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By Robert

L. Ishung

THE
MODERN ANGLER,

BEING A
PRACTICAL TREATISE

ON THE
ART OF FISHING, &c.

IN A
SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND,

Salter, Robert

When with his lively Ray the potent Sun
Has pierc'd the Streams, and rous'd the finny Race,
Then, issuing cheerful, to thy Sport repair.

Thompson's Seasons.

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1890

MODERN AMERICAN

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THE
MODERN ANGLER.

LETTER I.

To the Rev. MORGAN PRYSE.

Dear Sir,

I NOT only comply with your request, but shall derive much pleasure in imparting to you the knowledge I have obtained in the course of twenty years practice in the art of angling, during the early part of which, the frequent opportunities I have met with of collecting information from many of the most experienced of that time, induced

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me to commit their hints to writing, not with any intention of making them public, but merely to render them conducive to my own amusement. The most delightful part of the art being still enveloped in obscurities that are sufficient to deter a young artist from indulging in an amusement apparently so difficult, I shall, at your solicitation, arrange those hints in the best manner in my power, to convey to you the most useful information on the subject. With those which successful practice has proved to be well advised, I shall unite every useful discovery that has been acquired by my own observation.

Without troubling you with any tedious digressions, or useless recitals, I shall endeavour to remove the apparent difficulties in the art of Fly-fishing, by explaining a pretended *secret*, the possession of which is so much boasted of by some anglers whose vanity would lead them to be placed above competition, but which in reality is nothing more than a general knowledge

knowledge acquired by observation, how to vary or change their flies according to the season, the hour of the day, or the state of the water they fish upon. This is the great and mighty *secret*, and I leave it to them to enjoy the delusion.

If in the course of my communication the hints I give shall be found by your future experience worthy adoption, it will be an ample gratification to me to hear that you have participated in the enjoyment of them.

The difficulties of procuring and preparing materials for fly-making you will find in a great measure removed, as I deem it quite unnecessary to lead you far from home to provide them.

The art of pike and trout-trolling, which has hitherto been so little noticed, though in point of amusement scarcely excelled by fly-fishing, I shall carefully explain, and annex a plate to direct the size of your hooks, and give, to the best

of my power, such other information as
may enable you to become a complete
and a fair angler.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient,

Humble Servant,

ROBERT SALTER.

LETTER

LETTER II.

To *****.

Dear Sir,

Before I proceed to instruct you in the different methods of angling, I conceive it to be highly necessary that you become somewhat acquainted with the dispositions and appetites of the inhabitants of that element which is to be the scene of your future amusement. I shall therefore describe only such fishes that are worth an angler's notice, and begin alphabetically with the

BLEAK.

ALBURNUS, of the species of *cyprinus*. A small fish that seldom exceeds five inches; is found in most of the large rivers, has large bright scales, spawns in March, is a lively fish, and affords much diversion in the hot months, in deep, still water, generally feeding near the surface, where

where they will take almost any small fly that is cast for them; and are good baits for the pike.

B R E A M.

BRAMA; of the species of *cyprius*. A very deep, but thin fish, the scales remarkably large, the rays of the fins black, are mostly bred in pools, swim and feed in shoals, which social disposition is technically termed gregarious, they seldom exceed three pounds weight. The flesh is insipid and very little esteemed; spawns in June, must be angled for at the bottom of the deepest part of the pool with either worms, maggots, or stewed malt. If you bait the spot a few days before you fish your sport will be greatly encreased.

The mornings till ten, and evenings from about six o'clock will generally be found the best time to angle for them in summer.

CARP.

CARP.

CYPRINUS; of the genus of *malacopterygii*. The order of cyprinus contains nineteen species, the distinguishing characters of which are, according to Artedi, the branchiostegæ membrane on each side contains three small bones; the mouth is toothless except two serrated bones that are placed near the orifice of the stomach, which serves instead of teeth for retaining their food, from whence the term leather-mouthed fish is derived.

Carp are mostly bred in pools, though sometimes found in the deep, still parts of rivers, are deep-bodied, and thick, often grow to sixteen pounds weight; the scales are large, and yellow on the sides, the back is ash-colour; the head small, with a single barb at each corner of the mouth; spawn in July, are in season from September to May, and are greatly esteemed. Will live long out of their element, if taken after sun-setting in the summer, or in mild weather in the winter, and may be removed alive in safety

to

to a great distance, packed with clean wheat or oat straw, in a basket or cart, which is a far better method of conveyance for storing waters, than in a water barrel, as large fish by the agitation of the water, will be bruised against the sides of the vessel.

Being a subtle and wary fish, great attention should be observed in preparing your tackle and baits. The small ones generally bite eagerly.

In open water you must angle for them near the bottom, but at midwater among weeds. Use a small float, and make your tackle as fine as you dare trust it. They will bite at all hours, except in the middle of hot days. Their baits I shall describe when treating on that head.

CHUB.

CEPHALUS; of the species of *cyprinus*. When full grown weighs about eight pounds; is found in most large rivers:
in

in form he much resembles a trout, excepting his head, which is broader and much shorter, his scales are large and bright, the belly-fins red, spawns in May, and feeds in shoals. The chub takes all the baits that the trout is fond of in the summer, and in the cold months, others that will be found described in their proper places.

From the beginning of May to the end of September he is a soft and insipid fish, but in December and January is very little, if any, inferior to a Carp; does not afford the angler so much diversion as the trout, being so dull a fish, that when once hooked is soon tired.

DARE OR DACE.

LEUCISCUS; of the species of *cyprinus*.
A fish that greatly resembles a small chub, but is formed much finer at the head; found in most rivers, is seldom known to weigh above half a pound, spawns in March, swims in shoals, and
from

from about a fortnight after the spawning season takes the same flies as the trout. Is a soft and insipid fish in summer, but in the cold months is much better.

E E L.

ANGUILLA; of the species of *muræna*. The branchiostege membrane on each side contains ten slender and curved bones; has a long smooth slender body, covered with a strong skin, without scales; having but three fins, two pectoral, and a single back fin, which beginning at some distance from the head, runs along the back to the tail, and returns again underneath as far as the anus.

Eels are found in all our rivers and most of the pools, and will sometimes weigh six pounds; they vary in colour from a sooty hue to a light olive green, and those that are distinguished by their white bellies and ash-colored backs are called silver eels. About the middle of March they first appear, and being very voracious.

voracious, devour every thing within their power, such as small gudgeons, loaches, minnows, miller's-thumbs, worms, &c. &c. and about the latter end of September retire to hollow banks, roots of trees, mud, weeds, or any other place that will afford them protection in this torpid state, as they are not known to take any bait until March.

There is an opinion existing that all eels go to the sea every Michaelmas, and return again in the spring, but that I am convinced is a mistaken one. Naturalists have not yet decided when, or how they spawn: some of them inform us they are viviparous, and others that they are oviparous; Aristotle's opinion was, there is no difference of sex in eels, but that they are "promiscuously generated "in mud banks from slime," &c. and many other tales equally curious are told, but the doctrine of equivocal generation being now so universally exploded, there is no doubt, that all animals are produced by the copulation of
parents

parents like themselves, which must satisfy you that although the season of their propagation is not yet ascertained, that is not a reason sufficient to deny the existence of it. In rivers the eel bites most freely when the water is discolored, and requires strong tackle.

FLOUNDER.

PASSER FLUVIATILIS. A well known broad, flat fish, found in all the rivers that have an immediate communication with the sea; seldom exceeds three pounds weight, are without scales, their flesh firm and much esteemed; spawn in May, and swim in shoals; bite freely at all hours of the day, but particularly so on the rise of the water, taking any small worm that is cast for them near the bottom.

Flounders are profitable fish to stock ponds with, as they soon grow fat, and will live many hours out of the water, consequently may be carried to a great distance

distance, but will not breed when confined.

GRAYLING.

THYMALLUS; of the species of *Salmo*. A river fish that in figure nearly resembles the dace, but is rather finer at the nose and near the tail, which is much forked; are rarely seen above four pounds weight, spawn in April, and are in the greatest perfection in October, at which time they are the only kind worthy a fly-fisher's notice, and their flavor is highly esteemed. The scales are rather large which in the summer months are bright, divided by lateral lines, interspersed with black spots, the posterior dorsal fin is adipose. At the approach of the cold season their backs become darker, and the sides and gills lose their brightness, become clouded with brown shades, and, contrary to all other fish, are least beautiful when most in season.

In the summer they take all the flies that the trout are fond of, and delight
B
in

in the same streams, but in September retire in shoals to the lower end of still bays, just where the water becomes shallow, where they will take a fly at the top, but if you angle below the surface it should be as near to the bottom as possible, with a maggot, wasp-grub, or small red worm.

GUDGEON.

Of the species of *cyprinus*. A small river fish about five inches long, has large bright scales interspersed with black spots, small head, a single barb at each corner of the mouth, is a good flavored fish, but very bony; spawns in May, is found invariably in shoals, and must be angled for near the bottom with fine tackle baited with small worms or maggots.

LOACH, OR GROUNDLING.

COBITIS; of the genus of *malacopterygii*: distinguished by having soft fins that are not prickly. A small fish that rarely exceeds three inches in length, without

without scales, has three barbs at the mouth; spawns in April, and never moves far from the bottom, unless when disturbed, where they may be taken, with a small worm, maggot, or codbait.

MILLER'S THUMB.

CORRUS; of the genus of *acanthopterygii*: distinguished by having six ossicles in the branchiostege membrane. The head is prickly and broader than the body, which seldom exceeds three inches in length, a disproportion which forms a very unpleasant appearance; spawns in April, is found in gravelly brooks and rivers, always at the bottom, and chiefly under large stones, where they may be easily taken with small worms, &c.

MINNOW.

Of the species of *cyprinus*. A small fish about three inches long, has small scales, spawns in May, bites freely all hours of the day about midwater, at small worms, maggots, codbaits, &c.

mostly frequenting eddies, where they are generally found in shoals.

My principal reason for mentioning the minnow, loach, and miller's thumb, was to inform you how you may supply yourself with baits for trout-trolling.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

R. S.

LETTER

LETTER III.

To *****

Dear Sir,

P E A R C H.

PERCA; of the genus of *thoracici*. The distinguishing characters are, the branchiostege membrane contains seven bones, and the ventral fins placed under the pectoral:

The perch is a delicate eating fish, mostly bred in pools, but often found in the deep parts of large rivers; hog-backed, on which are placed two fins, the rays of the dorsal are very strong and sharp. Notwithstanding the defence this formidable weapon may enable them to make, the pike will as eagerly take them as any other small fish. The posterior fin is extremely soft and flexible, the pectoral and ventral fins red; they have five dark shades that cross their

backs to the middle of their sides, the scales are large, firm, and serrated, the mouth rather small, and their jaws rough; seldom exceeding five pounds in weight; spawn in May, soon after which season they afford great diversion from five o'clock in the morning until nine, and from three in the afternoon until sunset, but in winter the middle of the day is the proper time to angle for them.

The best baits in summer are large worms, minnows, and small fry, when you bait with either of the latter, put your hook under the back fin, and it will remain alive a long time. In the winter they take codbaits, maggots, and paste; generally feed in shoals, and must be angled for about midwater with strong tackle and a large float, they do not swallow the bait quick, therefore some time must be given them before you strike,

PIKE

PIKE.

LUCIUS ESUX; of the genus of *abdominales*: the distinguishing character is the ventral fins being placed behind the pectoral. A very fierce and ravenous fish, whose body is rather long, the head broad and flat, terminating in the form of a duck's beak, the mouth remarkably wide, the upper and lower jaws armed with a tripple row of strong and sharp teeth, nor does the tongue, which is large and flat, appear less terrible, it being covered with strong retaining teeth quite to the orifice of the stomach, the back appears of a greenish cast irregularly shaded with yellow stripes, which have, when they are first taken, a beautiful appearance, the shades continue down the sides, but are less distinct, and the dorsal fin is placed low on the back.

The pike spawn in March, at which season they retire to weeds, ditches, or any other quiet place, where if not disturbed they will continue a week

or ten days, which grants a short respite to the scaly race, for during that time they will not take any bait. They are remarkable for longevity, and many have been caught above thirty pounds weight.

R O A C H.

CARASSIUS; of the species of *cyprinus*. A fish bred in rivers and ponds, formed very deep but thin, seldom exceeds a pound and half weight, the scales are large and bright, head small, large eyes and the iris red; spawns in May, but are not in season until September, from which time to April they are good fish.

They take small worms, pastes, and maggots under water, but never rise at a fly.

S A L M O N.

SALMO; of the genus of *malacopterygii*. The branchiostegæ membrane on each side contains twelve bones. The salmon is a fish universally and deservedly in high estimation,

estimation, bred in fresh water, but spend much of their time in the sea; beautifully formed, sharp at the nose, and broadest at the dorsal fin, from whence they gradually become finer towards the tail, which is forked; the posterior fin is adipose, their teeth are strong though not numerous; are in the greatest perfection from January to July, at which time their backs are ash-color, belly and sides delicately white interspersed with black spots, and their scales moderately large. As they go out of season their spots gradually become red, the gill-covers red, brown, and yellow, forming an unhealthy appearance, and the sides and belly become irregularly clouded with dusky shades.

As rivers differ some weeks in their seasons all salmon do not go out at the same time; they generally spawn in November, the fry from which in March following are about five inches long, at which time, they being lively fish afford the angler great diversion, with small

small flies, worms, codbaits, and maggots.

The salmon are restless fish, never remaining long in one place. As soon as the fry are grown strong enough to attempt a removal, which is generally about the middle of April, they take the earliest opportunity that high water affords to make their first excursion to the sea, and in August following return to the rivers, having grown in that short time to one or two pounds weight each.

The difficulties which they will surmount as their spawning season approaches to get up to the tops of rivers, is astonishing, and their efforts to get over weirs and cataracts almost incredible. Having arrived in shallow water they there meet their greatest foe and become an easy prey to every lurking poacher, who, not regarding their worthless condition, with nets, spears, and fires attack, and destroy them by day and
night

night, which in some rivers nearly exterminates the species.

I have read of their having been caught in "*baskets tied to the ends of poles,*" and of "*women catching them in their aprons,*" and these marvellous tales are still told seriously, but am convinced I need not point out the absurdity of them.

Salmon have been caught above forty pounds weight, but how long they are attaining that size, is, I believe, impossible to determine, as they must return to the salt water soon after spawning, or they will pine and die.

SAMLET, OR BRANLIN.

SALMULUS; of the species of *salmo*. A small fish, highly esteemed, rarely exceeds six inches in length, is found in all rivers where salmon go up to spawn, but never in any other, yet are clearly different fish, as they never quit the fresh water. Very much resemble small trout, except their color, having
five

five dark shades that cross their backs, with two red spots in each; their belly and sides white; the posterior fin adipose; spawn in October, and are in season from March to September. They eagerly take all the small baits that the trout is partial to, frequent the most rapid streams, and afford the angler great diversion.

TENCH.

TINCA; of the species of *cyprinus*. Is rarely found in rivers, being so easily caught with nets, that they have but little chance of acquiring a good size there, but when bred in pools that are protected from the depredation of poachers by the authority of the owners, they often grow to six or seven pounds weight. Their form is short, deep, and thick, with small scales, the back ash, the belly and the sides gold color; they are greatly and deservedly esteemed, being in flavor inferior to none.

The tench was formerly stiled the *Physician*

fician of fishes, and the opinion is handed down to the present day, of a supposed “natural balsam which he carries about him, that will cure both himself and others.” I cannot persuade myself to give such an opinion a serious thought, unless his commentators will either prove it by analysis, or produce his *diploma*. Every different species being enemies to each other, it cannot be supposed that a fish so timid as the tench, would passively admit the approach of the pike, for even the gregarious kinds will not endure a familiarity with each other at any time except in the spawning season.

The tench spawn in July, and are in season from August to June. Must be angled for near the bottom, where they bite freely at all the small baits that you will find directed for pool-fishing.

TROUT.

TRUTTA ; of the species of *malacopterygii*. A fish well known in almost every river in Great Britain. Those that are
c.
caught

caught in rapid streams generally cut white, but those that are taken in slow, deep rivers, especially when they run through boggy or turbury lands, are red as salmon, which fish they resemble more than any other in shape. Their backs are ash-color, the posterior fin adipose, the sides yellow, beautifully decorated with red spots when in season, which is from March to September, and in some rivers till October. The mouth is large, and armed with a great number of teeth; spawn in November, and as that season approaches, like the salmon, make the greatest efforts to gain the source of the river, after which season they speedily return, but not to sport in the streams, as from that time until February they pass their time in solitude in the most retired places they can find, lean, unsavory, and unwholesome, seldom can be seen, and a prey to vermin* that seem to grow on their sides, in numbers incalculable. Thus passes nearly one fourth of his existence "the monarch of the

* The *Pediculus Aquaticus*

"brook"

"brook," until roused from his torpor by the appearance of returning spring, he quits his dreary abode, resumes his former haunts, and, with renovated vigor, prefers the most rapid streams to feed in, inviting you to enjoy your leisure hours in an amusement that is the most delightful and rational of all the rural recreations.

Before I conclude, it is necessary to inform you that both river and pool fishes often will vary a fortnight in their spawning seasons, consequently the best method of describing it, is, to ascertain as nearly as possible the medium.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

R. S.

LETTER IV.

To *****

Dear Sir,

Having enumerated all the river and pool fishes I am acquainted with, that are worth your attention, I shall next proceed to describe to you the most pleasant methods of making them contribute to your diversion.

Before I begin a catalogue of baits, some attention should be paid to the preparation of your tackle. The structure of your rod requires particular attention, especially for fly fishing, consequently it claims my first notice; the length of which does not depend upon the breadth of the river where it is to be used; a rod twelve feet long will cast a fly-line of fourteen yards, unless the wind be very unfavorable, but if it is to carry a reel-line, fourteen feet
are

are not too much. I advise you never to encumber yourself with an unnecessary weight of wood, as the great advantage of a light rod is, that of having it in your power to use it with either hand, which will enable you to cast your fly under bushes, hollow banks, &c. without endangering your tackle, for near those places the largest trout are generally found. The shorter the joints are when taken to pieces, the more portable it is of course, but the fewer joints are in it the better it will open a fly-line.

The lower part may be made of any wood that is tough and straight grained, but in forming the upper part too much attention cannot be paid. As our own country produces variety of wood that will make good tops, and local situations produce advocates for each, I shall mention all the kinds that I am acquainted with; they should be cut about Christmas, and if placed in the open air to season for twelve months, they will be the better for use; (viz.) elder, holly,

mountain-ash, and hip-briar; but the hickary which we import from America far excels either of them, nor is it surpassed by any wood that I know, except the bamboo or hollow cane, which we receive from the West Indies. In making a top of the latter, care should be taken to preserve the outside, that being the most elastic part of it.

I cannot quit this subject without advising you to avoid a custom that is so prevalent, of loading top rods with eight or ten inches of whalebone; why such a whim became adopted I am at a loss to tell, and that so many intelligent anglers continue to follow it, is still more astonishing; a good top rod should be light and elastic, whereas whalebone is dull, heavy, and much too flexible.

As moisture is at all times destructive to wood, it is necessary to guard against its influence on your rod as much as possible; although a shower of rain will not quite spoil it, unless it is protected

tested by a varnish it may soon be deprived of its elasticity, which is the chief requisite of a good fly-rod.

There are many methods practised of preparing varnish, but the best that I have experinced is the following: Half an ounce of shell-lac, and half an ounce of seed-lac, powdered fine in a mortar, put them in seperate vials, with half a pint of good spirits of wine in each, place them in a sand heat to dissolve; during the process, shake the vials often. When each is dissolved, mix them together in a larger bottle, with half an ounce of gum benjamin; encrease the heat and the dregs will subside. Then warm the wood, and with a camel's-hair brush apply that part of the varnish which is become fine; the third coat will remain on the surface, and securely protect the rod from injury.

Rods for bobbing with natural flies, should be made light, and at least fifteen

teen feet long, which will enable you to keep yourself sufficiently out of sight of the fish.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

R. S.

LETTER

LETTER V.

To *****

Dear Sir,

The next article that presents itself is your line, which must be made taper from the top, or it cannot be used with pleasure; a line twelve yards long, should have about thirty-six hairs at the top, and gradually decrease to four or five at the bottom; to which it is usual to fix from one to three yards of indian weed, or silk-worm gut, the former I prefer for this purpose, because it will endure the water much longer than the latter.

On large streams it is not unusual to fish with three, or sometimes four flies at the same time; when you use more than one, be careful to fix them at least two feet from each other.

The

The drop flies should be tied to short links, with a loop at each to fasten it on the line; the first drop should not be more than two inches long, the second three and a half, and the third five inches; if this hint is attended to, it will enable you to fish much finer than if they are all made the same length, as from the inclined position of the line, not an inch of it need touch the water, and each fly will float alike upon the surface.

When drop flies are used, loops to them cannot be dispensed with, but many anglers use a loop at the end of their line to receive another at the link that the point fly is tied to, which is a method I cannot too much condemn, as an idle and slovenly one, for be assured, that proper attention in preparing your tackle neat, and your knots small, will contribute much towards preventing the numerous short rises that are frequently experienced by the nicest anglers.

I have heard some ingenious anglers contend for the preference that stained or colored silk-worm gut is entitled to, which is an opinion that I cannot agree with, and shall take this opportunity of explaining my reason for it.

The color of gut when imported, is I believe, more difficult to be distinguished in the medium between water and light, than any other that has hitherto been substituted; but as proof is more persuasive than precept, boil the outside shells or leaves of walnuts in allum water, and when cold, put into it your gut, and it will in a short time become brown. Boil a few chips of log wood in allum water, and it will stain the gut blue. Then put a small piece of each color, with one that is unstained, into an half pint tumbler of water, place it in the upper part of a window while the sun shines on it, and gradually retire, keeping your eye on the glass until one of them disappears, and then you will be convinced
that

that it requires not the aid of philosophy to decide which color is entitled to the preference.

The choice of hooks being a matter of some consequence in preventing disappointments after you have raised a fish; the staple, or snake bent, and kirby bent, having each their partisans, who with equal warmth contend for the preference; I must advise you never to chuse a hook whose point stands outward, as it will often scratch a fish without laying hold, consequently you lose him; for after being pricked, except a grayling, he will not rise again within two or three hours. If the manufacturers of the staple bent hooks, *could* be persuaded to make their points somewhat shorter, and the barbs a trifle wider, than they generally do, they would then, in my opinion, claim a decided preference.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

R. S.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

To *****

Dear Sir,

Having instructed you in my last the best method I am acquainted with of preparing your tackle, I must next inform you what materials are requisite for fly-making, and how to procure them, (viz.) Hackles plucked from the upper part of the neck of a dun cock in December, observing to keep the light and dark ones separate for their different uses. The same fowl that produces the dark dun hackles in December, will in April or May following furnish you with the grizzle hackle. Such is the effect the air has on these feathers, that from March they gradually become paler until September, when they are cast off; being then a dirty yellow, consequently unfit for use.

The

The long hackles that grow down his back must be saved for the stone fly. Black cock's hackles should be plucked about December.

The pale red cock produces what for distinction I shall term the ginger hackle. The dark red cock produces an hackle which is black at the root, and sometimes, (what is much better for making the marlo buz) a black stripe down the middle of it, which latter feather is rather scarce.

The white cock's hackle should be plucked about Christmas, as it will receive a better stain than if left to grow older. The mealy-grey cock's hackle is white at the points, with a black stripe down the middle.

Various useful hackles are procured from the dun hen, bittern's and grouse's necks, partridge's back, the top-not, or crest of the green plover, and heron's crest; feathers from a wood pecker's back,

the

the back of a brown hen, the back of a pea hen, and woodcock's back; likewise feathers from the wings of the partridge, fieldfare, moor hen, starling, landrail, coot, hen blackbird, and thrush; and the soft feathers from the underside of the woodpigeon's wing. Long feathers from the tails of the cock and hen pheasant, copper color turkey, landrail, partridge, field-fare, and wren. Orl from the peacock's tail, and the black orl from the ostrich; the grey feathers of the mallard, the widgeon, and the mallard teal, will each be found serviceable for different flies.

Materials proper for dubbing are, the blue fur of a fox, blue rabbit, white rabbit, squirrel, water rat, and mole; the finest part of badger's and hedgehog's hair; the brown part of a hare's ear, and the red fur from the neck; spaniel's fur of the same color; otter's fur from his back, light ditto from his belly, the latter should have the long hairs plucked out before it is stripped from

from the skin; black fur that may be procured at the hat-makers, is a good substitute for the ostrich's orel; yellow, lemon-color, orange-color, and dark brown worsted, mohair, or camlet; and gold and silver twist.

Your silk is best preserved on a slip of card about two inches broad: the most useful colors are, white, yellow, lemon, orange, lead, and green, but for flies whose bodies are light colored, and the materials for making them to remain predominant, the barber's silk, is, I believe, unrivalled; it is three fold, and, when divided, so strong, that you can securely dress a neater fly than with any other I have ever used.

There are some articles enumerated in the above list that you will not find mentioned in the catalogue of flies, one reason why I directed so many, is, to give you a choice in collecting them, but the principal one is to prevent you ever being at a loss for materials; when
nearly

nearly provided as above, you may in the absence of those that are described, substitute others to supply the deficiency.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

R. S.

D 3

LETTER.

LETTER VII.

To *****

Dear Sir,

Being now arrived at that part of the amusement, which, to excel in, will require your nicest skill, I must here inform you, that no precise direction can possibly be given for the size of flies; it depends so much on the state of the water you fish upon, that you must be directed by your own observation, in which the following hints may assist you. Rapid streams, that are not deep, and run over fine gravel, are generally very clear, particularly near the source; on such water your fly should be made on a hook No. 9 or 10.—For slow deep streams that are generally discolored, a fly dressed upon a hook No. 5 or 6, is seldom too large.

My

• My catalogue of flies commences with
The BLUE DUN.

which appears about the beginning of March, and with a little variation in color, that will be noticed in its proper place, may be used with great success the whole season; its wings stand upright, are made of the feather of a starling's wing, the body of the blue fur of a fox, mixed with a little yellow camlet; at this time it must not be made too light, as it becomes paler as the season advances; is now used from ten o'clock in the forenoon until two. It is often made with a light dun hackle, instead of wings, but if used where a large one is required, it should have wings, and a small hackle.

The MARLO BUZ.

Appears, and is now taken about the same time as the blue dun. It is a good fly the whole season, especially at the clearing of the water after a flood. At its first appearance, must be made with a pale-red cock's hackle, that is black at
the

the root, the body of peacock's orl, but as the season advances, the hackle must be chosen darker. In bright weather, and clear water, it is often varied with great success until the middle of April, with ostrich's orl, ribbed with silver twist.

The CAMLET FLY.

Appears about the middle of March, and continues three weeks, it is a small fly, and must be used only in cold weather; its wings are made of the pale blue feather from the under side of the wood-pidgeon's wing, and the body of yellow camlet; it is best taken from ten o'clock to two.

The STONE FLY.

Is first seen early in March, and continues on the water until the middle of June. The general opinion among anglers that it never appears until the middle of April, is a mistaken one; the reason that induces me to be particular in the date, is to remove the error.

ror, by stating a circumstance that I have witnessed: on March the eighth when sitting by a stream to repair my line, I observed a stone fly crawling upon the gravel, which excited my curiosity so far as to make trial of an artificial one, the consequence of which was, great diversion from half past eleven until one, when the trout ceased rising; it was on a deep slow stream, that is generally tinged with red turbury water, but I have never found so much success on rapid streams with it so early in the season.

This fly is near an inch long, the body is made of the brown fur of a hare's ear, mixed with nearly the same quantity of yellow camlet, ribbed with yellow silk, the underside is much paler at the head than tail; it has four wings, which lie flat on its back, that are made of a pea-hen's feather, with a grizzle hackle wrapped twice around under them. Is often made with the grizzle hackle from a cock's back, without

out wings. It is an excellent fly for bobbing on deep streams, with a fine line two yards long, and the hook No. 5.

The MARCH BROWN.

Appears about the middle of March, and continues at least six weeks; the wings, which are upright, are made of the shaded feather of a partridge's tail, or the feather from the back of a brown hen; the body, of the brown fur of a hare's ear, mixed with a small proportion of lemon-color mohair. On dull streams, where a large one is required, it should have a partridge's hackle wrapped thrice around under the wings. If a small one is used as a drop fly, the hackle from a partridge's back is preferable to wings. It will not arise fish so early as the blue dun and marl buz, consequently should not at its first appearance be used before eleven or twelve o'clock.

The

The COW-DUNG FLY.

Appears early in March, but is seldom used with success until the latter end of the month; it will raise fish in cold, windy afternoons, until the beginning of May. Is a small fly, of a dirty orange color, the body of which is short and thick, and made of orange color mohair, the wings, which lie flat on its back, of the feather of a partridge's wing, when that is not easily procured, a small ginger hackle is a good substitute.

This fly is not peculiar to the water, neither do I believe it is bred there; being an insect incapable of sustaining a long flight, the numbers that are beat down by the wind in attempting to cross the streams, is probably the principal incentive to the trouts' fondness for it: swarms of them are frequently observed in pasture lands about the ordure of that animal from whence its name is derived.

March

March being the most variable month in the season for fly-fishing, renders it necessary to inform you, that the frosts occasioned by north, or easterly winds, will often cause a fortnight's difference in the appearance of the flies; therefore in a mild season you must expect them much earlier than in a cold one; and in a southern latitude earlier than that of a northern.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

R. S.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

To *****

Dear Sir,

At the commencement of April the blue dun must be used the first fly in the morning, and about the middle of the month becomes a good evening fly to the end of July. The stone fly should be used earlier in the morning and later in the evening as the season advances.

About the middle of the month the March brown may be used from ten till sun-setting.

The PEACOCK FLY.

Appears early in April, and continues about six weeks. It is a good fly in cloudy, warm weather, and will raise fish almost all the day. The body is made of peacock's orl, the wings, which

E

are

are nearly upright, of a pea-hen's feather, with a small dark dun hackle wrapped thrice around under them. The wings may be made with the feather of a brown hen, or for droppers, with a dark dun hackle, without wings.

The SAND FLY.

Appears early in April. Too much cannot be said in praise of this excellent fly, as from its first appearance it may be used all hours of the day, until the middle of July. Its wings are made of the feather of a landrail's wing, the body of the brightest part of hare's neck, ribbed with orange color silk. For small droppers, I prefer a ginger hackle, or the wren's tail formed as an hackle, to wings.

The GRAVEL FLY.

Appears in great numbers about the latter end of April. Its continuance on the water is seldom above fourteen days. Though a fly that the trout are remarkably fond of, regular diversion is rarely met

met with during its appearance, warm weather inviting them to the shores in swarms, from whence the gentlest breeze wafts them to the stream, where every fish that feed on flies are eagerly employed in devouring them until satiated, when the largest trouts retire to their holts, where they generally pass some hours, consequently little sport can be expected with artificial flies, while the trout do so gorge themselves with the natural ones. But on a windy day, which prevents them from appearing, being tender insects, the artificial fly is generally used with success. I have frequently tried it with most advantage after the natural ones have disappeared, even so long as a fortnight.

It is a small fly; the body is made with lead-color silk, a little waxed, the wings of a pea-hen or brown hen's feather, with a plover's top wrapped thrice around under them.

The DOWN FLY.

The last week in April, this beautiful small fly appears, about twelve o'clock, and never remains above an hour each day; nearly white as snow, and seldom continues above a week. Its body is made with white-rabbit's fur, the wings, which are nearly upright, of any soft white feather, with a small white hackle wrapped twice around under them.

This fly, from the shortness of its duration, might be considered beneath your notice, still I must not omit it, as I never could find diversion with any other, during the few minutes that it fluttered upon the water. From its delicate appearance, you may, perhaps, conclude it to be a tender insect, and only to be used in mild weather; but this fly appears in greatest numbers in the coldest days, which is evidently the best time to use it.

The ORANGE FLY:

Appears about the latter end of April,
and

and continues until the end of July; the wings are made either with the feather of a field-fare's tail, or a dark dun hackle; the body, of orange-color silk. At its first appearance, is used with most success from eight in the morning until two.

The BLACK GNAT.

Appears about the last week in April, and continues to the end of July; is used from one o'clock until the dusk of the evening. Its body is made of ostrich's orel, short and thick, the wings of the lightest part of a starling's wing, which may be varied with equal success, with a small light dun hackle.

The HAWTHORN FLY.

Appears near the same time as the black gnat, but seldom continues above three weeks; must be used from ten o'clock until three: the body, which is long and slender, is made of an ostrich's orel, the wings, of the palest part of a starling's wing, with a plover's top wrapped thrice around under them.

The wings of this fly being diaphanous, gives you the advantage of using any light color feather you chuse; I know a good angler who invariably uses the pith of the second quill of a goose's wing for them.

About this time the dun becomes a morning and evening fly, and should be made of pale otter's, or hedge-hog's fur. In bright weather the marlo buz should be varied from silver to gold twist, on a body made of peacock's orel. The cow-dung fly continues all the summer months, but are not worth your notice after the iron-blue fly makes its appearance.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

R. S.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

To *****

Dear Sir,

In the months of May and June, almost any fly will raise a trout, as he is at this time in his highest condition, and, though naturally an eager feeding fish, he appears less timid now than at any other part of the season. The great variety of insects that at this time frequent the rivers, evidently encreases his appetite and contributes much to his strength and courage; still he clearly evinces a partiality to a few, which I shall select: the first is, the

IRON-BLUE FLY.

Which appears about the middle of May, and continues nearly three weeks; is frequently seen in great numbers in cold stormy evenings, at which time only it must be used: the body is made

of mole's fur, the wings, of the feather of the hen blackbird's tail, with a short dark dun hackle wrapped thrice around under them.

The WILLOW FLY.

Appears about the middle of May, is a good fly from eleven o'clock to four, until the green drake presents itself; after which it is not to be depended on. Its head is so prominent as it flies, that the wings appear as though they were placed on the centre of its body, which is made of yellow camlet, ribbed with green silk, and a yellow hackle over it.

Having never seen a feather whose natural color had the least resemblance to the wings of this fly, I shall, for your choice, subjoin two methods of staining them: Gather an handful of the flowers of crow-foot, which begin to blossom in May, be careful not to disturb the farina; a lump of allum, the size of a pidgeon's egg, pounded fine; with two or three dozen of white
cock's

cock's hackles; boil them together in rain water in an earthen pitcher until they become the color of the willow-blossom. Or, dilute nitrous acid with water in a glass, until it will but just effervesce with brass filings, in which put the hackles, and in a few minutes you will observe them change color, which as soon as you discover, take them out, and plunge them into a solution of pearl ashes, thinly diluted with water, in another tumbler: this will brighten the color that the acid made, and prevent the feathers being corroded by it. The acid alone will make the feathers a beautiful color, but unless it is corrected by an alkali, they will become too tender to be fit for use.

The ORL FLY.

Appears about the twentieth of May, continues to the end June, and may be used all hours of the day. Has four wings, which lie close on its back; the body, which is rather large, must be made of that part of a peacock's
 orl.

orl that is not tinged with green, and a dark grizzle hackle over it.

The GREEN DRAKE.

Appears about the twenty-fifth of May, and continues near a month, it is used from nine o'clock in the morning until sunset. Upon small streams it is an excellent fly for bobbing, upon a hook No. 5 or 6. Its body, which is an inch long, is made of barber's silk, ribbed with a bittern's hackle, it has four wings, that stand nearly upright, they are a pale yellow, with a beautiful green tinge, which are made of a mallard's feather stained. It has a forked tail, which may with equal success be omitted, but if you wish to be particular in imitating it, two fibres of the dark feather of a cock pheasant's tail is the nearest resemblance I am acquainted with. When a bittern's hackle cannot be procured, the body must be ribbed with fine claret-color silk, and a pale ginger hackle wrapped thrice around under the wings.

OF

Of all the baits that I am acquainted with, this fly appears to be the trout's greatest favorite, as from its first appearance in the morning, which is about eight o'clock, they eagerly watch it the whole day, seldom retiring to their holds as they do at other times, for when gorged to the throat they are not satisfied, but rise as eagerly at it as when they first came on feed.

Various are the methods practised of staining feathers for its wings, but the two best that I know I shall describe for your choice: Scrape an handful of the inside bark of the barbery tree, half an ounce of allum, powdered fine, and two or three dozen of mallard's grey feathers; boil them in rain water, in an earthen pitcher about an hour, and you will find them the color you wish. Or, take one ounce of turmeric, one ounce of allum, half an ounce of common stone blue, each pounded fine, boil them with the feathers, as above described, and it will produce the

the same color. It may prevent a mistake to take out a feather frequently, and by dipping it in clean water you may watch the progress of the dye.

The GREY DRAKE.

Appears about a week after the green, and continues three weeks; it is not quite so large a fly as the latter: the body is made of white silk, ribbed with fine black silk; the wings, of the dark grey feather of the mallard widgeon, with a black cock's hackle wrapped thrice around under them, and has three long tails, which are nearly black. It is used with most success in an afternoon, particularly after the green drake retires.

During the time the green and grey drakes are on the water, the marlobuz, orl, sand, and orange flies may be used with success in the mornings before they appear: and on streams that are frequented by small trout, almost all the day.

The

The light dun, and black gnat, are good flies from seven o'clock in the evening until dark.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

R. S.

LETTER

LETTER X.

To *****

Dear Sir,

The month of June presents us with many new flies, three of which are precisely the color of some before described, I shall therefore, without troubling you with an unnecessary addition of new names, proceed to describe them first. Early in the month, about ten o'clock in the morning, appears one of the color and size of the gravel fly, and continues till one o'clock; another appears in bright evenings, the color and size of the camlet fly, which is often taken very eagerly when the the water is low and fine. The fern fly appears about the middle of June, and is the size and color of the sand fly.

The

The OAK FLY.

Appears early in June, and continues about five weeks. It is a good fly, and may be used with success all hours of the day. Being unquestionably the most difficult fly to imitate well, it provides you a wide field to display your ingenuity.

The body is much paler at the head than the tail, and may be made with the small hackle from a bittern's head, the wings, of the feather of a woodcock's back. When a bittern's hackle cannot be procured, great care is required to graduate the colors justly; it being at the head, pale yellow, under the wings, light brown, the middle of the body, orange, from thence it gradually becomes darker towards the tail, which is quite black. For legs, use a ginger hackle.

The GREEN GNAT.

Appears early in June, and is a good fly in bright mornings, on clear streams.

It is very small, and the body is made of green filk, with a small black cock's hackle wrapped over it.

The WOODPECKER FLY.

Appears about the end of June, and continues near a month. Its wings are made of the pale green feather of a woodpecker's back; its body of the same, with a black cock's hackle wrapped twice around it.

This fly is principally used for grayling fishing, the season for which is now commenced. Though a few will rise soon after spawning, they seldom afford regular sport till after Midsummer.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

R. S.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

To *****

Dear Sir,

About the beginning of July there appears a fly about noon, and continues to the end of the season, the size and color of the march brown.

The SHELL FLY.

Appears early in July, and continues to the end of the season. It is used the whole day in cloudy weather, and is one of the best grayling flies known. The body is made of the lightest part of otter's fur; the wings of the pale yellow feather of a hen; that which is nearest the color of cream is the best.

From the beginning of July to the end of August, two small flies appear that are generally called

LADY COWS.

They are nearly the shape of one half of a split pea. Though flies that the trout are very fond of, they have been strangely overlooked by anglers.

1. The BROWN LADY FLY, is made of the dark part of otter's fur, mixed with the brown fur of a hare's ear, and a grizzle hackle over it, in forming it observe the shape of the natural one.

2. The BLACK LADY FLY, is a beautiful insect, very small, and of course only to be used when the water is low and fine. The body, which is jet black, is made with ostrich's oil, with a small bright red hackle over it.

The following process, if carefully managed, will stain hackles a brilliant, and excellent color for this fly, and which will be found from their superior brightness far preferable to any natural color: Melt a small quantity of grained tin in a tobacco pipe, when fluxed pour it into cold.

cold water. Put this metal into a vial, and pour upon it a sufficiency of nitrous acid to dissolve it, which will not require many minutes, when the effervescence subsides, add to this solution an equal quantity of rain water. Decoct brazil wood in vinegar, and put to it a small lump of allum; strain it, and put a few drops of the above solution to it: then put in some small white hackles, and boil them with this mixture in an earthen pitcher till they have acquired a deep stain.

The YELLOW PALMER FLY.

Appears about the latter end of July, and continues to the end of September. Its body is made of yellow camlet, and a ginger hackle over it. On dull streams where a large one is necessary, the body should be ribbed with gold twist.

The SQUIRREL FLY.

Appears about the middle of August, and continues to the end of the season.

Its

Its body is made with the red fur of a squirrel, and ribbed with fine prim-rose-color silk; the wings of a peahen's feather, with a grizzle hackle wrapped thrice around under them. On clear streams, where a small one is used, the hackle may be omitted.

The BLUE GNAT.

Appears about the middle of September, and continues until the end of October. Its body, which is slender, is made of water rat, or mole's fur, with a dark dun hackle over it.

The blue gnat is the latest fly I ever could find diversion with, I shall therefore conclude this catalogue of trout and grayling flies with it, as trout after this time are not worth catching.

Having been careful, at the commencement of each month, to instruct you how to vary your flies according to the season, it is also necessary to inform you, that the three first flies, (viz.) the blue dun,

dun, marlo buz, and the march brown, are as good flies from the latter end of August, to the end of the season, as they were in March and April; and you may at this time find your sport as regular with them.

In this catalogue there are a few useful flies that have been noticed by others, which, to omit, would on my part appear to doubt the existence of, and consequently tend to deprive you of the advantage which may be derived by using them; and was I to affect originality, by inventing new names for such flies, I should feel myself guilty of an unwarrantable act of duplicity; but if, by experience, you find that I have described a better method of imitating those few, and have directed a readier method of providing materials for the purpose than has hitherto appeared, my wishes will be amply gratified.

I am, Sir, your's, &c.

R. S.

LETTER XII.

To *****

Dear Sir,

My last letter concluded a catalogue of such trout and grayling flies, that, if carefully observed, and proper attention be paid to the weather, and state of the water, you will scarcely ever be disappointed in a day's amusement: still there are many other flies and baits that, though I could not consistent with my plan insert there, yet must on no account be omitted, which must form a SECOND CATALOGUE, and commence with

The RED FLY,

Which appears in February. Its wings are made of the red feather of a partridge's tail; the body of the red part of a squirrel's fur, with a ginger hackle wrapped twice around it.

This fly disappears the first warm day in

March, consequently is of little use to an angler who fishes for diversion only.

As your present situation affords you an excellent opportunity of enjoying the pleasure of salmon-fry fishing in the Vyrnwy, in March and April, the six following flies you will find worthy your notice. On hooks No. 10.

1. The body made of peacock's orel, and a mealy grey cock's hackle over it.

2. The body is made with silver twist, and a small dun hackle.

3. The body of yellow camlet, ribbed with gold twist, and a ginger hackle over it.

4. The body made with equal quantities of the fur of a hare's neck and orange-color mohair, with the hackle from a grouse's back.

5. Gold twist body, and a dark red cock's hackle over it.

6. The

6. The body of peacock's oyl, with the bright stained red hackle over it.

The COD-BAIT.

With artificial wings. Is generally first used about the middle of March; and continues to the end of September. This natural bait must be used on the top of the water, like an artificial fly, an account of which will be given in a future letter, and must be managed thus: whip a pair of wings of a mallard's grey feather, upon a hook No. 5 or 6; a little below them a small piece of brass music wire must be whipped with the point inclined upwards, but nearly erect, to retain the bait, from which you must gently pinch the head, and a black gut will follow it; then through the aperture insert your hook, which must go through the body to the tail, carefully draw it up the shank of the hook until the wire is covered, and then the bait is ready for use.

I acknowledge this to be a troublesome

Some method of angling, but can, with confidence assure you, no fish when on feed, that take flies, will refuse it.

On dull streams, the feather of a land-rail's wing or the red feather of a partridge's tail, is preferred to the grey feather; but after the green drake appears, a feather the color of its wings is more eagerly taken than either.

About the latter end of May, two insects appear, of the species of *scarabæus*, one of which is generally called the caterpillar, or cock-chaffer; the other, the black beetle, or devil's coach-horse.

They are good baits for bobbing for chub, under bushes that project over the sides of rivers. The hook for the first should be No. 1, for the latter No. 4. I do not advise you to attempt to imitate them, as you cannot possibly use a long line with equal advantage to bobbing with a short one.

They rarely fly by day-light, but sleep on the pendant leaves of bushes, when a trifling agitation by the wind, or many other causes, disengage them, and dropping on the water in that torpid state, become an easy prey to every watchful fish.

It is not unusual with these baits to take large trout, as they are invited to those shady haunts at this season, to watch the green and grey drakes that sometimes float on the water in innumerable quantities, and the trout appear,

“As if increase of appetite had grown
“By what it fed on.”

About this time two night flies are recommended by a late author, for the use of those amateurs, who, when disappointed in their day's diversion, resolve to repair it by night; but as I never possessed sufficient perseverance to try the experiment, will not pledge myself for their success, but quote a description of them
merely

merely for your information, and advise you to leave their use to those indefatigable heroes (if any such there be) who can find amusement in such nocturnal recreation.

“ The BROWN NIGHT FLY.

“ He is made of the brown feather
 “ of a hen, and the body of the same
 “ color. This is properly a moth, which
 “ flies by night only, and is to be used
 “ (if you are inclined for night fishing)
 “ in a dark gloomy night, after a warm
 “ day. When you fish in this manner,
 “ use a line about a yard longer than
 “ the rod, and put a couple of maggots
 “ at the point of the hook, which will
 “ be of great advantage to the smelling
 “ part. It will take fish both in streams
 “ and standing waters, and you may
 “ hear them rise in as much perfection
 “ as if you were fishing by day.”

“ They will continue to bite till day
 “ break, if the night be gloomy and
 “ cloudy; but if it be a moon-shining,

“ or star light night, they will not stir
 “ at these flies, any more than they
 “ will at the day-flies in a bright day.

“ The WHITE NIGHT-FLY.

“ This fly is, in my opinion, the
 “ best of the two. He is made of the
 “ white owl’s feather, on account of the
 “ softness of it, upon a middle sized
 “ worm hook; the body of the same
 “ color as the wings, and as big as a
 “ very large wheat straw. He is in per-
 “ fection about the latter end of May,
 “ and continues till the latter end of
 “ June; when if you set out with an
 “ intent of killing a dish of fish in the
 “ day, and fail of success, you may be
 “ sure of taking them at night, if you
 “ are so disposed, and this fly is on the
 “ water.”

The BEE, and WASP,

Particularly the large humble bee, must
 not be overlooked, as they are good
 baits for chub in August and September.
 The living ones being so easily procured,
 renders

renders a description of materials, when you wish to imitate them, unnecessary.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

R. S.

c 3

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

To *****

Dear Sir,

The Salmon being a powerful fish, requires great attention to the preparation of your tackle, as it must necessarily be made fine and strong. Your rod ought to be fifteen feet long: eight feet from the lower end should be made of Riga, or Christiana deal; or, American pitch pine, which are light, strong, and not liable to warp; but on no account trust to the common white deal, as it is too tender to resist the violence that is opposed to it when a fish is hooked.

A reel, or winch, is indispensable, and should be large enough to receive a line at least ninety yards long; the end of which must not be finer than eight hairs. The last two yards of the line should

should be made of gut, or grass, twisted three fold. When the latter is used it must be put in cold water to soften, a quarter of an hour before it is twisted. The greatest care should be taken in performing this operation, for if each part be not of equal length, and regularly twisted, they cannot act together, consequently the line will be so much weakened as to render it unequal to the struggles of a large fish.

It will contribute much to the preservation of your tackle to fix a swivel between the hair and gut, to prevent the line from twisting or untwisting; for, when a salmon is hooked, and half-tired, the efforts he makes to disengage himself are far more dangerous to your tackle than when he is first hooked.

When you angle for him below the surface, the directions which you will find given for minnow, and worm fishing for trout, are the best methods you can adopt for salmon fishing.

For:

For fly-fishing, a hook No. 1, or 2, according to the state of the water, or weight of the fish you expect, are good sizes; the shanks must be near an inch long.

Before you begin to make your fly, whip that part of the link that the point of the shank rests upon, twice over, and it will prevent its galling.

It is a great improvement to a fly of this size, to make four wings instead of two; but though I advise the number of wings to be doubled, I would not on any account be understood to direct the quantity to be increased; it being a fault too prevalent in making trout flies, to overload them with feather.

As a salmon is much more whimsical in his feeding than a trout, it is sometimes impossible to make a fly too gay for him, therefore I shall confine myself to seven, which have been proved to be good ones, and leave the variation of their color to your own fancy.

The

The season generally commences in April, therefore I shall begin with

The BROWN FLY.

Its wings are made with the long gold color feather of the cock pheasant's tail; the body, of the fur of a hare's neck, mixed with one third of its quantity of the fine hair of a brown cow. In bright weather, gold twist is often added with success, over which wrap a red cock's hackle. The feather of the tail of a copper-color turkey cock, is a tolerable substitute for the pheasant's feather.

The BLUE FLY.

Its wings are made of the shaded feather of the hen pheasant's tail; the body of peacock's orl, with a pale red hackle over it.

The KING's FISHER.

The wings of this fly are made with the feather of a heron's tail, or the tail of a blue turkey; the body, of the greenest part of a peacock's orl: that
which

which is procured from about the eye of the feather is the best, over which wrap a feather of an heron's crest, or a black cock's hackle.

The PRIME DUN.

The wing's are made with a light heron's feather, the body of hedge hog's fur, with a light dun hackle over it.

The GREAT PALMER.

The wings are made with the feather of a cock pheasant's tail; the body, of peacock's orl, with a red hackle that is black at the roots, over it. This fly is often varied with gold, and sometimes silver twist, with great success.

The GOLDEN PHEASANT.

The wings are made with the feather of a cock pheasant's tail; the body, of orange color silk, ribbed with peacock's orl, and a ginger hackle over it.

The GREY MALLARD.

The wings are made with the grey feather

feather of a mallard; the body, which is very slender, of equal quantities of white rabbit and hedge-hog's fur, well mixed, and a light grizzle cock's hackle over it.

As the season for salmon fishing varies on different rivers, it is impossible to date the time of using each fly, with precision, especially for a fish so unsteady in his feeding. Those which I have enumerated are arranged in the order they make their appearance.

The brown fly appears with the commencement of the season in April, and affords the most sport till September, when the grey mallard appears, which is then the best fly to the end of the season.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

LETTER.

LETTER XIV.

To *****

Dear Sir,

Having compleated an account of all the flies within my knowledge, that are worth your attention, it now remains for me to direct the best method of making them. Though an art so simple in itself, it appears extremely complex to make one by the description; and I am convinced that you would learn more on seeing a single fly made by an expert artist, than in reading a volume on the subject; which has often led me to think, that the custom of giving directions "would be more honored in the breach than the observance."

Having never seen this subject particularised to my satisfaction, I shall carefully describe the different methods that

that I was taught by a very intelligent angler, near twenty years since, and what experience has convinced me I can derive no advantage by changing.

To MAKE an HACKLE.

Having selected your materials, cut off all the superfluous parts of the hackle, so as to have no use for the scissars after the fly is made, except to cut off the remaining part of the stem, and the silk; place the hook upon the gut, holding the upper end of the shank between the fore-finger and thumb of your left hand, fasten the end of the gut by three turns of the silk; then hold the hook by the bent, and whip it neatly up to the top of the shank, where you should whip two turns around the gut alone, to prevent its galling. Place the hackle with the root end down the shank, and fasten it with two turns of the silk; next take the dubbing and whip it neatly down the shank, securing it with one knot on the place you began; take hold of the point of the hackle, whip

H

it

it down the body until it is opposite the point of the hook, there fasten it, and your fly is complete.

When small, or tender hackles are used, such as partridge's or woodcock's, they may be whipped three or four times around the upper end of the shank, and there fastened; after which dress the body down to its proper place, and fasten it. If an hackle is so short that you cannot conveniently hold it, tie a piece of waxed silk to it.

To make a FLY with WINGS.

Whip your hook as before directed, lay the feather you have provided for the wings upon the shank, with the points towards the bent, the roots are consequently upwards; fasten it on the top of the shank firmly by four or five turns of the silk; raise the feather from the shank, and divide it in two equal parts; then bring back between the wings, the root ends of the feather, and fasten them. Dress your dubbing to the proper length of the body, and fasten it.

Where

Where WINGS and HACKLE are used.

When the wings are secured, whip the root end of the hackle close below them, then lap the dubbing one third the length of the body, hold the silk tight between the second and third fingers, while you twist the hackle to that place, there fasten it, and then finish the body.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

R. S.

H 2

LETTER

LETTER XV

To *****

Dear Sir,

Except the trout, the pike affords the angler more diversion than any other fish; and the various methods that have been invented to take him, are sufficient to convince you that the ingenuity of sportsmen has been attentively employed in making him contribute his share to their amusement.

He is a powerful fish, whose strength is only equaled by his rapacity, therefore you cannot provide a rod that is manageable, too stiff, nor a line, provided it is fine, too strong for him.

Any small fish from two to five ounces, may be used for a bait, such as trout, samlet, gudgeon, roach, dace, bleak, perch,

pearch, &c. &c. As he does not bite so eagerly soon after spawning, as when the summer is a little advanced, the best method to begin the season with, is

SNAP FISHING.

(WITH A DEAD BAIT.)

Fix a strong swivel (see plate, fig. III.) to your line with a spring loop at one end, to fasten the bottom link to, which must be made of gimp; to one end of which, whip a strong hook whose bent is near an inch diameter; (fig. II.) to the other end whip three small hooks triangularly, place the hook and triangle level with each other, then whip the top of the link so as to form a loop proper to put on the swivel, over which slide a cap of lead (fig. II.) at least half an ounce weight. To bait it, thrust the large hook through the mouth, and out between the eyes of the bait, again through the mouth, and out at the tail; then gently draw it to its proper place. By putting the hook twice through the mouth, you will find a loop formed

at the head of the bait, which will prevent it being drawn out of form by the resistance of the water. The triangle will then hang loose a little below the tail.

Another method of snap fishing, is, with four hooks (see figure IV.) The points of the two extreme hooks, should not be more than three inches from each other. The upper hook should be thrust across the bait's mouth, including both lips, and the lowest passed through the narrow part near the tail, so that it is a little bent, or it will not spin, then with a piece of thread whip the middle pair to the bait's side.

In the above methods the pike requires to be struck as soon as he takes the bait, but be careful not to strike him with a slack line, for if you do you are almost sure to lose him. He should be fished for about midwater, and you need not throw your bait twice in the same place.

SNAP

SNAP FISHING, (WITH A LIVE BAIT)

On large pools in a boat, is far from an unpleasant method, as a party of four or five may amuse themselves without the least inconvenience to each other.

The rod must be four yards long, and the line about five, lightly leaded, on which a cork float about two inches diameter must be fixed, with a hole through the centre, and a peg in it to keep the bait at its proper depth. One large hook for this method is sufficient, whipped to gimp, with a swivel at the upper end of it. To bait which, introduce the hook under the back fin, which may be done with so little injury to the bait, that it will live many hours.

When a pike takes your bait the float generally disappears, from which time allow him about a minute before you strike. The best depth for this method is about midwater.

It may not be improper in this place to describe the best situation for this amusement. Fix on a place in deep water that is not within twenty yards of any weeds that grow to the surface; drive down two parallel rows of piles, at a distance wide enough to receive a boat, observing that the piles are not left so high as the boat's sides, or they will be extremely troublesome, by frequently entangling your lines. When the willow tree is full leaved, weave or plash its branches between the piles. This grove (as it is called) will entice the small fish to sport about it, which, together with the shade it affords, seems to invite the pike there both for food and shelter,

There is a double hook manufactured to use a live bait with, called a spring snap, that expands itself in the act of striking a fish, which in my opinion is more a mechanical contrivance than an useful invention, I shall therefore say no more about it,

Snap

Snap fishing cannot be considered the safest method of catching pike, because many are missed in striking. It is only to be preferred to the dead gorge at that time when they have not recovered their appetites after spawning; consequently, I only recommend the practice of it, to the latter end of May, after which time to the end of December no method excels the

DEAD GORGE,

Which is made with a large single or double hook whipped to gimp, and well leaded on the shank (see fig. VII.) with a loop on the top of it to receive the swivel, which must be inserted through the bait's mouth, and out at its tail, (as all fish swallow their baits head foremost.) Draw it gently down, until the mouth is at the bent of the hook, then place it in a proper position, and whip its tail firmly to the gimp.

When a pike takes the bait, make no resistance, but permit him to go wherever

ever he chuses to take it, for now it is that he challenges your patience most; as sometimes he will remain a quarter of an hour before he gorges it; during which time, do not disturb him, but wait until he moves again, which you will readily discover by the motion of the line; then wind it up until you feel him, when he must be struck smartly, and you are sure of him, if the tackle holds.

You should be provided with a wire needle six inches long, with an open loop at one end, to bait the hooks, which may be carried in your book.

Laying BEAGLES, or FLOATERS,

Which, on large pools, affords stronger exercise, and greater variety of amusement, than any other part of pool fishing.

The floater must be seven inches diameter, made of flat cork, or any light wood, turned round, with a groove in
the

the edge large enough to receive a fine whipcord line, twelve yards long; or at least three yards longer than the pool is deep. A small peg, fixed in the centre, two inches long, with a notch cut in the end of it. A small double hook, fixed to a brass wire link, which is generally called a trimmer; to bait which, take a live fish, from two to four ounces, and with the point of the hook, make a small incision in the skin on its side, near the gills, through which thrust the wire, then carefully force it under the skin to the vent; draw the bait along it until the flank of the hook is covered; in which state it will live twenty-four hours.

Fasten one end of the line securely to the floater, and wind it around the edge of it, tie the other end to the loop in the wire, then fasten the line slightly in the notch of the peg, to prevent the bait running it out of the groove, leaving about four feet out for the bait to sink with,

Put

Put it out on the windward side of the pool, and if not taken as it is blown across, it must be returned again.

SALMON and TROUT TROWLING.

Commences in March, and is practised with good success, all hours of the day, the whole season, with any small fry for a bait; but those which are most preferred are, the loach and minnow.

From the middle of April to the end of August, the greatest diversion is found from three o'clock in the Afternoon, until it is dark, when the best fish are taken, particularly in deep streams.

It requires a strong rod, though not quite so stiff as what is used for pike fishing; the longer it is, the better, provided it be not too heavy. You cannot, with any pleasure fish without a reel, as you meet with such frequent occasions to alter the length of the line.

About

About eighteen inches of strong gut, or indian weed, should be put to the end of the line, twisted three fold; with a swivel, (fig. V.) to fix the bottom link upon, with four or five duck shot, split, and fastened on it.

To make the bottom links, there are two distinct methods; one is precisely the same form of the first link which I have described for pike trolling, only varying the size of the hooks, (fig. VI.)

The other method is, to fasten with a knot, the link that the triangle is whipped to, about half an inch above the large hook, (fig. I.) which must be thrust in the bait's mouth once only, and out at its tail.

As it has nothing now to prevent its being washed down the flank of the hook, by the force of the stream, one hook of the triangle must be fixed in the bait's side, which, when drawn to is proper place, will retain it securely.

The last method I recommend to you in clear streams, because the link is single; whereas in the first, it is unavoidably double.

There are many other methods practised, but I am convinced, when once you become expert in either of these, you will not derive the least advantage from changing them.

It is not unusual to take large chub, and small pike, by this method of angling, in streams that those fishes frequent.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

R. S.

LETTER.

LETTER XVI.

. To *****

Dear Sir,

Worms are the most natural baits, under water, for almost every fish, instances having occurred even of pike taking them. Must be preserved and cleansed in moderately dry moss, in a cool place in the summer, and out of the reach of frost in the winter. The more moss you make use of, and oftener it is changed, the longer they will live, as they cannot bear being exposed to the air. The largest is the

LOB, or DEW WORM.

Which is found by turning up soil, particularly in old gardens, fallow fields, and early in the morning may be taken upon the surface of grass fields. When, by crawling about, those that

meet with a cow, or horse dung, will creep under it, and there remain as long as it contains moisture enough to protect them from the intense heat; which situation changes their color, particularly about the head, to a dark purple; which appearance has given birth to an opinion among anglers, that it is a distinct species, and they have consequently given it the name of the peacock worm.

It is a good bait for salmon, trout, perch, chub, and eels, particularly in muddy water.

The RED WORM,

Is found in all loamy soils; may be gathered by following a plow, turning up garden soil, and under boards, bricks, slates, tiles, stones, &c. &c. that have lain undisturbed a short time.

This worm has several names, that vary with its color, which different situations will alter. It is a good bait
in

in clear water singly, but when the water is discolored, two are preferable, particularly for trout.

When two worms are used, the hook should be thrust through the knot of that which is to remain uppermost, and when forced through only one third of its body, must be drawn to the top of the shank until the wire is covered, and it will remain secure; then treat the second in the same manner, observing to reverse the end that you begin at, and the knot being held by the barb, they will remain sufficiently firm.

The BRANDLING, or GILT-TAIL,

Is a beautiful little worm, dark at the head, becoming gradually paler towards the tail; which is decorated with bright yellow circles, that distinguish it from all other reptiles of this class; and from whence the name gilt-tail is derived.

They are found in old dunghills, old

hot beds, especially where tanner's bark has been used, and often in tanner's bark alone, provided it has lain still a sufficient time to rot.

From the beginning of May, to the middle of September, it is the best worm that can be used; and what few fish, when on feed, will refuse. It is therefore unnecessary to dwell longer on this part of the subject, by amusing you with an useless list of worthless reptiles, when the few that are selected have been found by experience, to answer every purpose.

To prepare your tackle for worm fishing in streams; a small piece of music wire should be whipped to the upper end of the shank of the hook, to keep the bait in a proper position. No precise direction can be given for leading your line, as it depends so much on its length, the depth of the stream, and the rapidity of the current; the bait should sink quick, and fish near the bottom;

bottom. If your line is over-leaded; you will find it extremely troublesome, as the hook will frequently be entangled with whatever it meets at the bottom, such as stones, roots of trees, bushes, &c. &c.

The size of the hook and bait, must be governed by the brightness of the stream: for trout fishing I do not recommend a hook larger than No. 2, or smaller than No. 5; but for salmon, perch, and large chub, I prefer a hook No. 1.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

R. S.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

To *****

Dear Sir,

COD-BAIT FISHING,

On the top of the water, has been described in a former letter.

It is a good bait about midwater, and near the bottom in clear streams, on a hook No. 8, whipped to fine gut, lightly floated. Many anglers in preparing their hooks for cod-bait fishing, prefer the flank being leaded, to a shot on the line, which is a method I cannot approve, being but a tender bait, the lead renders it almost impossible to be drawn neatly over the flank. When used in still water, a small float is necessary.

There are a great variety of these insects, and many of the best flies that fre-

frequent the rivers are produced from them. Some are found among the weeds in standing waters, which are generally tinged green, inclosed in a very rough shell; but that which is most useful to an angler, is found in stony brooks, or gravelly rivulets, closely adhering to any solid substance it finds at the bottom; though sometimes among the loose gravel, with the *theca*, or husk, around them, and regularly covered with sand, or very fine gravel.

When taken out of the water, they may be preserved a month, by putting them in a woollen bag, with, or without moss, upon a cool floor. If the bag should become too dry, care must be taken not to use too much water to damp it again, as these insects cannot endure their native element, after they have been taken from it four days; still they must not be exposed to the other extreme.

MÄGGOT

MAGGOT FISHING,

Commences as soon as the frost disappears in the spring, and is a good bait in open weather, every month in the year.

Maggots are produced from all kinds of animal flesh, which may be hung in a remote place, and under it put a tub with a little bran or dry sand in, (the latter of these I prefer, provided the earth, or loam is washed from it); and in a few days you will find a plentiful supply of baits; a succession of which will continue near a month. When the carrion will not produce more, replace it immediately with fresh, as a maggot in the hot months, will become a fly in three weeks after its first appearance.

It is used for the same purposes as the cod-bait, and is eagerly taken by all kinds of fish that take small baits.

Maggots generated in October, will live

live through the winter, at which time grayling, chub, carp, tench, perch, roach, and dace, are in perfection, and may be enticed to any part of a pond to feed, by suspending a piece of carrion at the end of a pole, over the spot that you wish the fishes to frequent.

It is not unusual to bait particular places with worms, maggots, grains, stewed malt, clay balls, clotted blood, &c. but that method is not only troublesome, but you are liable to be deceived by the neglect of servants; admitting their punctuality, the fish would naturally become fonder of a spot where they can peaceably enjoy their food, which is continually dropping to them, than where they are often disturbed by being fed at stated intervals.

Those anglers whose situation is contiguous to a tallow chandler's, may at almost any time, provide themselves with plenty of these baits,

The

The WASP GRUB.

In July, August, and September, from a wasp's nest you may provide yourself plentifully with good baits for every kind of fish that will take maggots and cod-baits. In procuring which, it will be necessary to guard yourself against the resentment of the furious inhabitants, by introducing a lighted gunpowder squib into the nest, about the dusk of evening, then stop the hole close, and let it remain in that state half an hour, when you may dig out the comb without danger of being stung; it must then be baked before a moderate fire, with a tin bonnet behind it, which makes the baits tough, and blackens their ends.

The COW-DUNG BAIT.

Is found from the beginning of June, to the end of August, among the droppings from cattle in dry pastures; it far excels either the cod-bait or maggot, during its short stay, and must be used for the same purposes.

In shape, it resembles a maggot, but its color is much brighter; it is extremely tough, consequently a lasting bait.

CABBAGE WORMS,

Are of different colors, some of them are green, some are grey, and others speckled, varying in color according to the species that produced them.

They are useful baits in the hot months, for trout, chub, carp, tench, roach, and dace; are procured by shaking oak, and ash trees, hazle bushes, and upon cabbage leaves; must be used on the top, upon streams, and mid-water in pools. Being tender baits, require some attention to fix them neatly on the hook.

The changes which this insect experiences in its gradation from the egg to the butterfly, are so numerous, that you must be made acquainted with them, as

the aurelia itself is not surpassed by any winter bait.

The cabbage worm is produced from an egg dropped by the butterfly, from which it passes into the aurelia or chrysalis state, wherein it remains immovably fixed to one spot during the winter; while in that state it takes no sustenance. Its covering in this middle state, between the caterpillar and butterfly, is cartilaginous; its figure, conical. The succeeding spring this included insect has acquired a sufficient degree of strength to burst its cell; when, splitting its wintry coat from one end to the other, a perfect butterfly instantly appears.

The GRASS HOPPER.

Is generally found about the mowing season, and continues until it is destroyed by frosty nights. It is eagerly taken by almost every fish in clear streams about midwater, on a hook No. 6, with fine gut, and one small shot.

The

The CRICKET.

The common house cricket is used in the same manner, and for the same purposes, as the grass hopper, with this advantage, it is readily procured in winter and spring.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

R. S.

2

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

To *****

Dear Sir,

Almost every experienced angler, who uses paste, has his peculiar method of preparing it; to describe every one which I have seen used, would far exceed the bounds of my plan; therefore I shall only mention a few, that I have proved to be good ones, and what you may with safety rely on.

SALMON PASTE.

Take one pound of female salmon spawn, about September or October, boil it about fifteen minutes, beat it in a mortar until sufficiently mixed, with an ounce of salt, and a quarter of an ounce of salt-petre, carefully pick out the membrane as you find it disengaged;

gaged. When it is beat to a proper consistence, put it into cups, or gallipots, over which tie a piece of bladder close, and it will keep good many months.

SHRIMP PASTE.

Is prepared precisely by the same method as salmon paste, observing to separate the solid part from the shell, before it is put into the mortar.

PASTE, to catch CHUB and CARP in the WINTER.

Beat strong cheshire cheese, mixed with cotton wool, to paste; if it is too moist, temper it with wheat flour; if too dry, moisten it with honey. The bait should be formed about the size and shape of a small acorn.

PASTE to catch PIKE BAITS.

Mix four ounces of fine wheat flour with a little cotton wool; the whites of two eggs, and a very small quantity of vermillion, or red lead.

This paste should not be made above one day before it is used.

MALT BAIT,

Is not excelled by any of the above pastes, for small fish, if proper care be taken in preparing it.

To a quart of ^{un}ground malt, put two quarts of water; place it in a situation where it will just simmer; in about four hours the water is generally absorbed by the malt, when the skin separates, and then it is fit for use.

It must not be prepared long before it is used, as in a few hours it will become sour.

Having now, I trust, discharged my promise, I shall close this subject with a few aphorisms, the efficacy of which I have practically proved.

1. Indian weed, and silk-worm gut, are best preserved in a piece of bladder or oiled paper.

2. Hooks

2. Hooks may be protected from rust by the same method.—A small slice of camphor put to your fur, and a little ground pepper among your feathers, will prevent either being destroyed by moths or other vermin.

3. If, while angling, you observe a fish rise at a natural fly, cast your's as near to the spot as possible, without suffering it to remain still, for by keeping it in motion, the fish that see it are rendered eager to take it, and the deception cannot be so easily discovered.

4. You seldom need cast your fly twice on one place—if a trout is disposed to take your bait, he generally rises the instant that he discovers it.

5. The best baits that can be used in a morning, for trout, before the flies appear, are the minnow, loach, and worm; particularly after a light night.

6. If

6. If a shower, or any accident, swells the joints of your rod, so as to prevent their being drawn afunder without straining them, apply a lighted candle to the upper part of the ferrules, until they are warmed—the joints will then readily separate.

7. A South, or West wind, with a cloudy atmosphere, is always favorable to an angler's sport—a North, or East wind, with a bright sky, the reverse.

8. Trout fishing, with a worm, is practised with the greatest success at the commencement of a flood—and fly fishing, as soon as the water is become clear enough.

9. If ever you find the trout rise short, and refuse your bait, be assured that it is not exactly the color of the fly they are in search of; for such are their discriminating powers, that if the bait varies but a shade from the natural fly, they will, when the water is clear
refuse:

refuse it; from which, you will readily infer, that it is necessary an angler should apply a small portion of his leisure hours to the study of nature before he can possess a claim to superiority in this art—such an amusement, is in itself, instructive, rational, and not considered beneath the notice of the best informed: yet, by a little attention to the instructions that may be found in these letters, you may very soon become proficient enough to ensure yourself a day's success, when the elements are not unfavorable; the directions they contain being all deduced from practise.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient,

Humble Servant,

ROBERT SALTER.

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ERRATA.

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