days of my life.

I have avoided any attempt to teach my brother anglers how to angle; I have entered into no discussion as to the breeding of trout or grayling, or as to their times and places for spawning; I have no physiological or mysterious theories as to close times or open times—I only know that it would have vastly added to my enjoyment if I had been fishing in Dove Dale at a time when both trout and grayling were takable. I am aware that the Trent Conservancy Board, who are supposed to conserve the main river and its tributaries, are, or ought to be, very strict in their enforcement of the law as to the close time for trout from and after October 2nd; but my own experience,

and that of the other anglers whom I have met here, is that that date is unnecessarily early. All the trout taken by us were in perfect condition, and if the close time for trout had been October 15th instead of October 2nd, I am sure that I should have had a different story to tell. I suppose it may be taken for granted that trout in the same river do not all spawn at the same time—some are early, some late, and some barren. Of course, it is at all times a thrilling and pleasant sensation to have a struggle with a big trout, even when he rises to your grayling fly, and the grayling are sulking on the bottom; but one's pleasure is just a little modified by the pain one cannot avoid inflicting on the trout in extracting the hook, and the grief one cannot help feeling in parting with him by consigning him to his native element instead of to one's bag.

“Well, Mr. *Painter*!” says *Angler*, in “The River Dove,” “what say you now to my Dove?”

“*Painter*. I declare to you it is all a bewitchment: my tongue is ever ready to praise every next turning of the river more than the other; and I scarcely know which to like best,

Photo by]

TISSINGTON SPIRES.

[R. & R. Bull, Ashbourne.

this angling or the landskips. Look you! There again are rocks springing up like steeples on this side and on that; it is all full of surprises.

“*Angler.* Those Rocks are called ‘The Tissington Spires,’ for that retired village lies but the distance of a walk to the left. . . . So now I have brought you within a view of Thorpe Cloud.

“*Painter.* Is that Thorpe Cloud? Well, he is more changeable than Proteus; for here he looks like a beheaded cone.

“*Angler.* And now, brother, you are come towards the end of the Dale.

“*Painter.* Tell me not this sad news! . . . or if we must needs depart, let us first ‘*sit down by the waters and hang our harps upon the Willows, and weep.*’”

Now I too must say adieu to Dove Dale and its sweet stream, and close my account of this my short and last visit with these lines from “The Retirement,” by Charles Cotton :

“Oh, my beloved nymph, fair Dove!
Princess of rivers! how I love
Upon thy flow’ry banks to be;
And view thy silver stream,
When gilded by the summer’s beam!

And in it all thy wanton fry,
Playing at liberty ;
And with my angle, upon them
The all of treachery
I ever learnt, industriously to try."

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