DRY-FLY FISHING

FOR

TROUT AND GRAYLING.

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BY

"RED QUILL."

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JAMES ENGLEFIELD

("RED QUILL").

DRY-FLY FISHING

FOR

Trout and Grayling.

With Some Advice to a Beginner
in the Art.

BY

“RED QUILL”

(James Englefield).

LONDON :

HORACE COX,

“FIELD” OFFICE, BREAM’S BUILDINGS, CHANCERY LANE, E.C.

1908.

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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK
TO
SIR LINDSAY WOOD, BARONET,
AND IN MEMORY OF HIS BROTHER,
JOHN WOOD, ESQUIRE,
OF MAIDENHEAD, BERKSHIRE,
MY MOST INTIMATE AND CONGENIAL FRIEND
AND ANGLING COMPANION
DURING THE BEST YEARS OF OUR EARLY MANHOOD.

PREFACE, AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

THE greatest pleasure in life and perhaps the most lasting (next to that of doing good) falls to the angler's lot, who, having made fishing his hobby in early years, is content to ride it in easy stages through Nature's loveliest scenes by flood and field, until old age, often long past the Psalmist's allotted span when "his strength" is said to be "but labour and sorrow," comes to arrest his feeble hand, and to deny to his faltering steps any longer the power to pursue his fascinating art: but even then the retrospect of it all is a delightful memory to the very end of his days, and he almost hopes that as of yore the garden of Eden was watered by the four fair rivers Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates to make it fruitful and perfect, so in the next world he may have enchanting streams to linger by.

It is often said that a poet is born a poet, with the music of song already in his soul which may develop to a lofty strain, and "wake to ecstasy the

living lyre," or the poetic element may remain latent only, "mute and inglorious." That heredity has little or no influence in the making of poets would seem to be proved by the fact that their sons and daughters so rarely inherit this peculiar gift of their parents. So also it is sometimes asserted that a successful brother of the gentle craft is a born angler; and in this case heredity may to some extent be answerable for it, for the love of sport in one form or another is a national characteristic of nearly all Englishmen, and at the present time fishing is by far the most popular of all pastimes. An enthusiastic angler is always a worshipper of the Great Creator in all his works, especially

Where peaceful rivers, soft and slow,
Amidst the verdant landscape flow ;

and he is very often a minor poet at heart, or he likes to think so.

The writer's forbears were certainly good anglers, and he remembers many tales his grandfather told of his exploits in the river Loddon near Shinfield, in Berkshire, particularly one giving stirring details of the capture of a 28lb. pike on gut tackle—the single hook being baited with a large live roach. The fish was played from a 12ft. moderately stiff rod for about twenty minutes, and then, completely exhausted, drawn on its side to a smooth, gravelly shallow ford and there lifted out

bodily (for no help was near nor any landing net), viewed with trembling excitement, yet with rapture, as of a battle won, and then straightway killed. It was triumphantly carried in the fisherman's arms to the middle of Shinfield Common and there exhibited to the astonished villagers, who cheered, bore aloft the prize on a broken bough at the head of a procession, and escorted the victor home. All of whom, including wives and sweethearts, he then and there invited to come to supper off it next evening and make merry. It was a jovial party. He even told the names of some of the old songs which were sung after the repast—his own were "Old Rose" (which had been sung by his grandfather), "Barbara Allen," "Long time I've courted Nancy," and another whose title I do not now remember, but it commenced "'Twas down in Cupid's garden for pleasure I did walk," and was about the fortunate winner of a prize of twenty thousand pounds in a lottery (at that time a common venture in England, but long since made illegal) by a soldier, who had "gone to fight in Flanders" because his ladye love had refused him, but on acquiring this wealth, the song says:

Oh! then with gold and silver his clothes were laced
indeed,

And to old England he returned to his true love with
speed,

&c., &c.

The local fame of this day's sport clung to my grandfather for many years, and lived in his memory for life, giving him a high opinion of his own good fortune and skill.

He chiefly affected gorge-bait fishing (not then, as now, wisely and humanely forbidden in the Thames) in lakes and preserved waters, but on the Thames he was also noted as a good all-round fisherman. So also was his son, my father—angling was his favourite amusement on the Thames, and elsewhere, for he often went farther afield for his sport, and I was always his companion. It is no wonder, therefore, that at an early age I became initiated into some of the small mysteries and devices of the gentle art (a misnomer, surely, for some of its practices are very ungentle and, until the refining spirit of true sport with the angle corrects them, are decidedly cruel). At nine years old I was already a good gudgeon and perch fisher; indeed, when I was not quite seven I wandered from home for three miles to the river Lea to catch minnows, fishing with a red worm on a proper hook and line—contrary to the usual puerile form which begins with cotton and a bent pin.

Then for some happy years during my school days at Reading I had good practice in the river

Kennet, near its confluence at that place with the Thames, and from Sonning up to Caversham and Mapledurham whenever opportunities offered; in fact, such chances were often made for me by my tutor (Mr. Charles Havell), who had been usher at Dr. Valpy's celebrated grammar school, who, himself an accomplished angler, accompanied me, rod in hand, and by his precept and example taught me much useful knowledge by the way, and helped me to develop my love of fishing and of Nature's charming and reposeful scenery to which it leads.

From these early days of my life to adolescence and middle age I was content to fish in the Thames, and during my residence at Bridge House, Maidenhead, I could always manage (given favourable weather and the water in the right trim) to obtain sufficient sport to make it the most attractive of all pastimes and also an incentive to be frequently afloat in a punt on the beautiful river in the pure air for health, exercise, and contemplation. But I was gradually weaned from the love of making big catches of coarse fish. I no longer killed them indiscriminately for the sake of killing, but sought sport with each species separately, days for jack, days for perch, &c., returning to the river all other sorts captured on those days. I found much advantage in such limitation, for the haunts of fish

differ considerably, especially in winter, as compared with summer, and they became quite familiar to me; also the habits and life-history of each formed interesting studies. I attained so much expertness as a Thames angler that success was nearly always certain. I had nothing more to learn, nor subsequently while living for sixteen years at Great Marlow had any sort of bottom fishing the least charm for me, except for perch in the winter months with a one-hook paternoster, or occasionally to show a tyro what and how sport could be obtained when he went out with me in the punt, and under my directions used his own rod and tackle with good effect. In fine, I left off keeping a record of coarse fishing (coarse is hardly a fitting term for it), but my last takes of perch mentioned in my diary were published in the *Field*, viz., one day under Quarry Woods, 42lb. weight, and the next, 61lb., the Editor remarking in a note: "Mr. Englefield uses a paternoster with only one minnow thereon, and these fine takes reflect great credit on his certainly sportsman-like method."

Elsewhere, however, sport with the artificial fly, and that in its very highest and most artistic form, namely, with the dry floating fly, had gradually evolved from my life-long experiences and practice with ordinary rods and tackle into a more engrossing and fascinating hobby than (wonderful for me,

its hitherto enthusiastic devotee, to say) any Thames fishing, bar trout, in future could afford—a hobby I have, perhaps, overridden, for it has excluded all love of every other sport, or even games, indoors or out: nor do I now care to catch trout or grayling, or indeed any sort of fish, by any other lure than a well-tied dry-fly. This is absolutely true, absurd as it may seem to some all-round fishermen. A dry-fly purist has been described in euphuistic terms by Mr. Horace Cox as “one thoroughly imbued with the divine afflatus of fishing.”

It may be asked, what is a dry-fly purist? Well, after long pondering I fear it would appear presumptuous on my part to attempt to answer the question as applied to other fly-fishers, but, taking myself as a type, I believe I can give a very good definition of him.

He has gradually arrived at perfection in his fascinating art, first of all and chiefly by constant practice and experience; by watching the methods of experts by the river-side, and avoiding the mistakes of some not yet expert; by the discriminating choice of suitable rods, lines, casts, and flies, landing net, &c.; also by hints and knowledge gained in reading the current angling literature of the day, and modern books on the subject. To the dry-fly purist no other sport can vie with it; he cares for no other sort of fishing (in my case for no

other sport), never resorts to the wet-fly lure, although finding no fault with those good fishermen who do use it. He kills no small fish, nor any out of condition : is content with moderate sport, especially if obtained under adverse conditions proving his patience and skill. Therefore, it need hardly be said, he is no pot-hunter, save in the limited sense that he nearly always presents his spoil to his friends. Further, he prefers small flies to large : consequently (and for other reasons) he often does not join the throng of Mayfly enthusiasts, whose sport is sometimes like mere slaughter. He is humane to a degree in carefully unhooking and also in returning fish to a river so as to avoid injuring them ; in need, supporting them at its side until they recover from the shock of being pulled out—so contrary to the practice of many anglers who toss them through the air, when, on falling, they are often injured by concussion with the water. In fact, dry-fly fishing reduces the cruelty of angling to a minimum, and is a good argument in its favour. The dry-fly purist is a contemplative man, always in love with Nature in her varying beauties, and not least so when in his delightful environment by the river-side the weather is favourable for his sport ; but even then his skill is at fault until there is a “ hatch-out ” of flies on the water (as the metamorphosis of nymphæ to sub-imagines is often erroneously

termed), and fish are taking them. Then he makes the best of his opportunities. He does not, however, "hammer away" for long over a particular fish, but, leaving him for a time, quietly retires from the bank so as not to scare him and other fish away.

JAMES ENGLEFIELD.

“ Red Quill ” hereby acknowledges the courtesy of

The proprietors of the *Field*,

and also of

The proprietors of *Baily's Magazine*,

For their permission to republish a selection of his articles
bearing on dry-fly practice, &c., which have appeared in those
periodicals.

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DRY-FLY FISHING.

A Dry-Fly Purist's Advice to a Beginner.

CHAPTER I.

A FIRST DAY'S SPORT.

It is not my purpose to attempt to give you many instructions as to "casting the dry-fly," nor do I consider any man can learn to do it from books only, admirable and precise as some of the directions therein appear to be, and couched in most felicitous language. You will do better to accompany an expert friend on several occasions to the river-side, and simply look on while he gives you a few lessons and you try to learn by his example and practice how the necessary rudimentary knowledge may be acquired. Having followed this advice, and, by invitation, watched the methods of "Red Quill," for a few sunny hours on six days in the early spring—the rise—the play—and the landing of ten and a half brace of trout, averaging nearly one and a half pounds each fish, you naturally are all excitement, and you soon fix on your first leisure

day to commence operations. Carefully collect overnight, and put into your creel ready for the morning, a winch furnished with twenty-five yards of fine, level, dressed running line, a blue tin box containing casts and points and scissors; a crimson box containing red and olive quills, and a pink box full of other favourite flies. Also a damper-box, knée-pad, steelyard, &c. To your rod in its case fasten your extended landing-net, complete with the knuckle-joint; and do not forget the sling for the net. All this outfit is more fully described further on.

Having probably dreamed of fair river-scenes and sport, you rise in the morning in good time so as to be able to do all things orderly and leisurely—too much haste often leads to careless stalking. Saturate the pads in your damper-box and place therein the gut casts and points which you intend for use two hours hence. After breakfast you are soon ready to start, fair and free. Just then a fairy of your household places a luncheon package in your creel, and a small flask of brown sherry—evidently she is an angler's daughter.

En route to your fishing station you will notice that light, white clouds high up are slowly borne before the gentle influence of a south-west wind, which, being not unfavourable to your chances of sport, causes your hopes to run high. On arrival at

the lower boundaries of your fishing without undue haste, and avoiding, if possible, the least noise or commotion, you will stand well away from the margin of the river, and, having hung your creel on to a gate hard by and placed the landing-net temporarily beside it, you begin to put your tackle together, glancing ever and anon over the peaceful flood, now slightly moved to unrest in the middle as the sweet wind kisses it into smiling ripples, but it is smooth under the sedgy bank on which you stand—your bank you call it. What an improvement is the lock-fast joint, you think, as you put your split-cane rod together and handle it lovingly—just in mere wantonness waving it once over your head, first to the right side as you make the backward sweep, and then an imaginary downcut cast along the grass straight before you. And see! how gracefully the rod bends to the action. The winch fittings receive your winch to a nicety, and, as you thread the thin running line through the bridge rings, you are evidently well satisfied with everything so far. Now from your damper-box take out the gut cast, uncoil it and fasten the loop over a point of wood on the gate to hold it firmly while you stretch it out and pull it tight so as to test every knot and leave the collar quite straight, then loop it on to the running line and wind it up until the gut point is close to your hand, and you are

about to select a fly to attach to it by the aid of the jam knot. What fly shall it be? The golden rule is to imitate the fly on the water, having first caught and examined one; but at present you cannot do this, for you have not approached the river bank to see the rise, if any. But, as you know that the greater part of the ten and a half brace referred to above were caught on red quills, you select that best of all patterns, if artistically tied, for your first essay.

Leave the creel on the gate while you reconnoitre, having first transferred its contents as to fly-boxes and tackle to your pockets; put on your knee-pad, fold the landing-net at the knuckle-joint and hook it on to a sling, so that the net rides easily in the rear of the left hip and high enough not to touch the ground when you kneel. Hold the fly-hook between the thumb-nail and the forefinger of your left hand, thus keeping the line taut from the point of the rod; grasp the rod above the winch in your right hand, pointing it away from the river until you want to make a cast, so as to prevent its gleam from scaring any fish that may be near.

And now you are ready! You look up-stream over the two miles of water you are privileged to fish, and, carefully avoiding to make any jarring footfalls as you go slowly on, you soon kneel within a yard of the edge of the river, and wait—observant

of every sound and motion. The sun, as yet not very high, is opposite to you, the wind lightly blows obliquely across and up-stream. A few black gnats are floating down under your bank, but they are all unheeded by several trout clearly in view ; you think (contrary to the advice you have recently received) that you will make a cast at a venture, and therefore draw off from your winch a few yards of line (it is a mistake, until you are a practised hand, to have more than you can throw out straight), release the fly, wave the rod to and fro to get the line well out (not over the water yet), and then make a trial cast along the grass—yes ! that is about the right distance to reach the fish that is nearest to you. And now you make a real cast, the wind favouring it, and your red quill on O hook falls about three feet beyond its objective, and as it sails over his nose he moves slightly up to it in an inquiring manner, but does not take it. You try again, and your fly catches fast on some overhanging dry and sere sedge, tough as tow ; but, alas ! while creeping up to release it, the fish are scared and slope away to the middle of the river, hiding for a time under the weeds as is their wont.

To gradually shorten and then to lift the line out of the water after a cast over a fish has failed of a good result, the rod, partly raised, must be firmly held in the right hand—the butt pressing on to

one's thigh; draw the line smoothly through the rings, coiling it at the same time in the palm of the left hand after the manner of Thames fishermen when spinning from a weir. This plan causes no disturbance of the water or fish while the line is being recovered; the fly can be carried pendant at the proper length, not touching the ground, ready to make the next throw. And while in the act of doing so, to prevent the coiled-in-the-hand portion of the line from slipping (save at the critical instant it is intended it should do so), hold it securely in the closed palm, and taut between the line held lightly under the fingers of the right hand that grasps the rod. This may seem difficult for a beginner, but it is a skilful and neat way of working the loose line, and you also know the distance it will cover. Indeed, it is almost to be classed as an accomplishment well worth studying, and will be found of great advantage if utilised more generally for dry-fly fishing.

As you move on, the distant small splash of a trout in the rippled water attracts your notice, and a few struggling olive-duns are dimly seen near the opposite bank, and as some suddenly disappear it is almost certain that fish are taking them, although no rises are visible. Change your fly for an olive quill, kneel, and wait a minute ere you cast; you will have no difficulty about it this time, for the

wind will half carry the line over. After several attempts your fly falls delicately, as it should do, and a trout comes up to it just as a drag is beginning, and that is fatal to your chance. Your next essay is made a few yards higher up; your cocked fly, seen as it first sails, you all at once miss, and you think it has become wet and has sunken, but on lifting the rod a movement of the line shows that a fish is on; you strike, but too late—the fish on feeling the hook-pricks leaps out of water, and is free. This is a bad beginning, but although you are vexed you are hopeful still. Larger pale-winged Ephemeridæ are now coming down under your own bank, and you can see several trout eagerly feeding on them: you can even hear the familiar and always welcome sound, like “chop,” as their mouths sharply close on their repast. The sight rather excites you, and your throws are made in too much of a hurry: fish after fish is put down, and those within view await your departure, they have seen enough of your movements.

A little further on you come to a bend in the river where there is a deep eddy, on the edge of which, in mid-stream, a fish is steadily rising, and his every movement can be watched; he is too far off for you to reach, you fear, but, on the maxim “nothing venture, nothing have,” you dry your fly and kneel as close as possible on the nearest point of the bank,

and make a very fair cast, the wind again helping you so that your fly falls only a little short, is at once caught by the circling eddy, carried up-stream as it were until the down current catches and turns it. At that moment the expectant trout quickly moves towards it and innocently sucks it in; you strike, and you know instantly and thrill with the knowledge that the quarry is well hooked. His home, no doubt, is in the eddy, and he therefore bores down to its deepest part what time you hold him well under control to prevent his entanglement in a mass of horse-tail weeds which you can see he is making for. Failing in that he surrenders himself to the swirl of the eddy, and, while an example of passive resistance he goes the round of it, you have an opportunity of reeling in your slack line, now very dangerously lying at your feet, and then holding him from the winch. The eleven-foot rod behaves splendidly, gracefully bowing and bending by the pressure put on the fish with the view to tire him by degrees. Again and again he makes frantic efforts to gain those weeds. It is evidently an old stratagem, but at last he makes a bolder stroke for liberty by rushing up the stream, twice springing into the air and running out fifteen yards of line: a brief pause ensues, and again you reel up and have him under the management of the rod; he then turns and dashes down, hugging the east bank, as

probably he observes you, his enemy, standing near the eddy, and vainly he tries to take a turn round the roots of a yellow iris ; but the strain of the rod soon after five minutes' play is too much for him—he turns on his side and quietly comes to net. You are trembling with excitement as you lift him out. A prize indeed ! your first with the dry-fly lure, and proving you an apt scholar. Two smart taps on the head just over the brain-pan make the victim's fins quiver and the mouth gape and remain open. A real beauty you say, as you strut round him admiringly, while really you feel as proud of this success as you ever did in your life over far more important ones. Of course you make a guess at and overestimate his weight, but the steelyard indicates it is $2\frac{1}{4}$ lb.

Cover him over with dock leaves and flowers and leave him hidden in the sedge while you return to the place where you left your creel ; take the landing net and rod with you, as haply on your way you may notice some fish rising and may get another chance. The creel is there all right, and, resting the rod against the gate, you sit on its top rail and proceed to refresh the inner man with the good things provided for luncheon.

It is high noon, and you feel supremely happy—at peace with all the world, free and oblivious of all your little ailments and petty worries. And

Nature's pages are opened out to you in all the beauty and miracle of awakening spring. From the wood hard by come the ever welcome dual notes of the cuckoo, as if in answer to your thoughts; the earliest of the hirundines are sporting over the river, marvels of grace and activity; a single peewit, as he circles round in low flight, oft repeats his common name, and on the top of a hawthorn a song-bird pours forth a plaintive tale set to music all divine. A few patches of cirrous clouds are noticed coming up with the freshening wind, and the first doubt arises in your mind whether the day will remain fine. Lose no more time, therefore, as you want to explore all the water and to get another fish. Your creel rides comfortably at your side and the landing net; you resume the rod and move stealthily forward "noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness," and soon reach the scene of your late triumph near the eddy. Your trout now looks more beautiful than when lately landed, for then fear and exhaustion had changed his natural colour to paler hues, and his spots were fainter. But now they show bright crimson, black, and brown, and his sides glisten with a silver sheen. Prepare a bed in your creel of marsh marigolds, lady smocks, celandines, daffodils, and tender grasses whereon to lay him, as it were, in state, so that admiring friends on your return home may view him to advantage.

The river is now in wavelets all across, and you look in vain for any sign of a rising fish. No flies are about, and for nearly a mile no chance offers for you to make a cast. True, you do now and again let your fly just touch the water, blown by the wind towards the opposite bank, and you once have the excitement of hooking a fish, but he breaks away. At length you come to a clump of trees which shelters the river and leaves it smooth as a mirror, reflecting glorious cloudland; you can see no flies, but trout are busy, rising at something, probably at *Coleoptera* blown from the trees. You make trial casts with olive quills, then with black gnats, and at last you tie on a gold-ribbed hare's ear dressed on No. 1 hook. You are already kneeling, and at the first accurate throw your fly is taken, the fish well hooked, played until he makes fast round a sunken branch and is—lost! Just like your luck! you are about to exclaim, but you remember your great achievement of the morning and are wisely mute.

Another angler now approaches, preceded by a dog, who runs all along the edge of the bank routing about, and occasionally making a feint of hunting for a rat, little heeding, save by a sharp bark, his master's call, "Come back, Bob!" Why a dry-fly man should bring a dog with him surpasses comprehension, for he is ever in the way, peering over

and rustling through the sedge, thus putting down many a rising trout ; but he is full of amusing antics, and intelligently looks on, often with real excitement while a fish is being played and landed, and when it is laid on the grass wags his tail as he looks up to his owner's face as if to say, *We* have done that well. The two anglers turning away from the bank meet and greet, and, while making mental notes of each other's appearance, they gossip, and narrate the incidents of the day. You lament over all the fish you have lost, and show the one in your creel with becoming pride ; he shows that he has killed three brace, and says that, seeing you in the distance in the morning working your way upstream, and knowing it was your opening day of the season, he thought that as a matter of courtesy he would not interfere with you, and therefore kept to the upper water. He has now packed up for good (as you notice), and he adds deprecatingly, " It is no use going higher up now, for there is no fly on the water, and the wind is too rough for anything."

You act upon the hint, take your rod to pieces, and are soon on your way to the train. And although you have only killed one fish you are delighted with your day's experiences, and are henceforth a confirmed dry-fly fisherman. May you long enjoy this most fascinating and refined of all sports.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING HIS OUTFIT.

It will obviously be a fair conclusion for any man to draw, who is familiar with the contributions of "Red Quill" to the leading angling literature of the day (extending over a period of forty years, and during which time my evolution as a dry-fly purist has been completed), that I am well qualified by much practical experience to offer advice on a multiplicity of subjects connected with the gentle art in general, and the most fascinating form of it, dry-fly fishing in particular. It is, therefore, in no spirit of self-laudation, but with the modest desire of imparting useful information to brethren of the craft, especially to the tyro, that I again venture upon the delicate task of writing the following hints and advice in continuation of the subject, the first part of which appeared in *Baily's Magazine*.

And it is just because I am sure that the young aspirant to the dry-fly art very much needs some elementary and simple directions to guide him in his inexperience during the earlier stages of his career that I offer them. What I now say, therefore,

must be considered as chiefly in his interests. And although I have no thought of dogmatising—for every successful fly-fisherman is entitled to his own opinions—I have a decided disposition to call in question some theories, fallacies, and fads which a few people who have the reputation of experts continually indulge in and disseminate; indeed, I aim to show that success with the dry-fly is not difficult of attainment, if certain common-sense rules be observed and carried out in practice, and if the novice will follow advice I can promise him some good sport.

In selecting his outfit he may well be confused and bewildered by the number of advertisements which meet his eye, nearly every one of them claiming merit in the superlative degree for the articles they puff; and therefore anyone who enters a shop without knowing exactly what he wants, or, if he do know, without the requisite ability to choose discriminately, may easily be misled into the purchase of unsuitable wares. The needs of a dry-fly fisher are in fact very simple, but very special, and his aim must be to secure only the *best* of everything. That is not so easy as it would appear to be from the advertisements; for instance, what is the best trout-reel to choose? Where can he depend on finding the longest and finest silkworm gut? It is unfortunately not an uncommon occurrence to

meet a young angler standing by the riverside, say, at Eastertide, painfully conspicuous by the newness of his get-up ; with a rod far too whippy or too long and heavy, thick running line, coarse gut cast with cottony-looking points, quite unsuitable and badly tied flies, and a large modern brown wicker creel (it may be substantial enough to use as a seat) with complicated arrangements inside, half full of comparatively useless japanned tackle boxes, whose crowded contents, when their lids are opened, are caught by every gust of wind. They have been purchased regardless of expense, in simple faith. But perhaps the most convincing proof that he knows little or nothing of his requirements, and has been badly advised thereon, is to be seen in the large awkward landing-net he carries, screwed, without a knuckle-joint, on to a heavy solid handle four or five feet long, and only fit for punt fishing or for a gillie to bear—an encumbrance all day as he moves about, as he must lay it down whenever he kneels to cast his fly, and he often forgets to take it up again. The description of a landing net suitable for dry-fly fishing, and how to carry it, are fully given in the *Field* as under :—

HOW TO CARRY A LANDING-NET.

There are many ways of carrying a landing-net, and, according to my observation, most of them are

awkward and inconvenient. And as it is especially necessary to a dry-fly man that it should hang at his side easily available, not touch the ground—possibly to become unhooked as he kneels, leave both his hands free—one for the rod, and both when tying on his fly or manipulating his tackle, I venture to present my plan for the benefit of fly fishermen in general. The wooden oval frame of my net measures 16in. by 12in., the net itself is made of Marshall's thread on a $\frac{1}{2}$ in. mesh; it is 15in. deep, and forms a broad-bottomed bag (nets that come to a point or are too deep are very objectionable), and it can be dressed with the same preparation of varnish and linseed oil as one uses in dressing a running line (of course before putting it on the frame), but with more linseed oil to thin it; it should be left in the dressing two days, then wrung out, wiped, shaken, distended on a hoop, and suspended in the air to dry, moderately heavy weights being placed within it to pull the knots of the net tighter; if a new net this should also be done before dressing it. Silk nets are better still.

My landing-net handle is made of light bamboo, and, with the indispensable, strong, well-made knuckle-joint, measures 3ft. 8in., long enough to reach over the sedge to a played-out fish and to carry with comfort. Now, how I consider a dry-fly angler should carry his net is as follows: Bind with

copper wire exactly in the centre of the outer rim of the landing-net hoop at the top a strong split steel or brass ring half an inch in diameter. To an inelastic narrow webbing sling, and made to pass over one's right shoulder and beneath the left armpit, securely fasten a blunt-pointed hook of brass or steel (a lady's stay hook is just the thing required). Now kneel on the left knee, as when keeping out of sight of a fish, take the landing-net by the handle, bend the net hoop completely doubled over by the aid of the knuckle-joint until it is brought close to the handle—in fact, touching it. The little ring will now be in the same direction as the end of the handle, *i.e.*, pointing up to the sky; take hold of said ring and handle, pass the latter under and at the back of the left arm and between the webbing sling to keep the handle in its place and the end upward; put the sling hook into the little ring of the folded net, regulate the length of the sling so that the now suspended net does not touch the ground by as much as two inches.

On standing up turn the landing-net and sling rather to the back of the left hip than on it, where it will rest and ride easily; indeed, one hardly knows he is carrying a net at all, but it is always ready at hand and in no way interferes with one's movements, or kneeling, or shouldering the creel. Not before a fish is vanquished in the fight, and

brought near shore ready to land, need one move a muscle to touch the net, but then unhook the ring by the free fingers of the left hand, when as the net slips down take the handle and shoot the net out, slightly in an upward direction to make the knuckle-joint lock, thus fully distending the net, ready to quietly lift out the gasping quarry. I say quietly advisedly, for it is no uncommon thing to see a fish landed by a violent jerk out of the net, enough to smash it, whereas all that is required is to place it in the water under the fish, lift the hoop round him. and he is soon at the bottom of the net perfectly safe, nor is any hurry needed. I generally kneel when bringing a fish towards the net and over it, keeping out of sight as much as possible, so as not to scare him to make a final effort. It is an art to use the net properly, and to land one's own fish very much adds to the pleasure and excitement of the sport, and if anything does go wrong, then one has only one's self to blame.

And here let me say, absurd as it may seem to the uninitiated, there is a certain amount of fashion to follow alike in the rod and tackle chosen, as also in the angler's dress: he must be up to date in all respects, if he would escape criticism, perhaps some good-natured bantering, not to say chaff.

First, then, the various sorts of tackle and

appliances which I recommend him to use during his novitiate, and afterwards, until he can improve upon them, are set forth as follows. I am obliged to mention a few names of firms to indicate excellence of manufacture, but I by no means intend to say that some of their productions may not be matched elsewhere, or be even better. There certainly is room, all round, for more skill to be displayed in fly dressing, so as to imitate the natural insects with greater accuracy, if indeed that be a *sine qua non*.

There has of late been so much controversy about fly rods, and the issue is so confusing, that I can only prudently recommend the rod that suits me on our southern chalk streams, namely, Hardy's eleven-foot "Perfection" rod. It is in two pieces (not steel centred), with cork handle and butt cap. A spear I never use, because it not only adds a little to the weight, but the chief objection to it is that it dirties one's hands and clothes every time it is drawn out of the ground and used, as mud or more objectionable soil clings to it. The rod is fitted with all modern improvements, and as it weighs only eleven ounces, it can easily be wielded single-handed, and in need held out at arm's length to add a few feet to a long-distance shoot cast; I have had mine in constant use for seven years, without repair. It is indeed worthy of its distinguishing name of

“Perfection.” It is necessary to have a long rod in order to be able to cast a light, level, running line, terminated by a tapered gut collar, a good distance, with greater facility, and in my opinion a light line is one of the secrets of success with trout and grayling. My articles “Trout Lines and Casts” and “On the Losing of Trout,” which have appeared in the *Field* in elucidation of these subjects, can be consulted with advantage, as follows:—

TROUT LINES AND CASTS.

I cannot too much emphasise my opinion that, for a novice especially, to use the modern much-advocated heavy line for dry-fly fishing for trout or grayling is a mistake, and in the early stages of his casting practice tends to spoil his chances of success. Indeed, it may account for the often poor sport obtained by many of the more experienced anglers who have not yet altered their opinion and still continue to use it. My running line is made of the very best quality of fine eight-plait, solid, level, white silk, No. 81½ on A. Carter and Co.’s list of undressed lines. It is the fourth in size from the finest manufactured in solid plait. Dye it in a solution of Ceylon tea to a light brown colour, and, when thoroughly dried and pulled straight, dress it in the following preparation from a recipe given me by Harry Wilder, of Maidenhead, whose father, “Si”

Wilder, was designated by the late Charles Kingsley as "the king of Thames fishermen," and Harry in due course succeeded to the crown.

Recipe for dressing lines : To a quarter of a pint of boiled linseed oil add the same quantity of the best brown thick copal varnish, and eight drops of gold size ; a very little more oil may, in need, be added. Mix and stir these ingredients well together in a small slop basin, pipkin, or anything else suitable, while the compound is being warmed over a slow fire. The safest plan, to avoid its ignition, is to place the basin floating into a large saucepan half full of not quite boiling water (kept at that heat near the fire), and when the dressing is lukewarm, take the basin out and carefully place the line (100 yards, enough for three or four trout lines) into it. It must have been previously made into a loose coil sufficiently large to cover the bottom of the basin and yet be completely submerged in the dressing. Great care is required in preparing this coil. It must be taken from the flat wooden winders on which it is usually bought at shops, not by winding it off by the round and round movement of one's hand and arm, for that would make it full of kinks, but by turning the winder over and over as it is held in the fingers of both hands and letting the line fall down straight off. Then, in like manner, it can be placed round some smooth article, say a

gallipot or glass tumbler, as the latter is moved round to receive it straight on. A smooth surface is required on which to wind it, in order to facilitate its being slipped off. When it is all on, pass under the coil and tie round it, in four equi-distant places, circles of red carpet thread, to keep it quite loosely together, and also tie on two loops of the same thread, one at each end of the line. This should be done before putting it in the dressing. The loops are useful to show by their red colour exactly where each end of the line is to be found, and also to hang it up by, when stretched out for drying later on. It should be kept in the dressing for five or six days, occasionally turned over and opened out so that all parts, even to the core, may become permeated and made waterproof. When ready, take the coil out and suspend it for the surplus dressing to drip off; then, after a few hours, when it has ceased to drip, lie it on soft paper and gently press the part where the dressing has accumulated at its lowest point, to make it exude; take the coil in your hand (there is no help for it, unpleasant and sticky process though it be), cut away the four red binders, fasten one loop to a nail ready placed beforehand on the top of a wall or on firm wood-work, and, with the forefinger of each hand inserted within the coil and distending it, walk slowly backward, unwinding as you go, by the action of

the fingers mutually moving over each other in a circle, so as to do away with all chance of kinking. Keep the line fairly taut all the way to prevent it sagging, and fasten the other end securely to another wall ; it may, with advantage, be supported midway if conveniences offer. This done, now pass a soft fibreless cloth, rag, or sponge all along the line, very, very lightly, in order to wipe off the surplus dressing, and then back again. Leave it for a few hours, then carefully repeat the wiping process ; tiny half-congealed drops formed along the under part of the line will thus be smoothed away, and a surprising number of almost microscopic flies (caught and held prisoners on the varnish) will also be wiped away, leaving the line clear and in the first stage of drying. Choose a morning of soft airs and warm rays, say in April, when the weather-glass points to set fair, so that the line can be left out all night without much risk of rain, and in a few days it will be dry enough to wind on to a winch, from which it can easily be run off again and again on favourable days, to complete the drying. It is, of course, more conveniently manipulated if dressed in short lengths, of 25yds. for instance, which are usually long enough for a dry-fly fisherman's trout line.

A line thus dressed will last for years, and always be smooth, waterproof, buoyant, and pliable, never

requiring any lubrication by deer's fat, vaseline, or other greasy, messy, hand-soiling methods. Nor is an air pump at all necessary in the preparation of it; and if economy be an object, added to the amusement of dressing one's own line so efficiently, I may here mention that the entire cost of 100yds. does not exceed a halfpenny per yard.

Another advantage of fishing with a fine, level line is that the first link of the gut collar or cast may be selected to nearly correspond in size to it, and gradually taper from that down to the drawn gut point on which the fly is tied, as described below. Here it may be pertinent to observe that the taper of a heavy running line cannot be renovated when worn out, for, even if it be tapered at both ends, they soon wear white during the severe and continuous action of fly drying and casting. The very fact that the taper is required by the advocates of the heavy line is an argument, I think, in favour of a light, fine, level line; indeed, the gut cast, if nicely graduated, makes a sufficient taper. It has been said that some men can put a fly in the teeth of any wind short of a positive hurricane, but I have never seen it done with much chance of hooking a rising fish, save, perhaps, by a fluke, nor do I care to try to do it, and court failure. I am content to cast effectively and well enough with my light line against any moderate wind, and

to profit by the many advantages it gives over a heavy line in a favourable wind, and if the breeze be adverse and too boisterous in the open reaches I shift my quarters, haply to find in some comparatively sheltered turns of the river, or in nooks and corners of it, more encouraging conditions.

A tyro who attempts to throw over a rising trout with a heavy line will be sure to put him down and make a bungle of it, and therefore I repeat that it is one of the chief reasons of his failure. I will now briefly refer to the gut cast. I purchase every year, in good time before the season begins, a hank of 18in. fine round natural gut, and of 18in. "refina," or the finest natural gut I can procure, also a hank of 18in. 4x drawn gut, and of the very finest 6x, all tinted a pale steely-blue colour, which a weak solution of Stephen's blue-black ink will give. From these four qualities I select and tie together six strands, so as to form a well-tapered, useful, superior cast, about 3yds. in length, and costing only 5*d.* or 6*d.* It can be shortened or lengthened at pleasure, and an uniformity of excellence obtained, and every strand of it, whether it frays or breaks, can be renewed. Only the very best of gut should be used, regardless of cost. Gut looks so different in different lights, and so much rubbish is bought by the inexperienced, that I suggest it is a good plan to keep fair samples of what suits in one year for comparison

with that which one chooses the next. I invariably do so. The loop at the top end of the cast should be small, and passed over and into a similar loop on the running line. Most anglers, however, prefer to fasten the running line to the gut loop by the jam knot, but the objection to that is, that the end of the knot is necessarily left at least a quarter of an inch long, and as it stands out nearly at right angles it frequently catches and hangs up the casting line; the two loops obviate that. No attempt should be made to tie gut knots without first thoroughly soaking the ends to be operated upon in water, until they are sufficiently soft and pliable.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE LOSING OF TROUT.

“OH, me!” exclaims Piscator in Izaak Walton’s classic. “He has broke all; there’s half a line and a good hook lost.” “Ay,” laments Venator, “and a good trout, too.” To which Piscator promptly replies, “Nay; the trout is not lost, for pray take notice no man can lose what he never had.” Mindful of this pertinent correction, let us, therefore, rather consider why trout so often escape. For, with some dry-fly fishermen it is a growing evil, nor are a few who have the reputation of being past masters in the dry-fly art exempt from failure on occasions; otherwise we should not read that during a day of particularly bad luck (that is the euphemism when skill is really sometimes at fault) three out of every four fish hooked got away, nor so commonly hear of six to eight escaping during a day’s practice, and probably more than that on some days which the angler makes no mention of—perhaps the wiser course! That there are exceptions to such marked misfortunes as these is certain, for some men will bring most of their well-hooked

fish to grass, not missing as many in a season as others in a week. This is not a wild statement, but a fact; and, being so, it is only logical to conclude that what experts can do, other men may attain to by improving their methods and taking proper precautions to avoid, as much as possible, the loss of so many fish—a matter alike vexatious and disappointing to the rod wielder and detrimental to a fishery by making the escaped quarry, if again and again they are hooked and break away, at last very shy of rising to an artificial fly—although, for that matter, the best so-called “educated” trout has in the long run but a poor chance against the wiles and skill of an accomplished dry-fly enthusiast.

Some of the probable reasons why fish escape are, with all due deference and respect for the opinions of those who may differ from him, suggestively offered in the following remarks by one whose ample practical experiences have been his best guide to success, especially on the Test, Itchen, Avon, and the Bourne, the Dove, and the Derbyshire Wye and Derwent. It must at once be admitted that the dry-fly fisher who, except on rare occasions, only uses the three small sizes of hooks 000 to 0 cannot help sometimes missing fish; either the hook in the act of striking is drawn too quickly away from the rising trout, or, if he be only slightly hooked, it gives way as he turns and the rod bends to his first

struggles ; or, if the hook be fast in a fleshy part, it often works out under the strain of lengthened play ; or the fine-drawn gut point—a necessity for a perfect dry-fly cast—may break by a fish being struck with too much force, or if his sudden rush be too masterfully restrained. Some of these mishaps are due to nervous excitement on the fisherman's part, and may be partly avoided by taking matters quietly ; a dry-fly man should never be in a hurry. And, with regard to striking, it may be observed that, as a fish in position sucks in the counterfeit fly, a turn of the wrist and a gentle draw at the right instant (not altogether from the winch) are enough to hook him ; and if he then, in a scared way, bolts up-stream and a little pressure can be risked, it may be tried with advantage, for, feeling it, if he do not then make a second and often the most dangerous rush for a weed patch, he will haply turn down-stream, followed along the bank by the excited angler, whose bending rod puts such a strain on the trout that he heads up again, and is in a brief time played to exhaustion, and netted out. If, on the other hand, a fish (especially a grayling) appears to take no notice of one's fly as it floats past him, but, when least expected, turns to follow it down-stream and take it, he is, while in that position, often insecurely hooked, because the striking is too lightly effected on a partly slack line, and, in consequence the barb of the hook is not covered ;

therefore the better way, while the head of the fish points down-stream, is, if possible, by a back-handed draw to strike up the contrary way.

It is wonderful how seldom a gut cast breaks under the even pressure of a bended rod. Perhaps the most dangerous tactics a trout instantly resorts to when first hooked are to rush up-stream and try, with instinct approaching to reason, to entangle the line, the hook, and himself at the base of a weed bed, not infrequently, if improperly handled, taking two or three turns round their roots and making fast thereto; that is then a desperate case, and usually a break away, after much anxious waiting on the angler's part, is inevitable. But half the risks of being so helplessly weeded are done away with in advanced modern dry-fly practice if, instead of trying to restrain the first rush, a free line is given, and when the fish stops (it may be in the middle of a dense weed bed) the line be carefully wound up, the rod held vertically in the right hand, or sloping at the back of one's right shoulder, and then the running line be taken by the fingers of the left hand and very gently pulled taut, so that the position of the fish may be almost as certainly felt as if the index finger touched him. If at first no movement is felt, he is perhaps still entangled, and, if so, an even sustained pressure brought to bear on the now quite tight line will often cause the weeds to

break away. At that critical moment the rod should take up the line released from the left hand, and the fish be firmly played from it, while the victim is drawn down-stream, and, out of all danger, successfully landed. Some men prefer to spike their rod into the bank when a fish weeds them, and use only their hands to coax or draw him forth ; but to make use of the rod, as described above, is more sportsmanlike, and gives greater pleasurable excitement to the angler.

THE FURTHER LOSING OF TROUT.

Sometimes a well-hooked fish is lost by the jam knot slipping from the eye of the hook, if the finest drawn or gossamer gut be so tied to an eye rather too large for it. That is one reason in favour of using needle or small-eyed hooks, and Major Turle's knot in preference to the jam knot. It is much safer in all cases, but not quite so easily tied, especially if one's sight be not very good, or at dusk towards the end of the evening rise, when every minute is of consequence, and it is often a period of excitement sufficient to make an angler's fingers less steady to manipulate the tying-on. Another risk with the jam knot is when, on applying paraffin to the artificial fly to make it float better, the knot and the eye of the hook are inadvertently oiled too. In that case the gut is apt to soften, and then, after

much using or the strain of a struggling fish, to flatten and slip from the hook. This far more often occurs, alike with drawn as also natural gut, than many anglers are aware of, but it can easily be proved by examination of the end of the slipped knot, which will be in a tiny curl. In most instances, however, the jam knot is fairly reliable, and is greatly in favour for its simplicity.

The use of improperly preserved, brittle, or old, unsound gut (often rendered so by prolonged exposure to the air and light, and not kept from both, especially between fishing seasons, by being inclosed in washleather envelopes) are good reasons why fish break away, often in the act of striking. So also with even the best selected fine or stout gut, if it be not thoroughly soaked in the damper box and made pliable before using it. But that may be overdone, and if so it will be deficient in strength, and it should never be put away in the damper box or it will become tender, perhaps rotten. About two hours are enough to soften natural gut, but much less will suffice for drawn, and a few strands of the latter, to renovate frayed points or breakages, should always be kept ready for immediate use, irrespective of one's already-prepared collar or cast. And further, on such made-pliable gut, flies are less liable to be flicked off while casting.

A dry-fly enthusiast, confident in his skill, very

much prides himself on overcoming difficulties which more prudent anglers would avoid ; he therefore never hesitates to present his counterfeit fly to a sizable trout, haply rising in a haunt where, if hooked, it is almost a foregone conclusion that he cannot be brought to bank. A few fish are lost that way every season. That also may possibly occur through the line catching on to a low bending or partly submerged branch of a tree, or because the hook fastens thereon. "In a fix" like this, one recalls to mind Rolfe's picture of an angler who, fishing with a tail and also a dropper fly, has hooked and played a lovely trout on each hook, but the line having become fast in a bough he is unable to land them, and the situation looks hopeless, a break-away imminent—not, however, to happen while the painting lasts for men to admire.

Losing fish as they are brought near or even to the landing-net is of common occurrence, and is, perhaps, to an irritable man, the most annoying of the many adverse incidents that happen to him during his season's practice with the fly rod. Some of the causes which lead to such mishaps, totally unavoidable or otherwise, are briefly referred to in the following remarks, and the reader (if an angler) must judge for himself under which heading he will class his losses. Often a fish at the moment of striking is felt to be only slightly

hooked ; in that case, unless very carefully handled, he will, while lightly held on a taut line, probably shake the hook free, or artfully rub it out against weed stalks ; or, if the play be prolonged, it will simply give way and the fish escape. One is afraid to strike a second time. Given that the fisherman is alone, his wisest course is at once to crouch low down, or prone at the edge of the bank is still better, and thus keep out of sight. Then gently draw the fish (often while seemingly unconscious of being hooked or of any danger) over the landing-net, which should be held a few inches under water, and then the chance comes to lift him out. Well-hooked fish, if struck too hard, more especially if at that same instant his first wild rush the contrary way begins, are nearly always lost. So also will those who leap out of water, it may be several times, when they feel the hook prick or their liberty restrained, unless the top of the rod be promptly lowered and a temporarily slack line be given. As an example of the way in which a hooked and nearly played-out fish is too often lost at the last moment by unskilful handling of the landing-net, the following typical instance will suffice : An inexpert attendant on an angler carries it extended and ready for use, and from time to time, as the quarry is brought near to the bank, prematurely holds out the net at arm's length over the water,

making wild and abortive attempts to reach the fish, and in the end, when it could be easily, if quietly, netted out, the bungling net-bearer makes a sudden dash at it, knocks the hoop of the net against the hook and the fish, when the latter, thus set free, swims away, much to the angler's disgust and disappointment. After a few such losses he will probably decide that in future he will generally land his own fish—a wise resolution which will very much enhance the pleasure and excitement of his sport.

Probably the modern much-advocated short dry-fly rod is responsible for the loss of many an adult trout, which, if played from an 11ft. split cane, would have been brought safely to bank, for with the latter more control can be exerted over a fish. But that there is a great diversity of opinion about rods is proved by the fact that in Messrs. Hardy Brothers' present list over thirty special patterns of fly rods are mentioned, many of them bearing the names of some of the best fly fishermen of the day.

CHAPTER IV.

A DRY-FLY OUTFIT (*continued*).

THE winch I use is a silent multiplier, of which I have many; made specially to order, and I must be credited with the courage of my opinion in saying that for lightness, moderate cost, and the speed with which it veers out, or winds in, an ample length of dressed line, I prefer it to all the other sorts I have ever tried. The speed may be increased if desired by partly filling the drum, if small, with a coil of tow or spare line, or it would be an improvement to enlarge the drum by ventilating space around it. I am well aware that there is a prejudice against the multiplying winch, chiefly, I think, by young modern anglers who have seldom if ever tried it, and because recent inventions more easily manufactured have been so persistently brought forward and advertised. It is considered old-fashioned, and is now so nearly obsolete that it is not even mentioned in most of the trade lists, but it may still be obtained at a few shops or made to order. The principle is a good one, and if improvements in its manufacture were effected by such a firm as

Hardy Brothers, who offer to make any kind of winch desired, it might again become the popular one for trout and grayling fishing. To possess a *silent* winch in action is almost a blessing, for the irritation to one's nervous system by the constant rattle and click ! click ! of most metal ones is thus avoided. The startling scream they sometimes make when a fish rushes out the line has been called "the music of the reel," but I must confess that I have no ear for such music, and, while intent upon sport in an environment of perfect peace, I deprecate noise of any kind that can possibly be avoided. It must be distinctly understood that the above praise is only for a thoroughly well-made article.

My creel, 17in. wide, is of the ordinary white willow description, and for moderate cost, appearance, cleanliness, ventilation, space, lightness, durability, and its easy adjustment to one's back, riding on the left hip, is not yet superseded by any modern invention. The shoulder strap of strong woollen webbing should be at least 2in. broad, and in some fast shade of colour to assimilate to the angler's dress. The creel, especially at the bottom of it, should be cleansed every time after using it for fish. A small leathern strap and buckle to go round and support it and to lift it by, when heavy and full, is an advantage. No fishing bag is to be compared to it for carrying capacity.

The knee-pad is a necessity for the dry-fly fisherman; mine is made of leather wadded with horse-hair and lined with soft leather waterproofed; measures $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 6 in.; completely covers and protects the left knee-cap, and is fastened round the leg by a strap and buckle, below the knee. It is like the one volunteers used to wear.

The damper box. Mine is made of white-plated thin metal which the wet does not affect nor, therefore, rust. It is round, $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter and three-quarters deep, with a lid to take off. Cut out a round of thin Saxony flannel to cover the bottom of it loosely, to take in and out; also cut two similar rounds of spongio-piline, which can be purchased at any chemist's shop. When in use, these three rounds should be saturated with water, but not be dripping wet. Between the flannel and the waterproof side of the spongio-piline is the place to put a spare collar, so that it may be ready in case of need; between the two rounds of spongio-piline, face to face, put the cast you intend using first, and two strands of 18 in. 4x drawn gut, also three of 6x or finest for points, the 4x in a small coil, the 6x not so small, so that at a glance you may know the difference. This provision will probably be sufficient to repair breakages for the day. All should be placed in a damper box quite two hours before they are required for use, so that they may be soft and

pliable. Always test every knot before beginning to fish. These preparations and precautions are very important, and lead to success, but no gut must be left in the box when the day's sport is over. Stretch your gut-cast straight before looping it on to the running line.

Boxes for flies and gut. All my japanned and elaborately constructed and wastefully expensive boxes for the above purposes I have relegated to the reserve stock of tackle seldom used, chiefly because they are heavy and cumbersome. Instead thereof, the following are sufficient, *i.e.*, six round tin boxes three-quarters of an inch deep and $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter, painted inside and out in bright colours, in pairs, with Aspinall's enamel (any lady friend will be glad to do it for you). The object of the bright colour of the box is that if dropped in the water meadows or elsewhere it may be more readily seen and picked up; it may also be made useful to indicate the contents without opening the lid: for instance, if you appropriate blue for gut casts and points, crimson for quill-bodied flies, and scarlet for other sorts of flies. Cover the bottom of the blue box inside with a round of thin sheet cork, easy to take in and out—this is to keep it dry. In three of these boxes you can carry all that is required for the day's fishing. The other three will do for reserved flies and gut, which of course you will leave at home.

For the crimson and scarlet boxes cut out for each one round of strong linen-rag-made white paper to fit inside and lightly cling there. Then prick four or five dozen pin-holes in lines across the paper, with sufficient space between the holes, and also between the lines of holes ; that done, carefully place your flies therein, the barb of each hook quite through each hole separately ; and by final touches somewhat arrange the wings of the flies to set sloping one way. Also previously, to facilitate your selection of a particular pattern you want, in an emergency or at dusk, you may write the dry-fly entomological names above them. Thus in two boxes you may safely carry eight or ten dozen of flies, and they are all so securely fixed in the paper that the wind will not be likely to blow them away, and moreover each fly can be taken out as required, without pulling or ruffling its wings, by nipping the pin-hole with the point of your scissors, and then with the latter lifting the fly out by the wire of the hook. This is, I submit, a very ingenious plan of mine, and has never before been made public. One thing more ; do not return to the box any flies that have been used—stick those in your fishing cap in the usual manner, but do not keep too many there, as they bleach in the sun, rust in the wet, and spoil. At every opportunity, therefore, when the fish are rising freely, old flies

can be utilised—they often then kill as well as new ones.

The other articles you need are a pair of pointed scissors, in a sheath for safety ; but without a sheath is less bother, as one is continually losing it. There are several modern inventions of fly scissors, some combining gut clips, but I prefer a small, sharp ordinary pair.

A brass steelyard it is advisable to carry to weigh by $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. up to 5lb., or to weigh by loz. up to 4lb. is better if you fish water where weight is the hard-and-fast rule as to the size a fish may be killed. But if length be the rule (which in my opinion is far better), you may save yourself the trouble of carrying a special measure by marking the length on your landing-net handle.

Paraffin oil, in a small bottle, with a tiny camel's-hair brush inserted into the cork, is now often carried, but experts in drying their flies by the old method have no necessity to use it, and it may be thought to derogate from their skill. In fact, the beginner who desires to learn to dry his fly properly had better do so without the aid of oil. It is of doubtful advantage at any time, save perhaps on a drenching wet day, or when the air is saturated with moisture. And it is ordinarily a nasty-smelling, greasy thing to use, soiling one's fingers, and from their grip the cork butt of one's rod.

Granted, it may make a fly float, but very often it does so on its side rather than as it should, and must do for success, upright, or, as we anglers say, "cocked." It certainly softens and impairs the strength of gut, so that the gut point which forms the jam knot affixed to an eyed hook flattens, and then often slips off while being whirled through the air during the drying process, or when a hooked and desperately fighting fish strains it. I am confident of this being the case from experience, for I have often taken special note of it by looking at the end of the gut, when a fish is supposed to have broken away, and in several instances the gut has shown that the knot had slipped and was the real cause. It is almost impossible to prevent the eye of the hook from being lubricated to some extent, however careful one may be. The Turle knot is perhaps safer at any time, but no doubt it is when paraffin is used, or when the eye of the hook is large and the gut then too fine; it is not so simple as tying the jam knot. On the whole question, for or against the oil, I incline to class it amongst the many unnecessary things the dry-fly fisher carries.

If fishing in extensive and quite private water, I sometimes carry, instead of a drum net, two small bag-shaped nets, rather broad than deep, and each large enough to hold a brace or two of good-sized fish. They are made of netting thread,

closing or opening at the top by a slip loop, but, as there are no rings or hoops, they roll up into a small space, and can be carried in one's pocket without inconvenience. They are very useful in hot weather to keep fish alive in, which would otherwise be half cooked while being lugged about in one's creel all day, and, having these nets with you, you need not encumber yourself with the creel, for that can be hung up on a bush or tree, and left for a while. The object of having two nets is that as you move quietly along the bank, and fish upstream, you have no necessity to return immediately to the one you make use of for your first capture, for when you catch the second fish you will have the other net handy for it. Of course you can shift them both from time to time, being careful to note exactly where you leave them—in running water is best, to keep up the vitality of the fish you intend later on to present to friends. A collapsible drum net is described below.

The most important subject of flies, &c., remains to be dealt with, with much useful advice to guide the beginner as he advances on through much practice to proficiency.

NEW FORM OF KEEP NET.

A drum net is useful to keep fish alive in, to prevent their deterioration in appearance and quality

if killed immediately they are caught, and carried about in one's creel or fishing bag in very hot weather; it also eases the burden. And for another reason, it gives an angler the opportunity (should the rules of a fishery limit him to only a fixed number per diem) to exchange and release any already captive in the net for larger ones if they come to hand. The writer's new invention may be described as follows: Two thin round iron rings 16in. in diameter are made with three equal joints, one of which opens and shuts with a screw-nut to fasten it. When open, one end of it is inserted between the knots of a light but strong net made of undressed netting thread on a $\frac{1}{2}$ in. mesh and passed in a line all round the upper part of it, and the other ring in the same manner at the lower part, both rings, when closed, fully distending it and forming the drum 10in. in depth between the rings. The top and the bottom of the net are then nearly flat, but the top part is made to contract gradually and extend for a few inches in an upward direction so as to form a neck about wide enough at the opening to allow fish up to about 4lb. weight to be passed through. When in use the weight of the iron rings is enough to sink it in the river, prudently at a chosen spot out of the way of another rod's practice, and concealed from view. A thin water cord with a slip loop will serve to close the opening, and to

tie it up to anything found suitable near the bank, to rest on the bottom, or, in preference, to suspend it in the water so that the free current passes through. When empty it can, by turning the screw and opening the rings, be made to collapse and fold into three, and then carried in one's pocket or creel, being easily re-formed again. It is also even more useful while lake fishing, or from any boat which is without a well, to hang over the side for the same purposes.

CHAPTER V.

HIS OUTFIT (*continued*).

THE important part about flies, &c., is now set forth as briefly as is consistent with the purpose of further rendering the advice and instruction efficient to the tyro. It will be seen by the previous descriptions of tackle, &c., that among the objects I keep in view two especially are suggested, *i.e.*, to avoid carrying anything unnecessary, and to reduce the weight of impedimenta to a minimum. It is ludicrous to observe how some anglers encumber themselves—with a spare rod, waders, heavy water-boots where not needed, waterproofs, and what not, so that they look more like Robinson Crusoe equipped for a journey than a peaceful brother of the gentle craft. My silk landing-net, full length complete, with knuckle-joint to fold it by, so as to hang it at one's left side without its touching the ground when kneeling, can, *en route* to the river-side, be tied to the rod by the tape strings of the rod-case, and the net-sling utilised for binding both together, for convenience of handling. They, with all the tackle, &c., I usually take (as minutely

specified in the foregoing pages), including creel and shoulder-strap, only weigh $3\frac{3}{4}$ lb. And, while fishing, the three boxes of flies and casts can easily be transferred to one's pockets, leaving the creel free for luncheon packages. Nor need the creel always be carried; it can from time to time be hung on a bough, and thus the burden be reduced by more than half. In fuller elucidation of easing the burden of a fly fisherman, the following article was published in the *Field*:—

A LIGHT DRY-FLY EQUIPMENT.

After reading in a recent number of the *Field* an article describing a dry-fly man's burden, almost too much to bear, I am moved to show by the following account of my own methods (long since evolved from much experience, and, it may be said, proved advantageous in successful practice) how any excessive weight to be carried by a dry-fly purist may be avoided. First, then, as to the artificial flies: I do not myself require any for wet-fly fishing, as I never resort to it, even in a half-tempting emergency, when no fish are rising to take surface food for many hours, and yet in sharp runs or other likely places they can be seen minnowing, or picking larvæ from the weed-beds or river gravel, haply intercepting nymphæ. Nor are flies on much larger-eyed hooks than No. 2 required for sedge-fly

fishing up to dusk. This simplifies the matter, as only lures for dry-fly sport need be carried. I lay down my pen at the last stop, and pause awhile to look into a mahogany box on which I have often sat in my punt, and at the contents of a small chest of five drawers, all (box as well) crowded with tackle used in early days, when Thames fishing by float or leger, paternoster or travelling, was a satisfying pleasure, or in middle life, when spinning for trout or jack seemed delightful, and afterwards, when fly fishing for dace or chub led the way to the present fascinations of the dry-fly art. Except to remind one of happy days gone by and genial companions who also have vanished from life's changeful scenes, all this angling gear is discarded as useless to me now, save the articles in the top drawer, which are more or less wanted for fly fishing, such as winches, dressed lines on winders, hanks of natural and also of drawn gut in wash-leather envelopes, and about a dozen expensive japanned boxes of artful construction, but little use by the riverside and cumbersome to carry, most of them containing old flies, once, but no longer, favourites; but four cases hold a reserve stock of dry flies, with all improvements up to date, and one pale green cardboard box, $4\frac{3}{4}$ in. square by $1\frac{3}{8}$ in. deep, inclosing twelve smaller ones "as closely as nature packs her seedlings," delivered within the last few months, and full of red quills

tied by Ogden Smith on No. 000 to No. 2 blue sneck-bend hooks.

In addition to the weight of japanned boxes with compartments, open or with lids, the objections to them are that one's flies in a little time too often get mixed, and thus the intended advantage of their separation to facilitate selection is done away with. Also, if opened while the angler is standing in a windy place, some of their contents are frequently blown away and lost. My plan is simplicity itself, as three round tin boxes, together only weighing a few ounces, are all I require by the riverside to carry flies and casts.

These three coloured tin boxes fully furnished with flies and gut as described in the preceding chapter barely weigh 7oz. The damper box, with three saturated pads, and a steelyard to weigh by quarter pounds up to 5lb., weigh together $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. An 11ft. split cane rod (without the spear), 11oz.; the rod case, $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz.; brass winch, with about 25yds. of eight-plait fine silk, level, running line, $4\frac{1}{2}$ oz. The knee pad, with buckle and strap, weighs 4oz. A pair of scissors and a 2in. oil bottle, partly filled and a tiny brush weigh $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. The silk landing-net, with knuckle-joint and handle complete, also a sling with brass hook to carry it by when hanging at one's left side weigh together 12oz. Two small nets to keep fish alive

in only weigh $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. A capacious white willow creel, 17in. wide, with leather shoulder strap and buckle, weigh 1lb. 15oz. The latter can be utilized, when not over the shoulder, to strap round the creel, and to carry it by hand, right or left, and thus ease the burden (often heavy with the spoils of the day), or as more convenient to lift in or on alighting from a train, or to shift with other luggage on a long journey. The total weight of all this (hardly to be called burden) is under 4lb.

And while one is actively on the warpath by the riverside this weight may be reduced more than half by hanging up the emptied creel on the bough of a tree, or hiding it in the sedge, and instead of carrying it about all day, with the additional weight of fish killed, making use of the two nets referred to above to retain the fish alive as they are brought to grass. A good deal might be added about an angler's dress, but I will only refer to it briefly. I dress according to the weather, but not in heavy garments, nor do I wear high, clumsy water boots or leggings. And as I never wade I am not encumbered with brogues, fishing stockings, wading trousers, *et hoc genus omne*. One consequence of not wading is that I have never had even a touch of rheumatism. I am, at present, a fair-weather angler, guided by the forecast for each day I intend to wield the rod, but I have never of late

years carried waterproofs ; if the weather be doubtful I simply tie a straight-handled silk umbrella, weighing only 12oz., to my landing-net handle, and it rides easily with it at my side. In use it is a sufficient shelter from moderate rain, and may be left behind with the creel if the sky clears. To those dry-fly fishers who court fatigue by carrying heavy burdens, the foregoing is commended (with becoming deference) to show how they may be made light.

As to what is best to carry for luncheon, it has often been discussed in angling literature ; but no conclusion can possibly be arrived at, as the habits and appetites of men are so different, and what will suit one may not suit another. Personally I prefer for an *al fresco* tiffin in the trout, and even in the later grayling, season a good supply of fruit, cake, (home-made, of nutritious ingredients), biscuits, &c., to anything else, supplemented, if the day be long, by a meat patty or sandwiches. I have such refreshment put up in paper bags, and if I take anything to drink, which is very rarely, a glass or two of old brown sherry in a medicine-bottle, which when empty can be left behind ; but glass should never be thrown into a river. I do not carry a flask, because it is heavy and, when drained, useless ; also for another reason, because dram-drinking, an old

friend of mine used to say, "is a stealing thing," and may easily become an objectionable practice. Indeed, too much eating and drinking while fishing make one less active in the pursuit of sport. As a non-smoker, I perhaps miss some pleasant dreaming, but I have a little less weight to bear, no tobacco-pouch, cigar-case, pipe, match-box, &c.

I have now come to the important subject of flies, and I am confident that my articles published in the leading sporting periodicals over my well-known pseudonym will be of service, if again and again referred to, to indicate the successful flies to use in the Itchen, Test, Avon, Wye, and elsewhere, under the varying conditions of the weather, of the water, the rise of ephemera, trichoptera, or lepidopterous insects, and of the time of year. And I may add that, in whatever *river* I have fished in England, Scotland, and Wales, I have often found the same lures answer (with the addition, perhaps, of one or two favourite local patterns which it is always wise to try), accounting for good sport obtained with the dry-fly from 1880 to the present year.

The entomological names of the flies agree so little with the present nomenclature of artificial flies, and the latter so imperfectly represent the natural ones, especially as regards imago wings, that it is a constant source of wonderment what

they are intended to represent, and, still more so, what the fish take them for. I am inclined, however, to think that it is the body portion of the artificial fly (looking a little like some floating insect, or a grub in its advanced nymphal condition—a familiar object to every fish feeding under the water) that constitutes the chief attraction for a rising trout as he sucks in the tempting morsel. Nevertheless, from a dry-fly man's point of view, the wings must stand upright, and sail the body down-stream in a natural manner. In this connection it may be surmised that an Alexandra fly (which is at present generally tabooed on private trout-streams) is taken for a minnow, and the whole glittering family of silver, gold, or tinsel-bodied flies, from a gold tag to a Wickham fancy, are also taken for larvæ, gemmari, coleoptera, lepidoptera, perchance for hymenoptera, for I have more than once seen a wasp, struggling and gyrating by the action of its wings, pass down-stream until snapped at and swallowed by a too eager trout—a dangerous tit-bit, one would think.

It is no doubt a pleasure and some advantage for an amateur to learn to tie his own flies in an artistic manner, as he not only tries to copy the natural ones which he meets with on the rivers he frequents, but he can carry out his own fancies and inventions, which, if successful, he can keep secret for himself. I have known some of the roughest-looking

nondescript flies prove killers. He is also likely to be satisfied with fewer patterns, and the delight he finds in his sport is much increased by tempting the quarry to destruction by his own handiwork. Further, he can choose the hooks he most affects, and keep to a uniformity of make, which is certainly desirable. But if he has no leisure or inclination for fly-making (and it may here be observed that, notwithstanding some popular works on the subject, comparatively very few out of the host of fly-fishers seem to care for the trouble of it), there are some fairly good professional fly-dressers with whom orders can be placed with some chance of instructions being carried out and one's samples imitated. On the other hand, there are many who never take any care whatever to gain hints from the study of natural flies; they are alike careless in their tying and fastening off, and in the selection of hooks, with the result that a good many of the cheap flies sold so readily in shops are really worthless. It would be invidious to mention names, but one or two are widely known as among the best.

I am not wishful to raise any controversy as to the limit or excessive number of flies which some anglers consider necessary to use, for it is too large a subject for the space at my disposal, and, moreover, is full of theories; but I am able to prove by my

recorded successful sport that not many are required on chalk streams—in fact, not a quarter of the one hundred patterns which experts made out lists of a decade ago. I have gone through a season with one pattern of fly only. (See *Field*, March 18th, 1899, and December 17th, 1904.)

I submit the following reduced list of trout and grayling flies, all to be dressed on Hutchinson's blue sneck-bend, turned-up eyed-hooks in varying sizes, according to circumstances, from No. 000 to No. 1, and for evening fishing, when phryganidæ are on the wing, Nos. 2 and 3. All are not, of course, needed by my novice (to whom I will now again address myself), but I do not like to omit any one of them; you will soon learn to discriminate as to those you like best, and as you improve in practice you will settle down to a few favourites.

TROUT FLIES.

Red quill, with dark starling double wings and red gamecock's hackles; olive quill, with pale, medium, and dark wings (both these patterns may be varied with a flat gold or silver tag); ginger quill, blue quill, gold-ribbed hare's ear, Salisbury red-spinner, with badger hackle; Wickham's fancy, silver sedge; black gnats of both sexes, woodcock quill, Lock's fancy, iron blue, brown sedge, and

small Alexandra on No. 1 hook ; this properly made can be fished dry, and, although I do not use it myself, I see no reason why so small a one should be objectionable where a silver-bodied fly like Foster's fancy and other patterns resplendent in gold and silver are tolerated.

GRAYLING FLIES.

Red tag, Foster's fancy, honey dun bumble fished dry, the Englefield quill, with and without a flat silver tag, as tied by Ogden Smith ; pink Wickham, apple-green, hare's ear, and dark olive dun with silver-ribbed body. But you will find that *Salmo fario* and *Thymallus vulgaris* will alike often take almost any pattern of floating fly.

It will be noticed that I do not mention Mayflies in the above lists. The simple reason is that I am not an authority on the subject, and do not care for the excessive "slaughter of the innocents" so easily (it appears to me) effected. And that opinion is consistent with my practice, for never, except in June, 1895, have I fished with an imitation of the great ephemera. Nevertheless, I can well appreciate the enthusiasm for the sport of its many devotees while the brief rage for it is on ; nor may I presume to find fault with them for their full enjoyment of it. I decidedly expect you to try it, and I know that the imitations of *Ephemera danica* and

Ephemera vulgata, in their colorations of green and brown, are among the best patterns.

As it is very important to know what hooks to choose, I can confidently recommend Hutchinson's blue sneck-bend, turned-up, eyed hooks. I prefer them to all others, because they are reliable in every way; they do not rust nor break, are of good strength, sufficiently open at the gape, full-barbed, and sharp; the eyes are nicely open, and the finish and colour complete the perfection.

I have now described all the gear you need for dry-fly fishing, and I shall add nothing anent the wet-fly practice except that the two systems are somewhat opposed to each other, and cannot be followed by the same man on the same day with equal chances of success: he had better keep to one or the other than be often shifting about and changing his flies. The dry-fly brings sport in the highest sense of the word; the other requires more varied skill, and therefore has its enthusiastic followers also. As erst an all-round fisherman myself, I should be sorry to say a word in its dispraise.

To the advice already given you, the following hints and suggestions are offered for your guidance. Avoid making any noise by the riverside that you can help, for it is a moot question whether fish are endowed with the sense of hearing, but it is wise to

assume that they do hear, and act accordingly. Keep out of sight by all means.

In this place an article from the *Field*, "In praise of Solitude," will be read in the following chapter with much interest and profit—offering cogent reasons why to fish alone is absolutely necessary to ensure *perfect* sport with the dry-fly, and as an example describing a day's practice on the river Itchen in June.

CHAPTER VI.

IN PRAISE OF SOLITUDE.

Dry-fly fishing to be perfect should be solitary. This is my answer (too long pondered over and delayed because I hoped in the interval that perhaps a more facile pen than mine would reply) to the interesting question propounded in the *Field* by Mr. Basil Field, virtually to this effect: "Is dry-fly fishing in rivers and streams social or solitary?"

The accomplished writer of the short but highly finished, and one would have thought sufficiently attractive article to induce some correspondence, came to the conclusion that "he loved to fish alone," and he repeats this, with a proviso, by saying, "Let me alone when the fish are on the feed." With every word of the article I cordially agree, not the less so because I can refer to many of my own, published in the *Field*, wherein I emphasize the fact that the companionship of Nature does away with the solitude of an angler's environment, given that he is a man of sentiment, with a touch of poetry in his spirit. But I take a much more

extreme view of the situation when I venture to express my deliberate opinion, as placed at the beginning of this chapter. And I crave the indulgence of my readers in making the following remarks and giving some reasons for the bold assertion, premising that they are the outcome of my own extensive practice with the dry-fly, and that they are not put forward in any presumptuous or dogmatic spirit, nor in the least attempting to gauge the minds of others on the subject. Indeed, I may frankly admit that among my angling friends few lay so much stress on the absolute advantage of fishing without a companion or attendant as I do, but, then, I include all the peaceful and charming accessories of the surroundings.

But except in rare instances, where on private water only one rod is permitted by the owner at a time, it is often out of the question to have a fishery to oneself, therefore men, keen as each other for expected sport, must meet occasionally; it cannot be avoided. In that case, to follow one another, taking turns to try over moving fish, is a mild insanity, and, in the end, annoying and nerve-upsetting—altogether unsatisfactory to both parties. They should, therefore, at the initial stage, arrange to part company at once. If both banks are available, it is easy; the second comer should, as an act of courtesy, be offered his choice, but if his modesty

hinder his acceptance of it, the simple but somewhat vulgar "toss up" may be resorted to to solve the difficulty, or certainly a more refined method is to place two folded papers, having "east bank" and "west bank" written thereon, in a cap, shake it, and draw the fateful issue out.

If only one bank of a preserved fishery of, say, two miles in extent is available, a distance of half a mile at least should separate the two rods, and even if four were on the warpath, similar space could be allotted—the four half-milers following each other as each beat is cleared, but, by tacit agreement (obviously in the interest of all), the distance always being more or less observed. The rod in the upper quarter would then return to the lower beat, the second rod taking his vacated place, and in due course, in like manner, the other two rods passing up, with the regularity of clockwork. Also, each of the rod wielders, at all events, in the first hours of sport, would have the great advantage of casting-over his half-mile of water without disturbance, and practically for that time alone. A time limit of an hour or two might be, with good effect, hit upon to operate on each half-mile. In passing to and from, the sure sign of a good sportsman, always considerate of others, is to avoid the river marge as much as possible, and to tread softly on his way. Of course, the owner

or lessee of a fishery could best arrange this plan by embodying it in his rules ; partly as to beats, as was lately the case on the Abbots Barton water just above Winchester, and in accordance with the prevailing custom on some salmon rivers, pools indicating beats. On the other hand, it will be objected to by some dry-fly fishermen, who, like myself, are of the advanced modern school, that there need be no necessity for so dividing the water, as they should all be under the influence of *esprit de corps*, and ever desirous of not interfering with another's sport and pastime by approaching too near. But is that so? I am glad to be able to reply: "Yes, almost invariably," but there have been, and are, exceptions within my own experience when a rod has kept too close in front, or when a restless angler settles down to no particular reach and appears to roam aimlessly here, there, and everywhere in a most fidgeting manner ; such a one should be given a wide berth.

Another way to ensure fishing alone is to rent water, and, if money be an object, to allow one or two professional or busy friends (whose leisure is necessarily very limited) to share it with you, choosing those who, at most, can only spare one or two fixed days a week, to be reserved and set aside for them throughout the season—the water to remain fallow when they do not come, reserving all the other days for one's own sport. This is, I

consider, an excellent arrangement, indeed, far preferable to the beat divisions described above; more free, even with less fishing. I adopted the plan when I rented the St. Cross water a decade ago, for three years, and it was satisfactory to all.

I have, during some past seasons, been most fortunate in receiving invitations to fish for a few days in the strictly private and highly preserved portions of the Bourne and Test at Hurstbourne Priors, of the Test at Longparish, the Avon at Lower Stratford beyond Salisbury, and most frequently of late years (twenty-five in regular sequence), in "the cream of the Itchen," at Winchester. But perhaps the place on the Itchen most worthy to be called "an angler's paradise" is found in Shawford Park, and a description of a day's fishing there in utter solitude as to man's companionship will, I think, serve somewhat to illustrate the title to this article. The main stream meets the back stream at the lower boundary of the demesne. Let us begin there. It is June, but the Mayfly is over (never any attraction at any time for the writer), the day is perfect, and overhead the magnificent arched canopy of illimitable space is glorious in mountainous masses of pure white clouds, with azure spaces between like mysterious lakes, or wider expanses like seas.

“What a lovely world is this!” one exclaims, as, lost for a few minutes in admiration, one’s rapt gaze falls to earth again, and there beauty is all around, summer decked in her choicest robes, profusely embroidered by Flora. The fly-rod is ready, and so are you. But, as you feel that you have the two streams and the park entirely to yourself, there need be no hurry in your progress. That is an advantage to enhance one’s quiet enjoyment. A trout is rising almost at your feet, so cautiously have you approached the bank; you draw away, and kneel lower down. He still rises. “Doomed!” you mutter—and, sure enough, the first fly, deftly presented, tempts, hooks, and he is brought to net; the steelyard indicates $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb. The fish are so guileless in this little-fished preserve and, therefore, so easy to capture—moreover, it is a rule with me, when fishing by favour in private water, not to aim at making too big a bag—that I at once decide not to kill any smaller trout than this first one caught, during the day. It may be self-denying, but it is an advantage to the fishery and an act of courtesy to one’s host. The three next seen rising fish are all, presumably, under that size, and therefore are not even cast over. Then a grayling rises, but I snatch my fly from him, as he cannot be in condition yet, having only completed his spawning operations in May; in like manner all other grayling rises are

avoided. Within an hour a brace of trout, weighing $2\frac{3}{4}$ lb., is creeled. A larger one, in a favourite locale at mid-day, under overhanging boughs, is watched, but he makes no sign or movement save that of his tail to keep him in position. A mental note is made that one will try for him when the shadows deepen later on, an advantage one could not count on if other rods were at work. Below the glassy waterfall in the bubbled, frothy turmoil, close under the apron, three trout are feeding. One looks takable and rises instantly to a red quill on No. 000 hook (no other fly is tried all day), is hooked, and, after taking a turn down-stream and giving very exciting play, is netted out, weighing $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. The other two have not been disturbed, and, after many throws alternately over one and then the other, the one farthest off seizes the fly, rushes under the fall, the gut is felt to be rasping against a stone, and a break-away follows. Two brace are now in hand.

Luncheon comes next. On nearing the mansion I interview the gardener, who tells me of sport lately had by a visitor, and then he shows me over his glasshouses. I stroll round the park, now looking its best, adorned with stately trees in their full leafy honours, and about four o'clock have reached the lower portion of the back stream, standing on the east bank. Not a fin is

moving, nor probably will be until the evening rise. So I thought, and therefore, after waiting about, I take out a pocket volume of "Childe Harold" to read as I sit at ease on a fallen tree, *pour passer le temps*, and to recall familiar passages of some of the best poetry in our language, learned in youth and not forgotten in advancing years. About two hours later my cap (on which old flies are stuck, in the orthodox fashion) was suddenly surrounded with gnats, sounding a warning "ping," and, on glancing to the river, I saw, with surprise and pleasurable anticipation, that "a rise was on"; diptera and dark-winged Ephemeridæ floating down, some trout eagerly taking them. It was, at first, difficult to see their size, and therefore time was lost in bringing some under the set limit to net, but, when they began to poke their heads above the surface for an inch or two, it was easy to discriminate, and during the next hour a leash of goodly trout were secured, weighing respectively $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb., 1 lb. 6 oz., and 1 lb. 9 oz. The rise began to lessen, and then I crossed over to the main river to take another look at the large fish under the tree, referred to above. He had dropped down a yard lower, and was taking olive duns to the right and left. My imitation for some five minutes was totally unheeded, but at last he turned, followed, and closed his jaws on it. He was too well hooked to have much chance of escape in the

broad water near, and withal played from a split cane rod 11ft. long. But he tried all his wiles before he gave in and lay gasping at my feet—the best fish of the day, scaling 2lb., and making up a sufficient bag of four brace. It will be admitted that this is perfect sport—that the sense of quiet enjoyment, freedom from all restraint or interruption, is delightful, spirit-stirring, and refining, especially if one can realise that

This is not solitude, but 'tis to hold
Converse with Nature's charms and view her stores
unrolled.

But, of course, it is too much to expect enough of it by favour of generous friends, or even wish it. Therefore, the better course of all is to rent a fishery outright, in order to experience what is meant by Walton's distinction given to angling as "the contemplative man's recreation." One's holding need not be extensive if the water be fairly well stocked. Half a mile of both banks should suffice for an expert, as he would have the option of fishing the late evening rise from the east bank to the opposite one while the water between remained lighted up by the reflection of the after-glow of sunset. Or, if a mile of one bank only can be secured, a more extended environment would be some compensation for the restriction, and one would be able to offer a friend a day or two; but

consistent with the opinion I hold that to fish alone is the great desideratum for sport and study by the riverside, it is my rule not to accompany a rod, unless he be a tyro, and urges me to become his mentor for the nonce. In that case I usually offer to land his fish also.

Fish by yourself as much as possible, and without a keeper following you about ; if you offer him what he naturally expects and you are naturally ready to bestow, give it at your first interview, and hint to him that, if all goes well, you will from time to time repeat the *douceur* ; he will then understand, or in need you may plainly tell him that you prefer to fish alone. But, of course, he has his master's interests to look after, and must interview you occasionally. It is a prudent plan to voluntarily show the contents of your creel, and ask him to check the weight of your choicest captures. He will perhaps tell you where he has just seen a rise of fly and fish. Take no boy with you to carry your net, &c., for he cannot long be quiet, and is mostly troublesome. Land your own fish ; the excitement of doing so will very much enhance the pleasure of your sport, and you will save your landing-net from rough usage in a bungler's hands.

Weigh your fish, with a witness, on your return home at night, or before you present them to friends, and at once make an entry in your diary of sport.

There also record your observations about flies and natural objects at your leisure after your fishing day is over, or next morning, but make brief notes by the riverside to aid your memory when writing a fuller description; carry a pencil and scraps of paper in your pocket for the purpose.

Avoid a restless angler; give him a wide berth.

Be courteously polite to other rods whom you meet by the riverside. If they offer you a killing fly, give one or two of your own favourite patterns in return, but do not gossip too long.

Never, in casually passing a fly-fisher at work, if a stranger, ask him abruptly "what sport he has had?" for if good he may not care to publish it, and if nothing at all, it is somewhat humiliating to say so. I never can understand why utter strangers to a man carrying a rod and creel, as he passes along a thoroughfare on his way home, should *sans cérémonie* accost him and take the liberty to ask the above question. It is peculiar to angling. A gentleman carrying a gun is never asked by a stranger, "How many birds have you killed?"

Aim at perfection as much as possible in flies and tackle, and never fail to put all straight and in order after the day's fishing, however late it may be, before retiring to bed.

It is not always advisable to show your hand—in other words, to fish in your best manner while a

casual observer is near. There are many methods of casting, or rather of presenting, one's fly, modifications or improvements of instructions to be found in books, which are learned only in constant practice, and are therefore secrets it is well to retain for one's own benefit. One, for example, is to be able to cast a fly so that it falls delicately on a slack, curved line a foot or two in front of a rising fish, and thus to postpone for some important seconds the usual drag of the fly, which sooner occurs on a fully extended straight line.

Wading while only trout fishing is often quite unnecessary, and should be avoided as much as possible. I never wade. It disturbs the water, scares the fish away from under or near the banks, probably crushes and kills larvæ and other fish-food in the gravel or on the weeds. And it always seems a little unfair to other men who follow to fish the same water who do not wade. Granted, in some rivers it may be needed to increase one's sport—for instance, in such rivers as the Derwent; but there, as in other shallow streams, worn in places by winter floods into eddies, shelving pitfalls, and suddenly deep holes, an element of danger lurks. And it may be added that habitual waders run the risk of suffering afterwards from rheumatism and other kindred infirmities brought on by exposure and damp.

Favourable winds. There are some fallacies about the wind. The old couplet that "when the wind is in the south it blows the bait in the fishes' mouth" is right so far that the south wind is nearly always gentle and in the angler's favour, but a south-east or south-west wind is often stormy enough to roughen a river into wavelets or even white-tipped waves. I have had fairly good sport in north-east, seldom in north, winds. A down-stream wind is one to avoid. But if one cannot avoid it the best may be made of it by patience and perseverance, and there are occasions when good results have followed. (See below my short article from the *Field*, "A Down-Stream Wind.") But too much from any quarter is bad for dry-fly fishing :—

A DOWN-STREAM WIND.

There is no reason to suppose that larvæ in their nymphal transitional state must, by force of a natural law, rise to the surface of a river at a particular and fixed moment of their existence to change into duns ; but rather, on the contrary, it may be inferred that they are endowed with discriminating instinct to defer that metamorphosis for a time until favourable conditions of weather prevail, likely to assist the operation, for otherwise they would be rising at all times. This every dry-fly angler knows is not the case—he has too often to wait during

long hours, sometimes days, without seeing a pseudo-imago on the water. The temperature of the water or of the air can have little to do with it, for when grayling fishing in severe wintry weather, snow all round, and ice bordering the stream, I have often witnessed as good a rise of flies for a few brief hours as in the spring or summer time. Again, sunshine nor light, although, perhaps, important factors, are not absolutely necessary to develop a rise, for after sundown the greatest rises of Ephemeridæ often occur, and long past the after-glow and at dusk of Phryganidæ, while, even later, swarms of some Lepidoptera and other nocturnal insects fill the air.

I have often pondered over this subject, but only lately, while day by day successfully finishing my trout season on the Itchen (despite a long continuance of cold down-stream winds), have I come to the conclusion that the wind, little or much, may be the chief cause to induce a rise of nymphæ and give them a better chance, when they emerge from the nymphal envelope in the pseudo-imago form, of quickly drying their wings and escaping into the air. No wind, if the air be dry, or a gentle wind which barely ruffles the water, from whatever quarter, are always, to some extent, favourable, but the old saw, quoted by honest Izaak Walton, about "when the wind is in the south," &c., no longer

holds good or brings great success to the modern dry-fly man, nor does a south-west or west wind, if at all boisterous. On the other hand, I have noticed on the Itchen that during the prevalence of a north-east wind (which, blowing down-stream, is generally considered inimical to sport, and is so unless the horizontal or drift cast can be adopted) the greatest rises of Ephemeridæ often occur about mid-day for a few hours, but chiefly in somewhat sheltered places. And at such times the fish, after a fast from surface food, rise and take them freely, nor are they then over shy of one's deftly-presented artificial lure.

Indeed, if one duly considers it, a down-stream wind must really be favourable for the metamorphosis of the fly, as while it floats on its boat-like exuviae with the stream its wings have the chance of drying more quickly, and it is less likely to drown than it would be if blown by a south or south-west wind up, and therefore against the stream; moreover, this wind would help to lift the fly from the water up into its new element, there after a few days to assume the marriage robes of the imago, and revel in the new delights of its existence.

Nevertheless, under the most adverse conditions of the winds, some sport may possibly be obtained if duns are coming up, or other surface food floating down, tempting fish to move. And although there

would seem to be no certain data to guide one as to when flies will appear or not, for they rise erratically, much may be gained by your watching the water at different times of the day if you live near, or, if at a distance, trusting to a keeper's report or wire about it, and to his opinion as to the prospects of success with the dry-fly.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ADVICE TO A BEGINNER CONTINUED AND ENDED.

MAKE the best of difficulties, and try to minimise or overcome them ; it is the acme of sport to do so. Indeed, an easy capture of a trout is far less exciting and satisfying to one's *amour propre* than one where the utmost skill is required to play and tire out an old stager, fighting him through all his stratagems (which have hitherto availed to preserve his liberty), and drawing him to net *hors de combat*.

Never leave a rising fish, is an adage more or less become obsolete to the dry-fly expert ; for he, after a few ineffectual casts over a too wary fish (who looks at one's fly and refuses it), wisely passes on to others, hoping to "call again" on the first one later on, haply to find him less guarded, and quickly taken.* I have known this often to occur ; in fact, I have come to the conclusion that no trout can for

* In "Seventy Years' Fishing," by Charles George Barrington, C.B., published by Smith, Elder, & Co., 15, Waterloo Place, London, 1906, at page 132, occurs the following note :—"Since these pages were written, the experienced angler who writes under the signature of 'Red Quill' has expressed his disapproval of dwelling too long at one spot.—Sept., No. of *Baily*, 1905. I am happy to find myself in agreement with so practical and skilful a hand."

long resist being deceived by an artificial fly properly presented, under differing but favourable conditions. In other words, a so-called educated trout has in the long run no chance against a dry-fly purist.

The Evening Rise.—It is wise to decide during the morning practice in what likely portion of the river you will wish to be when the sun dips below the horizon, and this important time is to be utilised to crown your day's sport with further success. It is best not to try to cover too great an extent of water—a quarter of a mile, or half that, is ample. And it is in proper form to patiently wait at the lower end of this limited space until the fish begin to move near you, or you observe rings in the distance to which you gradually will work up. A field-glass has been recommended to enable one the better to see such rings, but fortunately, as I do not suffer from *myopia*, I have never required such aid, and can therefore do without the encumbrance of the glass—so may you. One loses time by roving far afield, and when the dusk begins,

And in the ascending scale of Heaven
The stars that usher evening rise,

it is not advantageous to shift about, for in the changing light one's optic powers change also and, if relaxed while hastening away to a perhaps not far-off bend, they do not easily accommodate themselves to

another environment, or to the surface of the stream a little more in shade. Always fish the evening rise if possible, and the wind be in your favour, from the eastern bank, so that you face the glory of the setting sun, and have the great advantage of the long after-glow to light up the river scene, and to enable you not only to mark where the rings of some feeding fish appear, but distinctly where the crowd of pseudo-imagines, diptera, &c., float down on the middle of the smooth surface, or under the opposite bank; and afterwards, when the sedge flies and white moths give warning that your day is fast closing in. Many a half-despairing man who has toiled all the day and caught nothing has rejoiced over his after-success at the evening rise, not only saving him from the humiliation of a blank day, but burdening him with a welcome, though heavy load of fish to carry home. It is of all the long day the time when the trout are most easily killed by dry-fly experts who know their business and have good *long* sight. Also to be quick of hearing is a help, especially if it be too dark to see clearly. As an example of this, I remember that in the days of old John Lock, the keeper of the Abbot's Barton fishery, above Winchester, I once caught a leash of trout, by ear chiefly. Lock was walking by my side carrying my already half-filled creel as I returned towards home through the darkling gloom of the water-meadows

bordering the mill or middle stream, which, compared with the main river, is narrow. My rod was still rigged up, and an unused fly, a red quill on a No. 1 hook, tied on to fine natural gut, when suddenly the noise like chop sounds, and made by a trout recklessly feeding, was heard—presumably under the darkened opposite bank. No movement was visible, but I ran off from the winch sufficient line, at a guess, to reach the *locale* from whence the sound seemed to come. The first throw was without effect. Then the peculiar sound was repeated, and again my fly shot forth towards it; a fish seized it, the line tightened, he was played without much time being given, and safely netted out. Lock had seen such a thing often done before with a large wet fly called Hammond's Adopted, and therefore he was not nearly so much surprised as I; but when, as we moved along, another came to grief under similar conditions, and a third followed, making a brace and a half (weighing nearly six pounds the following morning), he thought with me that it was a remarkable capture, admitting that he had never seen such "luck," he called it, with the dry-fly in the dark before. The same fly lured the three; it was too dark to see to change it, but each time it was dried by waving it backwards and forwards in the usual way *sans* oil, and I have no doubt it floated dry.

Late or night fishing, or even in the moonlight, is not now to be thought of by the dry-fly artist. When he cannot see the small duns or large blue-winged olives, or where his own artificial falls amongst the ovipositing Phryganidæ, he gives up fishing for the day—it may be tired and weary, yet sighing that the good time is over.

It is an old saw, often repeated, “That the man who is longest by the riverside kills most fish,” but that is certainly not true if applied to modern dry-fly fishing, for an expert will make a good bag in half the time an ordinary performer could. And even in wet-fly practice, skill and experience, and “an eye for water” to discriminate between the likely haunts where he thinks fish should be, and the unlikely, will obtain better sport than a novice in the art lingering by the riverside from morn till dewy eve. Chance and desultory fishing seldom, if ever, avail against a skilled hand.

Swear not at all. Even a harmless expletive may by degrees increase in force and degenerate into an oath, when provoking mishaps occur, such as breaking the top of your rod, or losing the largest fish you have hooked and played in the act of trying to land him; or if, when the evening rise of fish, fast and furious, is nearing its finish, your gut cast becomes hopelessly entangled, and you miss your last and best chance. The man who thus laments over his bad

luck, sometimes profanely cursing it, is generally one who expects to have everything his own way—an impossibility in this life! Happily, swearing is no longer the fashion, as it was with the young *bloods* in our forefathers' time. It is now a sign of vulgarity and the want of moral restraint.

Luck has been defined as “nothing but the outward appearance of careful and calculated reasoning.” It is so to a great extent in dry-fly practice, and that is why some men (I do for one) object to the question so often put to anglers, “Have you had any luck?” for one is apt to think, and to pride oneself upon it, that skill has brought success. Nevertheless, circumstances do arise when “fortunate” or “good fortune” mean almost the same as the objectionable word, though not quite the outcome of mere chance.

Exaggeration : scrupulously avoid it in any form. Anglers have a bad reputation for untruthfulness, not to say for telling lies, but which (as a body of men under the influence of an innocent recreation and in close contact with the charms of Nature and the elevation of mind they should, and in fact often do, inspire), I venture to say, they do not deserve. To tell a deliberate lie in ordinary matters would cause a man to be shunned by his associates, and yet what is the difference in a “fish story” often listened to in a mixed company amid much mirth,

and causing a sort of competition as to who shall outdo another in propagating a greater falsehood, and, in enigmatical language to the uninitiated, "take the cake," whatever that may mean? It is a reprehensible treatment of the subject, bringing suspicion, if not disgrace, on the whole fraternity, and the sooner right-minded men set their faces against it the better. I have never known even a suspected instance among my friends who are dry-fly fishermen of an intentional violation of the truth. Of course, exaggeration may occur without any intention to deceive when a man guesses at the weight of fish he has killed, and more especially of one hooked and masterfully held until it broke away. Indeed, it is a common remark that a so lost fish is always a big one, and people incredulously smile as they hear it. But it is not necessarily erroneous, for a large, desperate trout is the most likely to fight for his freedom and obtain it.

Avoid controversy on moot questions and subjects connected with angling. It is impossible for a man breathing atmospheric air to put himself into the position and understand the life of a fish respiring through his gills in a different element, and argue matters from his (the fish's) point of view, mind, or instincts. But that is what some fly-fishers and many theorists are always trying to do.

There is a good deal yet to learn about the life-

history of flies and fish. Not much more about fair angling, but a good deal to unlearn as to the necessity of using so many different patterns of artificial lures.

If ever you are honoured by the privilege of writing for the sporting press on angling topics, confine your "copy" to your own experiences, knowledge, and ideas; you will then have a free hand to write what you think proper, without being subject to any charge of plagiarism. I have had the great pleasure of doing so for forty years, and can boast that I have seldom written an article that was not published.

And now I have finished my "advice" for the present. A good many "beginners" have already written to thank me for it so far, and I hope to meet others by the riverside who may have profited by the simplified teaching of "Red Quill."

On the following pages, Notes and Sport of a Dry-Fly Purist are selected from a great number of articles written by "Red Quill" which have been published in the *Field* and *Baily's Magazine*, illustrative of fascinating dry-fly practice and of the delightful environment in which it is pursued.

Notes and Sport of a Dry-Fly Purist.

CHAPTER VIII.

A REMINISCENCE OF DERBYSHIRE.

HAVING received the gracious permission of the Duke of Rutland (through the steward of the estate) to fish for four days in each week in the river Wye, betwen Rowsley and Bakewell, from August 20th to October 2nd, I passed the whole of that pleasant time in Derbyshire. It was my first visit, and as first impressions are generally the best, and they were duly noted, mentally or by brief memoranda on the spot, or at the close of the day's angling in my diary, the following extracts from the latter retain their freshness and interest. Although I am a lover of Nature in all her charms, and ponder over her mysteries, my chief object was dry-fly fishing. And as the dinner hour and meals at the Peacock Hotel (far famed for its excellent management) would have much interfered with my freedom for sport, especially in the evening, I took unpretentious lodgings at Mrs. Greatorex's cottage at Rowsley, situate within a minute's walk of the

bridges over the Wye and the Derwent, and near the confluence of the two rivers. Some particulars are given as guide for other anglers. I was very comfortably put up, and, as there was no other lodger taken, all needful attention was given, without much disturbance of one's privacy, an important consideration to a writer for the press. Nor was there any fault to be found with my landlady's cooking and service. She was dairy-woman at the principal house and farm close handy, from whence, by favour, I could draw supplies of poultry, eggs, butter, &c. I ordered in what I liked, or rather the best the village afforded, for there were only two or three nondescript shops, and no butcher within four miles; that worthy called once a week; fish I had of my own providing; and eels, also a rabbit occasionally from Hensberg, the keeper. Besides all this, abundance of fruit and vegetables from the cottage garden. Could any "contemplative man" be better placed for his "recreation"? That question was even more satisfactorily answered after next day's successful sport. I will here premise that for the purposes of this book, and because of the necessary restriction of space, a detail of every day's practice is not possible, and perhaps would only lead to wearying repetition.

I will therefore describe the river in stages, and

the sport obtained in the three or four days while covering the seven miles of the winding course of the fishery which will serve as examples of many other days.

By 9 o'clock a.m. I stood close to the Wye stone bridge of two arches, through one of which the mill stream passes, and the main stream through the other, both mingling beyond. The water was so low that in a few places the river bed was exposed and dry, and therefore to place a dry-fly accurately over the narrowed channels between was extremely difficult, but trout were dimpling the surfaces as they rose to take in dark-winged Ephemeridæ. My ten-foot green-heart rod, weighing only seven ounces, was soon put together and rigged up with a light, pliantly-dressed running-line, fine gut collar, and a small olive quill artificial fly; forth it was repeatedly thrown over the nearest fish, and at last, when it floated without a drag, he seized it, and after fighting gamely for a minute was brought to net. Another quickly shared the same fate. The first captures from a strange river are always exulted over and examined with special interest. This brace was perfect in every way, bright as silver with a sheen of gold, short, thick, and well spotted; and, as I found out during my progress, of an average size for the Wye; but after my sport elsewhere in May, June, and July, when I killed thirty-six brace scaling 108lb. 11oz.,

they appeared small. At the tumbling bay of the little weir (which acts as a dam to keep up the mill head-water to a proper level and accounts for the lowness referred to above) another brace was killed on an apple-green dun, a favourite Derbyshire pattern, and good in the Test and Itchen where I have tried it, especially for grayling. Then, passing over the foot-bridge to the farm on the east bank and fishing the likely pools and runs half-way up through the Rowsley meadows, three more trout were creeled before sunset, and several small grayling put back.

The following day I began where I left off yesterday (but on the west side), catching five trout before 12.30 p.m.—one of them $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb., at the mouth of the Lathkill river—a splendidly stocked stream reserved exclusively for the Duke's family and their intimate friends, except, I believe, for one day in the Mayfly season to any tenant who affects the gentle art. The lure was a red quill on a cipher hook, and I kept to that pattern for the remainder of the day. Having done so well, I retraced my steps towards my lodgings for luncheon, turning at intervals on the way to cast up-stream over any rising fish. One almost at my feet, close under the shelving bank, betrayed his presence by the noise he made in closing his jaws over floating duns; I drew back stealthily, knelt, and deftly placed my

fly in front of him in a line with some natural ones, and he sucked it in without any suspicion of the fraud, was well hooked, played, and restrained as he made for his haunt in a weed-covered cleft of limestone rock at the bottom, clearly seen in deep water. In the evening I tried again up to the Lathkill, and beyond to Filliford Bridge, but only small grayling came to hand and were returned. The next stage fished was from Filliford Bridge, along the east bank through the Chase to the narrow wooden foot-bridge, and on the opposite bank where the river takes a wide sweep round before gliding under Haddon stone bridge. Everything was favourable for sport, in this, the best and most sequestered portion of the fishery, with the result that by 3 o'clock p.m. seven handsome trout averaging 11lb. each, and two large grayling much over that weight, were killed. It was enough. And for the nonce I had even a greater attraction in view than further fly-fishing; therefore rod, creel, &c., were left at a neighbouring cottage, and I entered into the unique baronial residence of Haddon Hall, to look over it for the first time, and to meet my son, who was on a sketching tour and had been granted free *entrée* at all times to paint his three pictures: (1) the Banqueting Hall; (2) the flight of steps down which Dorothy Vernon is said (without any confirmation of it in the family records) to have

passed to her tryst with her lover ; and (3) a broad seat in the terraced gardens overhung by trees through whose umbrageous shadows the sunlight glints and flickers with good effect. All of which were then approaching the finishing touches. Some parts of the hall date from soon after the Conquest, and the chapel contains a Norman font. The rooms run very much into each other, and all the wood used is of oak—flooring, wainscots, steps, shutters, the large round table or bench, and forms instead of chairs, in the banqueting hall ; all black with age, but as sound as ever. Here lived the King of the Peak, and the oldest tower is still called “ Peverill.” He was prodigal in hospitality, 140 servants being retained to wait upon his friends, and at Christmas open house was kept for twelve days at a stretch.

By the marriage of his daughter, Dorothy Vernon, with Sir John Manners, the estate passed into the family of the latter, and the direct descendant of this interesting couple, whose union will always have the glamour of traditional romance about it, is the present Duke of Rutland. As one walks through the deserted rooms, it is easy in imagination inspired from remembered history to repeople the place with its former denizens, and a gay throng of guests in the ballroom, or wandering in groups through the terraced gardens, or a convivial and select party

indulging in feast and mirth and revelry in the dining-hall. Every room is as it was then, and some of the furniture remains ; tapestry still hangs on the walls, and many pictures, which would not be to the taste of modern times, adorn or rather disfigure them, and therefore are not now generally shown. Of course, there is a bed on which Queen Elizabeth slept—she seems in her visitations to have given all her nobles, and not a few of her gentry, a turn—and a looking-glass is shown in which she viewed her charms, and a very unflattering mirror it is, which, knowing her vanity, one wonders at. Full of the past were my musings as I walked back along the dusty road to my headquarters, and at night I dreamed I was a guest at Haddon dancing with a fair partner in the ballroom.

There were no lamps at Rowsley ; it is as primitive as it was three centuries ago, save that now, night and day, the frequent trains on the Midland Railway rush with lightning speed, and shriek like fiery fabled dragons as they burrow into the long, dark Haddon tunnel, waking the echoes, and destroying the repose of the peaceful valley, and leaving a sense of *shock* behind.

During four days of the following week I fished from Haddon up to Bakewell Bridge, chiefly casting from the west bank, and having the fair sport of three or four brace each time, always using small

flies tied to the finest drawn-gut points. And for the remainder of my six weeks' stay I was equally successful and as happy and content as any dry-fly enthusiast could wish; indeed, I was enraptured with the scenery between Rowsley and Bakewell. The verdant meadows of the hill-bounded valley through which the river winds its silvery way are made park-like by small groups of stately trees, with, here and away, solitary giants having free space to wave their arms about in, and whisper to the passing wind, or, when Æolus rages, to toss their branches in fury. And the Wye as a trout stream is perfect. My total bag was sixty-eight brace, including six and a half brace of grayling. This sport was pleasantly diversified by walks or drives to explore the Lathkill valley, to Staunton Moor to see the Druidical remains, a circle of stones called the Nine Ladies; to visit Chatsworth; Buxton, with its thousands of fashionable visitors; Hardwick Hall, Belvoir Castle, Matlock Bath, and other places. But a visit to Bakewell Church must be briefly described.

At Bakewell Church Dorothy Vernon's and her husband's remains lie beneath a quaint monument of the period, and when the church was last restored these remains were viewed. Some of her hair (yellow) and six brass hair-pins were found with the bones. Sir John's skull was of the retreating-fore-

head type as represented in his effigy ; judging by this he seems likely to have been a very plain man for such a beauty as Dorothy to elope with. Their son (who is represented on another tomb opposite) has a similarly shaped head, but he married a lady with an intellectually developed cranium, and their offspring (six) who kneel “ in dumb oratory ” are all possessed of improved-shaped skulls—three really good. Thus it took two generations to modify Sir John’s type.

In the same church are many stone coffins of an early period (Roman and Saxon), and others broken up and built into the walls as rubble stones. There are also inscribed monoliths of a still earlier time—runic, experts say, and certainly there is an ancient inscribed runic cross in the churchyard. These remains carry the mind back to prehistoric eras ; but what is that interval compared with æons of the formation of this earth, as demonstrated by geologists ?

CHAPTER IX.

A DRY-FLY TOUR IN THE NORTH.

AFTER a railway journey of 340 miles at express speed an angler bent on dry-fly sport in new surroundings alighted from the train at Carlisle at 6.5 p.m., in order to change and rebook for Elvanfoot, on the Caledonian line, and it was a little disappointing to find that, after all this hurry, there would be no train until the following morning at 7.20. However, to make the best of what could not be helped—indeed, good came of it—I secured a bed at the Great Central Hotel, dined there, and as soon after as possible sallied forth to take a cursory view of the city, and as my steps would naturally trend towards the riverside I took my greenheart rod in its case and all other requirements with me, so that if I saw any promising rises of trout in the Eden I might try to bring a sample brace to net. A fisherman was already on the warpath working down-stream, with rather a large tail fly and four droppers on his cast. He had caught one chub and one trout. Sportsman's etiquette forbade that I should "take his water";

therefore I approached him and ascertained that he intended to go some distance further on, and after a little chat, during which I gained some information about Scotch rivers that he had often fished, but never with a dry-fly (he did not believe in its efficacy as compared with the sunken lure, he said), I turned and faced up-stream, intently watching and waiting for the rise. To a fine $2\frac{1}{2}$ -yd. collar with 4x drawn-gut point I tied a gold-ribbed hare's ear dressed on a No. 1 hook, which looked about the size of the dark natural flies floating on the water. It was about 8.30 p.m. when I first saw one taken, but after that, more or less continuously : the lingering light of a summer night (June 29th) enabled me to see exactly where my fly fell before the nose of a feeding fish, and when to strike by a gentle turn of the wrist. By ten o'clock one and a half brace of trout were killed, and when strung together (for I had brought no creel) and suspended from a steelyard weighed over 4lb. On my way back to the hotel I fortunately met the angler referred to above, and presented them to him. He had had no further sport.

I was highly delighted by this, my first success on a river I had never even seen before. I dreamed of it that night, and on the morrow, in reverie, while on my way to Elvanfoot, hoped that my introduction to the Clyde would be as good. My

advertisement for "quiet quarters close to a trout stream, and if there were grayling so much the better, and out of the beaten track of tourists," had been answered by a score of letters, one of them rather takingly in verse, the prose details of accommodation and attractions offered set forth in several stanzas a little in the style of, but a long way after, Burns. I closed with this novel offer, and wrote to Mr. Sandy Macpherson that I would become his guest about the end of June. On arriving from Carlisle on the 30th, his cottage, within view of the river, seemed quite orderly, and good enough for an angler who could dispense with luxuries, especially if his sport were fair. Therefore, after breakfast I arranged with Mrs. Mac that during my stay I would always return punctually at four o'clock for an early dinner. I chose four o'clock because the morning rise of flies and fish would probably be over until the evening, and then I could fish on until dusk without interruption. About 11 a.m. I shouldered my creel, hung the landing-net on a sling at my side so that in kneeling it could not touch the ground and perhaps be left behind at a critical moment when wanted, and with an 11ft. split cane rod in hand, already extended and rigged up, went joyfully to the riverside, waving the bending rod over it, and in the act bowing myself as if in salutation to the Clyde at

my first visit. The rippling stream glittered in the sunlight, and almost at my feet a grayling flashed up to the surface and took a floating dun. I drew back about ten yards and knelt. Again a natural fly was taken, and then my artificial fly, a red quill on a No. 00 hook, was sent forth ; but not until after many throws and pauses between was it seized, and the first prize, a handsome grayling weighing 2lb., landed. (Grayling were only about twenty years ago introduced into this river, and they have thriven well.) The sport it gave was most exciting, and after three taps over the brain pan, and it lay dead on the grass, another fisherman stopped to look at it, and, I could see, to eye me as a stranger. But he passed on without speaking, assiduously throwing a cast of five or six flies across and down stream, the distance between us gradually increasing, as I worked the contrary way.

About 1 o'clock the trout rose freely under my bank, quietly sucking in small diptera, but my lure was unheeded. I therefore changed it for a black gnat on a No. 000 hook, and at the fourth presentation a trout of about 1lb. turned aside, followed, snapped at it, and fastened, coming after a short struggle rather tamely to net, for he was hooked in the tongue, and that always crows a fish. Being my first trout captured from the Clyde, he was examined with much interest, and was a fair type of

all I killed afterwards; but in brightness, form, condition, and beautiful markings was not equal to a Test or Itchen fario. Soon after a similar one came to hand, and, being only lightly hooked in the rim of the upper lip, gave better sport. No touch followed until between 3 and 4 p.m., when a few straggling duns on the smooth glides in mid-channel tempted fish to take them. I knotted on a dark-winged olive quill, and it was, after about a dozen trials, successful in bringing a third trout to grief.

On the way back to my lodgings I noticed that the hawthorn trees were as yet scarcely showing any white blossoming; kingcups were in the marshy meadows, and a profusion of wild pansies “freaked with jet” embroidered the moors. Curlews in graceful curves of flight over the valley uttered their very mournful cries (hence their name), and often one or two would swoop low down quite close to where I stood; indeed, until I got used to it, I ducked my head each time they came near. Could the flies stuck in my cap have attracted them? In the evening only two more were caught, as few flies were on the water to induce fish to rise, and that I found out afterwards was often the case. The only plan, therefore, was to watch for a trout apparently at rest on a shallow place under the shade of the bank, and from a good distance in his rear to cover him with a fly—a large red quill accurately placed

floating before his nose by a first cast, perhaps, arousing his attention, and at the next presentation he would suck it in and be hooked. I explored the river for nearly a mile, and was charmed by its whole environment; all seemed so peaceful and sequestered. But, alas! that was a delusion, for all through the night there was the continuous rumble, rattle, and clatter of traffic on the Caledonian line, the shrieking whistles of engines, and blowing off of steam, shunting, and bumping, so that my rest was completely disturbed. More than sixty trains and "pilots" passed every night, so the station-master told me. To change my quarters after the first week was inevitable. I was sorry, for the sport was good, *i.e.*, twenty-three trout and six grayling falling to my rod from July 1st to 4th, altogether, including those caught on the first day, seventeen and a half brace.

By other offers of fishing in answer to my advertisement referred to above, I was tempted to go first to Dalry, in Galloway, for a week, where I found the scenery very beautiful, but only small trout and many salmon parr could be caught. Then I went to Girvan, in Ayrshire, and was comfortably lodged for another week at the King's Arms Hotel, having the benefit of sea air, fresh-caught delicious sea fish (especially small herrings) for breakfast, rest at night, and a thorough change;

but the river was too low for any chance of sport, and my rod was idle. Therefore I pleasantly whiled away the time by visits to the birth-place of Robert Burns about two miles from Ayr, to scenes in the neighbourhood he has described, and by a daily reading of his poems. But as all this was not fly fishing I decided to try Doyedale for the first time, and lodge with J. Fosbrooke, keeper to Sir John Crewe at Hartington. On July 28th, on the Manifold near Ilam Hall, I killed three and a half brace of trout. On the 29th and 30th, on the Dove between Pike Pool and Walton and Cotton's fishing house, *piscatoribus sacrum*, only four brace. But on the next day I was destined to have the best dry-fly sport I have ever had in my long life, namely, eight brace, all caught on one pattern of fly; a small four-winged black gnat, and no other, was tried. Fourteen of them weighed $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb. to $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. each, one $1\frac{3}{4}$ lb., and the largest $2\frac{1}{4}$ lb. At Fosbrooke's house they were carefully weighed and laid out on a large old-fashioned Japan tea-tray, for distribution as he thought proper (for I had no friends near enough to send them to), and he remarked that he had never seen a better day's capture with a small fly on this historic reach of the Dove. He had often in the same locality attended the late F— F—, of fame as angler and author, and he told me many amusing tales about fly fishers who regularly came to the Dove.

One was how a certain fisherman, by the secret addition of two or three gentles to the point of his fly hook, managed day after day to bring home good bags of grayling to the hotel where he and other disciples of the craft were staying. Said anglers, who were getting little or no sport, were much exercised as to how it was done, and in their vexation they bribed Fosbrooke to watch next day, with the result that the spy rushed down from his ambush in the adjacent wooded hill when he saw a grayling fast hooked and being played, nor would he be put off by the angler under the pretence of carrying a message from him to the hotel, but insisted on waiting to help to land the quarry, when, on doing so, the baited hook told the tale, and the murder was out.

CHAPTER X.

GRAYLING.—SPORT ON THE ITCHEN.

GIVEN good health, without a touch of rheumatism, and the body well protected by soft, fine, all-woollen underclothing (which does away with the necessity of that inconvenient thing an overcoat), the rigours even of November weather may be braved with comparative impunity. And if plenty of leisure, the privilege of fishing on the best of dry-fly waters, and an enthusiastic love of the sport be added to these advantages, the grayling fisher may indeed consider himself a fortunate man. That am I, in all these respects, I am thankful to say. Nevertheless, I wait patiently to choose seemingly favourable days, guided by my own experiences of what certain signs in the forepart of the day portend, and more or less by the weather forecasts of the daily newspapers—the old adages of “A red sky at night,” and “A red sky in the morning,” no doubt influencing the decision. To fish for grayling in November, sunshine is needed to bring even moderate success with the small artificial floating fly, for then best do natural flies emerge to and struggle

on the surface of the smooth river, preparatory to their first essay of flight in the air, tempting *Thymallus* to rise from his lethargy under weeds or from deep water to feast on them.

Accordingly on each of the four following dates fine weather was assured, and the bright sun was near the zenith before I left Winchester by the train. On arriving at my destination a walk of about twenty minutes by the high road and through the delightful environment of a beautiful and sequestered park brought me to my happy fishing grounds on November 6th. After a week of storm and almost continuous rain, the main stream of the Itchen, though full, was still clear, and while I put my rod together and rigged it up with a very finely pointed long gut cast, and knotted on a pale winged olive quill tied on a No. 00 hook, the nearest pattern I could find to the natural duns in view, several distant rings and small splashes (the former probably made by trout and the latter certainly by grayling) were observed, with hopeful anticipations of sport. Before making my first throw over a fish under my bank I looked at my watch. It was half-past one o'clock—and I may state that on each occasion I began to fish at the same time, and left off at 4 p.m. in order to catch my return train; therefore only moderate bags could be looked for, limited to two and a half hours'

practice. But the result each time was better than I expected.

As I was landing the first hooked fish (unfortunately a trout looking to be over 2lb. in weight) the loud report of guns in my vicinity made me fearful that, as I was kneeling half hidden in the sedge, I might inadvertently be shot; and to avoid the chance of it, for accidents soon happen, I rose and crossed over to the back stream safely out of range. Fish were here rising very freely to small Ephemeridæ with pale yellow wings as they floated down the shallow glides, and over beds of green weeds within a few inches of the surface, or on deeper water swirling near the east bank, on which I stood. But as everywhere the stream was running rather wildly, one's artificial fly only floated for an instant without dragging; then it was hurried down in an unnatural manner. The consequence was that all one's skill was needed to counteract this difficulty—happily, as it turned out, with good effect, for I had no necessity to range more than a few hundred yards all the time, and my casting over breaks on the surface was almost continuous. But, of course, my oft-presented tiny bunch of feather and a hook could not be expected to be seized as often as the natural flies, hence delays between captures were inevitable. But it was simply delightful, and the acme of fascinating sport in this

dreary month of the year, to hook and play to a finish in the landing-net four and a half brace of beauties glittering like silver. Besides these, six trout were landed and returned—not a bad total for two and a half hours' fishing.

Next day, after the white dank mist and ghostly hoar frost had cleared away from the housetops and meadows, an early luncheon disposed of, and the short journey, as before, made (my mind full of the pleasant hours of yesterday), I again strode through the same surroundings, sometimes ankle deep in rustling fallen leaves, and as I quietly drew near to the back stream a heron flew up from the sedge, in its heavy flight startling four woodpigeons from a circular group of seven noble trees, amongst whose bare branches many large bunches of mistletoe depended. The bright and now warm sunshine, the placid river with flies floating thereon, and fish taking them, inspired hope of sport, nay, the certainty of it, as I knelt and made my initial cast over a grayling in mid-channel, who promptly seized my fly, a gold-ribbed hare's ear dressed on a No. 00 hook. No fish ever gave me more excitement in playing and landing it—a goodly specimen of *Salmo thymallus* at his best, and over 11lb. in weight. Within half an hour two more were tempted by the very same fly (11in. fish) and brought to bank. I say tempted by this fly, but, really, all through the

present grayling season I have only used old and often dilapidated flies, and one has been as effective as another. Lower down the ring made by a fish rising fitfully from deep water caused me to kneel and wait until it came up again, when, after many presentations, my fly was taken and the fish hooked ; but his struggles were so violent, boring low down and not showing himself, that I thought a trout was on, and therefore I was less careful in dragging him toward the net ; but when within reach I saw he was a large grayling—instantly the net was used, the hook giving way, but he was safely lifted out, weighing $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb.

Again working steadily up to where I caught the first fish, I saw several breaks on the surface of a shallow glide—the best rise of the afternoon was developing, and a fair number of pale winged olive duns were floating down. Among these naturals it is no wonder that my counterfeit was seldom risen to, but on two occasions it was taken with a snatch, and a brace of 10in. grayling were added to the now weighty creel. From three to four o'clock the *Ephemeridæ* gradually left off rising ; but in the last few minutes, before I had to hurry away for the train, I made a fortunate finish by landing another good-sized grayling, making three and a half brace, taken in two and a half hours.

From the above date for the next fortnight,

although a few bright sunny and frosty days intervened between stormy and north-easterly gales, the air was so searchingly cold, as it always is when a heavy fall of snow is imminent, that even my enthusiasm for dry-fly fishing failed to tempt me far from home, and I knew by experience that fish become lethargic and seldom rise to the surface when snow is brooding. But when on November 22nd I read, with surprise and pleasure, that light southerly breezes were predicted, my thoughts ever and anon wandered to the riverside, and by 1.30 p.m. I was there in person, ready for the sport, and perfectly happy in the solitude and peace of natural surroundings. As yet, however, no fly was on the water; nor did the rise begin until three o'clock, when the first grayling was hooked and landed. The afternoon, therefore, was so far very disappointing; but when I left off at 4 p.m. three brace, weighing from 11oz. to 18oz., graced the creel.

On the 24th the back stream at 1.30 p.m. was found to be let down so low by the exigencies of the miller, that on nearly all the glides and shallows which grayling usually frequent when rising to surface food, no fly or fish could be seen. I therefore crossed over the park to the main river, and, approaching the margin on tiptoe, knelt while necessarily making underhand casts to avoid the pendant boughs of a sycamore close by. I made

good practice with a red quill on a No. 00 hook over almost continuously rising fish, taking pale olives and a darker-winged fly, and within an hour two brace of 10in. to 12in. grayling were brought to bank. Further on, after passing over a rickety and slippery hatchway board, several simultaneous dimples broke the surface in mid-stream, three of which were cast over with good result, a leash coming to grief, all $10\frac{1}{2}$ in. grayling. Then under the opposite bank, which the utmost power of my 11ft. split-cane rod and right arm could barely reach, the unmistakable splash of a large grayling arrested my progress. Many casts were essayed before the fly fell a foot before his nose, but then he seized it and was firmly hooked. Instantly he scurried down stream, zigzagging and furrowing the surface, until he was masterfully restrained, and afterwards soon landed—a fish of $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. I had now only ten minutes to spare, but at four o'clock another grayling was landed, making up four and a half brace killed in two and a half hours, and an aggregate of thirty-one fish in ten hours.

CHAPTER XI.

LAST HOURS WITH THE GRAYLING.

ALTHOUGH on some fisheries the rule for killing grayling extends the time to March 1st, most dry-fly sportsmen at the end of the year put by their rod, hang it up in its case out of the way of temptation, and it was very near the end of my grayling season when, on December 27th, I stood on the west bank of the Itchen exactly opposite Twyford Church as the hour of noon from thence slowly smote the air in measured strokes and all was still again. The wind was N.E., shifty and unfavourable, but sunshine (albeit without much warmth) lit up the clouds in robes of white as they sailed silent and majestic over the sky, and gladdening the landscape all around. Beneath the church on the slope of the green hill the white gravestones in God's acre stood out in bold relief. The full river as it hastened on gleamed in rippling laughter. The weeds had lately been cut, with due regard to the interests of fly fishers; the reeds at the broad, swampy sides also, leaving only brown and rotting stumps about 10in. high. This picture was mentally digested while I

rigged up my split-cane rod and knotted on to the finest gut a pale olive quill dressed on a cipher hook, but ever and anon scanning the surface of the water for nearly an hour without noticing a single natural fly or any fish moving on it.

Passing on and coming to a wide ditch, I was hesitating to cross the single narrow plank over it, for it was sodden, rounded by wear at the edges, and dangerously slippery (as such boards too often are), when the under keeper hove in sight, splashing and picking his way through the irrigated upper meadows, in places ankle deep. Seeing my quandary, and when he had crossed—with youth's elastic and fearless step—he approached me, and, after asking me to let him see my fishing ticket, strewed handfuls of dry leaves and the stalks of withered flowers over the board, making my passage easy. But, finding the meadows so much flooded, I sent him, with my card, to the owner of the fishery, asking leave, as it was my last chance there, to try in the usually reserved reaches in front of the gardens and lawns of Twyford Lodge. The prompt and courteous reply, "Fish wherever you like," at once raised my hopes of sport, and, the keeper accompanying to show me the nearest way along the sedgy bank, more Blondin feats over risky boards had to be essayed before I was safely in the private grounds and left to my own devices.

All across these broadest shallows of the upper Itchen, which are well known as the headquarters of the grayling, and beyond which they do not naturally ascend, three weirs have of late years been constructed, with a view to make three levels of the surface, lower between each, and therefore a continuous flow of water to fall over in a glassy glide, not deep, at the edge of the weir, so that fish, if inclined, may leap up and through it. But close under there is a depth of 2ft. or 3ft. (ideal haunts for trout), the well-scoured chalky bottom a short distance below, gradually silting up, and again forming shallows which feeding fish love to frequent and dry-fly anglers to cast over. The beneficial effects of these weirs, by causing a lively stream, are to keep the water, even in hot weather, well aerated, to improve the fishing, and to attract the fish to work up from the lower reaches, particularly at spawning time, and to tempt them there to remain. I was struck with what I saw. On nearly every clear space of the shallows, or behind weeds, or scooped out in the midst of them, or in small bays, trout were in evidence, not less than fifty or sixty, all more or less fulfilling the law of their nature in the propagation of species. Therefore I made no attempt to fish there, but turning, and by a circuitous route avoiding the slippery boards and water meadows, gained the lower reaches about two

o'clock, and for two hours made good and almost continuous practice. A sparse rise of rather large sub-imagines was developing, just enough to make the trout on the alert to intercept and suck in every one as it floated down. My artificial fly was oftener risen to than could have been expected, with so many chances against such a comparatively clumsy lure of feather and quill on a dangerous hook, so that by 4.5 p.m., when I had to hurry away for my train (putting my rod in its case and adjusting impedimenta on my way as I almost ran), three and a half brace of 10in. to 14in. grayling were in the creel. Not one fish broke way, and the hooking of any fario was avoided. And as the sport was all obtained in mid-stream, one capture was so much like another on this occasion that full details may be excused.

On Saturday, December 30th, my last fishing day of the year, after two dull and wretchedly wet days, when it seemed hopeless to attempt grayling fishing with the dry-fly, the forecast of the weather reading "showery to fair" was not altogether unsatisfactory, and about 11 a.m. the sun's rays broke through the obscuring leaden-hued clouds, and for several hours flooded the wintry landscape in pallid yet cheering light. My thoughts were on the river side: the longing to be there, rod in hand, could not be repressed: therefore, after an early luncheon, and a

G.W. Railway train suiting, I was by 1.30. p.m. kneeling on the bank of one of the best fisheries of the Itchen, bounded on the west side by Shawford Downs and Oliver's Battery, ready to make my first cast over a grayling. A break on the surface was seen: my fly was presented lightly over it, and a grayling weighing 11lb. hooked, played, and landed. A first success is very encouraging. The main stream was very low here, as it is constantly diverted for milling and irrigation purposes, and had been so for several weeks, the sandbanks in mid-stream standing above the surface and green with vegetation; also the shallows in places were barely covered, one's fly catching on to weeds at every recovery of it and necessitating a clearance. Moreover, the grayling were only moving a long distance off, and barely reachable even by shooting-out casts, nor were they either furrowing the surface or rising in any other part of the fishery. My whole practice, therefore, for over two hours was limited to this very difficult fishing, with the fair result, by the time the sun went down at 3.57, that two and a half brace of handsome grayling had been killed. As I walked back, rather sad that my season had now ended, the air became piercingly cold. The planets Saturn and Mars in the south-western heavens were some hours later to come into conjunction with the crescent moon, and next day was to be the coldest of the old year.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TROUT SEASON, 1905.

ALTHOUGH at the present day, more than ever before, fishing in all its branches has an extensive literature of its own, there is, perhaps, no subject that requires more careful handling by an author anxious to interest his readers than dry-fly practice in general, and the sport obtained by his own rod in particular, during the long trout season. Nor is it easy to condense within reasonable limits anything like full details of, and the actual incidents connected with, his captures—and also combine references to the delightful environment in which he is wont to pursue his fascinating art (the most humane of all sports where killing is concerned), and briefly to other matters, to embellish his descriptions. But I have done my best in what follows, and I hope the reader, all the better if he be an expert himself, will in imagination follow me through the verdant, flower-decked water meadows, and share the pleasures of an angler's quest.

Long weeks before the first of April, which is the earliest date dry-fly sportsmen commence fishing in

the Itchen, my preparations were completed—the eleven-foot “Perfection” split cane rod overhauled by its makers, and after many years’ hard work made to look like new (a trusty weapon as good as any angler need possess), was more than once taken from its case and within doors lovingly waved about as if casting a fly. An ample supply of well-tied flies was duly received, and on opening each small box the contents made one smile to look at, because they would certainly be killers, *i.e.*, red quills with gold tags; olives in three shades of colour as to wings; Englefield’s green quill-bodied flies with silver tags; gold-ribbed hare’s ear, and Wickham’s fancy, all dressed on sharp, full barbed, sneck-bend hooks in several sizes, and supplemented by old flies left over from previous seasons, which, when trout or grayling are well on the feed, are often accepted as readily as new ones—which would seem to prove that the fly is not of so much consequence as some people imagine. But beyond rod and flies, I attribute my success to always using a *fine* dressed running line, and the finest of gut collars, prepared by myself thus: Four strands of 18in. picked refina natural gut knotted smoothly together, and pointed with two strands of 18in. 4x fine drawn gut, forming a length of $2\frac{3}{4}$ yards finer all through than usually supplied from shops, and yet strong enough to hold and play to a finish any trout up to 4lb.

I mention all this for the benefit of some men who I am certain do not fish fine enough in the clear Itchen.

All through April the river had a winterly appearance, the fish were not in condition, the weather unpropitious, and those too ardent anglers who did try met with poor sport; nor were blank days unknown.

For these reasons I did not make a beginning until May 19th, and it will somewhat simplify the following details of my dry-fly sport, and save much unedifying repetition, if I state at the beginning that all of it was obtained on the prolific River Itchen, namely, from two meadows on the east bank above Winchester, where I rent the exclusive right *ad medium flumen*, but by the usual tacit understanding between owners of opposite banks, casting all across was not interfered with; in fact, it happened that no other rod fished there. It is a great advantage having even a small length of well-stocked water all to one's self, and to watch it closely for flies and fish rising during the morning or evening, and take the benefit of such knowledge by resuming the rod at the nick of time, thus avoiding over-fatigue, and perhaps disappointment, while waiting long hours by the river-side to no purpose.

And by favour, annually granted to me for many

years past for a liberal number of days after June, I plied my rod in the three miles of the main river, mill, and side streams of the Abbot's Barton fishery between Durngate Mill and Headbourne Worthy. Also I was courteously offered sport in the lower reaches at Twyford and Shawford.

On my opening day, May 19th, at Winnall, a leash of trout weighing 5lb. 2oz. was killed. The next time I tried was on June 3rd, for only a quarter of an hour after sunset, in the much over-fished public water known as "The Weirs," when a brace, 2lb. 1oz., came to hand. On the 13th, a brace was caught before noon in my private fishing, weighing 2lb. 15oz., and on the 22nd, six, scaling respectively in the order of capture 1lb. 9oz., 1lb. 5oz., 1lb. 5oz., 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ lb., 2lb., and 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ lb.; aggregating 9lb. 11oz., and proving the best day's sport of the season, although on one of its hottest days. Two days after, in an hour while the sunset glory was fading, a handsome brace weighing 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. was brought to grass. And during July, in the same limited extent of water, nearly always about sundown, the following were creeled—*i.e.*, on the 1st, three fish, 4lb. 2oz.; on the 3rd, two, 2lb. 3oz.; on the 14th, one, 1lb. 14oz.; on the 18th, one, 1lb. 2oz.; and on the 29th, one, 1lb. 14oz. Also on August 5th, one, 1lb. 9oz., and on the 8th, one, 1lb. 5oz.

On July 21st an early train landed me at Shawford, and on entering the beautiful park where is the seat of Sir Charles E. Frederick, Bart. (since disposed of), I turned short off to the right, and through a tangled undergrowth of wild flowers, weeds, and nettles, prickly bramble bushes and the trailing branches of *Rosæ canina*, soon reached the back stream, only to find a large group of cattle standing in it, tormented by flies, and churning the water into the colour of milk all the way down, spoiling one's chance of fishing. But at the lower boundary of the demesne, where the main river mingles, it was clear and a few flies floating on it. Directly I knelt in the sedge a brace of partridges sprang from it and whirred away. Rooks were noisy in the elms, and from trees on a small eyot stock-doves told their monotonously mournful tales. But my eyes were watching a trout under an overhanging branch opposite. At length he rose and took a small, pale-winged subimago fly, and while I tied on to my fine gut cast the nearest artificial I could select in size and colour to the natural flies on the water, he dimpled the surface several times, but at the first wave of the rod down he sank to the bottom. Nevertheless, after a pause I threw my lure well over him—a yard in front, so that he might see it. At the first cast he moved, at the second boldly came up and snapped at it; was well hooked,

played, and netted out, not much disturbing other trout in view, one of which a few minutes after shared the same fate, the brace weighing over 2lb. Large fish are scarce in this fishery at present.

As I crossed over to the lower reach of the chief stream, my steps were stayed to admire the surroundings: the various stately trees in full foliage in solitary grandeur, or in groups adorning the emerald sward, which was profusely embroidered with Flora's gifts. And on the river banks were seen the familiar flowers an angler loves, amongst them "love's gentle gem, the sweet forget-me-not," tall, graceful willow herb, spiked purple loosestrife, meadow-sweet, mimulus reflected in the glassy stream, yellow iris, hemp agrimony, and a crowd of others. The blazing sun was now near the zenith, and the morning rise of Ephemeridæ at its best; fish were feasting on them freely, not only in their haunts at the sides, but on the middle, over thick beds of starwort and waving crowfoot. For two hours I was almost constantly at work hooking and returning some ten to eleven-inch fish and killing a leash about a pound each. It was very warm, and as I neared the small waterfall a clear space on the hard chalky bottom hidden from view almost tempted me to bathe; but instead I wetted a leaf of butter-bur, and folding it inside my cap to cool my head, laid the rod aside and quietly sat on a prostrate

tree to rest awhile. But reflecting that I had done fairly well, and the 2.36 Great Western train was available, I hastily put my tackle together, interviewed the keeper to show the sport, shouldered the creel, and arrived at the station just in time.

On July 31st I again had the privilege of fishing in the park. A gentle wind stirred the leaves to whisper, and it was only pleasantly warm. While I sat in the garden reach making all ready to begin sport, the gurgle of the falling water through the six hatches had a soothing influence on one's spirit, and taking Tennyson's "In Memoriam" from my side pocket, I read a few passages, but as that was hardly in form for a dry-fly fisherman with the clear stream at his feet and fish in view waiting to be caught, I soon went above the hatches, and from the cottage gardens on the east side by 11.30 a.m. managed to creel a brace, and above Shawford Bridge from the west bank, another brace by two o'clock. Then, as before, I went back by train, and resumed practice in the evening; but there was no rise until 7.45, when phryganidæ were on or hovering over the surface of the water, chiefly in mid-channel, and trout, also grayling, were eagerly on the feed, making a splash, sometimes "a boil," as they seized a fly. For a full hour with little cessation I was casting over them, hooking, unhooking, killing two brace, or returning fish.

Altogether it was a fairly successful and very enjoyable day; but the four brace scaled only $7\frac{3}{4}$ lb.

By the courtesy of Alex. P. Ralli, Esq., I had the choice of a day's fishing in his Twyford preserves, and after waiting for a favourable forecast of the weather, a bright morning and a gentle wind from the south tempted me to try on August 17th. A survey of the water showed it to be choked with weeds, some in flower standing out above the surface or greenly covering the bottom, except in a few places where the force of the stream had cleared spaces between, showing the chalky bed. Many dry-fly fishermen dislike such a dense mass of weeds, because it is so difficult to draw a hooked fish through or over them; but for several reasons I much prefer a fishery where they are seldom cut to one where they are shaved close by the chain scythe or torn out by grappling hooks, leaving little or no cover for the piscine denizens, and destroying their food, for young weeds are the *habitat* of larvæ, gammarus pulex, mollusca, &c., on which trout largely subsist. There are several inviting seats along the west bank on which one can rest at ease and watch for rises, or even cast one's fly from, and also to admire the panoramic view along the bright water meadows stretching away to St. Cross, and beyond to historic Winchester, and shut in by undulating hilly downs on both sides, which ages

long ago were probably the banks of a wide river, an estuary of the sea. Opposite is the church and pretty village of Twyford, where the remains of a Roman villa can be visited, and in the churchyard is a famous yew-tree.

From 9.30 a.m. until one o'clock I fished persistently, using small flies, but except one trout creeled weighing $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb., only undersized ones came to hand. There was no evening rise until 7.30, and very sparse then, but afterwards three trout were landed and put back, and one over a pound killed to make up a brace. The keeper then coming up to me, remarked that there had been no May-flies at Twyford this season.

On August 24th I made a good, although delayed, beginning on the Abbot's Barton fishery. After stalking along the east bank from nine o'clock until nearly mid-day, and casting without once having a touch, hope waxed faint, and I thought I had made a mistake in choosing the day; but when the last meadow opposite the new gasworks was reached, a trout, in position close under the sedge and sword-grass covered right bank on which I stood, was rising and sucking in large dark-winged olive duns as they floated toward him. I carefully drew back, and assuming the kneeling and crouching low down posture—also well hidden from view—I saw with satisfaction that I had not

disturbed him from continuing his repast. But as I am not ambidextrous, it was difficult to place one's fly by the right hand the proper distance before him. Trial after trial was made until he became suspicious and sank to the bottom, but was not scared away; I could see him plainly. Anon he rose again, but, fortunately for me, not so close to the sedge. To have made any bungle in casting now would have been fatal, therefore I felt it to be a crucial test of skill to place the lure just right. At the first presentation he took it, and by a gentle turn of the wrist, making a *draw* rather than a strike (for my red quill fly was dressed on a 000 hook), he was firmly hooked, and instantly rushing up stream ran out ten or fifteen yards of line ere I durst attempt to restrain him. And when I did so, wound the line in, and played him from the bowed rod, he turned and scurried down stream, leaping out once only, but flouncing several times on the surface, thus helping to exhaust himself. Now was the moment for masterful pressure to be put on him; accordingly, when I drew back the line by degrees, and he felt the strain, he turned and headed up stream in wild affright, and it seemed some minutes before his struggles were over and he was safely netted out, the gut cast several times twisted tightly round his gills. He was a splendid trout weighing 2lb. 13oz. Men from the adjacent

gasworks during the latter part of their dinner-hour had been watching behind me, but I was quite unconscious of their presence until they called out : " That is a nice fish, sir," and crowded round to admire it. About three o'clock another chance offered lower down at the first wide bend. Two fish, both within reach of where I knelt, were rising, but only at long intervals—probably their feast on flies was nearly finished and they had become fastidious, for when, at the second throw, my fly covered the nearest one, he quietly sidled off under horse-tail weeds. But the other fish was not so shy, and after casting over him several times he accepted the fateful fly, was hooked in the tongue, and immediately bolting up stream made fast, for an anxious minute, in a weed-bed of water celery, from whence, however, he was drawn forth by taking the line in the left-hand fingers and using gentle but gradually increasing force, while the right hand held the rod sloping backward from the vertical position, ready to play him when released. An excellent plan, but not fully effectual until the unavoidably slack line could be reeled in, the quarry held taut from the bending rod, and drawn gasping into the landing net—a well-conditioned fish scaling 2lb. 5oz. The brace, weighing 5lb. 2oz., was shown to the head-keeper on my way back. There was absolutely not a

single rise afterwards that I noticed. And another rod had the same experience, but not the same sport.

I have been particular in describing some of the details of the foregoing captures, as they are typical instances of dry-fly practice, and therefore, and also because the space at my disposal is necessarily limited, I may be excused for shortening what follows.

On September 1st, three trout were killed, weighing 1lb. 5oz., 1lb. 9oz., and 1lb. 2oz.

On the 4th, two, weighing 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. and 1lb. 10oz.

On the 11th the vane stood due west, the sky was lowering, and rain fell at intervals, but a straight stick umbrella sufficed to keep one dry, and, tied to the landing net handle when not in use, is far more convenient to carry than heavy waterproofs, which at best are heating and uncomfortable. I recommend fly-fishers to try it. Above the Great Western railway arch, on the broad shallows and past the "plantation," grayling (only in recent years introduced) seem at last to have made their headquarters, and from eleven o'clock to three p.m. three were unavoidably hooked and returned, for the lessee of the fishery, Mr. I. E. B. Cox, wishes them not to be taken at present under 12in. (and only two *per diem*) so that a stock may live to increase and multiply. But a leash of trout were caught and creeled during the time. And as the morning

rise was nearly over I slowly retraced my steps, observant of any break of the surface of the water ; climbed the steep railway bank, crossed over the bridge, passed down the line for a long distance to the stile, and resumed the rod on the Winnall side, where, from the last meadow bounded by the ditch, two more trout were killed, making up $2\frac{1}{2}$ brace, scaling 6lb. 6oz. On my way I noticed a profusion of the coral-like hips of the wild rose, haws on the hedges, scarlet viscid berries on yew-trees, and beautiful clusters or cymes of clear red berries like currants on the water elder : also amongst many other wild flowers, scabious, candy-tuft, corn cockle, yellow foxglove, clover, ragwort, &c., and standing erect, *Lysimachia vulgaris*.

On the 16th a fine trout, weighing 1lb. 14oz., was hooked and landed when it was almost too dark to see where one's fly fell.

On the 19th the wind was north-east, and therefore unfavourable ; added to which in the upper half of the water mudding out was being done by one man, while another, in a ballast boat, poled it up and down laden with chalk to repair the banks. This not only disturbed the stream, but coloured it, and I was about to forego fishing, in despair when, looking back as far as I could see clearly, fish were rising. By a wide *détour* I carefully got below them, and at once noticed that they were feeding on

nymphæ and subimago flies, and the water there was less turbid; indeed during the men's dinner hour it cleared. By two o'clock two trout, weighing 2lb. 1oz. and 1lb. 6oz., were tempted to their fate by my red quill fly, and another soon after, 1½lb. In the evening, after sunset, two more were killed, 1lb. 7oz. and 1lb. 9oz.

On the 27th, five were drawn to net, and weighed by steelyard as soon as landed, and, in the order of capture, 1lb. 14oz., 1lb. 7oz., 1lb. 2oz., 1lb. 9oz., and 1lb. 5oz. As the shadows made by the declining sun were lengthening, swallows were congregating high in the air, looking like mere specks, and also many were swooping over the smooth river, snatching with unerring sight from its surface midges and black gnats; and yet not so later on at dusk, for a house-martin seized my artificial fly as it was being whirled in the air in the act of casting, and was fast hooked at the point of the beak, wildly fluttering in alarm until wound in to the top ring of the rod, there very tenderly handled, caressed, and released—not much pained or damaged.

On the 29th, after a stormy night, when a great number of eels were caught in the large iron grating trap at Durngate Mill, through which the main stream can be strained—a deadly device—I made no attempt to fish until after luncheon, when in no

hopeful mood as to sport (for thunder-clouds were gathering in the distance as black as ink, and a few premonitory big drops of rain were falling) I waited on the east bank watching for any movement. A trout rose under the opposite side and sucked in a natural fly. Many times my lure was presented, with occasional intervals between. At last he rose to it and fastened, fighting well, but a losing battle, and was soon brought to the grass, weighing 1lb. 7oz. In the evening, when the weather had somewhat cleared, I went along the west side as far as the Spring Garden lower hatch, to make a last attempt to catch a goodly trout I had often observed and cast over. He fed close to a mass of green tussock grass overhanging the water, and under which was his haunt when idle. The set of the stream round the wide bend of the river brought floating ephemeridæ, trichoptera, and nocturnal lepidoptera to the tussock, often touching and even clinging to its blades trailing on the surface; the wily fish therefore invariably took up one and the same position when hungry, opening his mouth wide to receive the tempting morsels. It was difficult for a dry-fly to be placed in front of him by the most skilful angler, for the hook so often caught on the grass, which was tough, and in pulling the gut broke. I much coveted that fish, and did not like to be beaten. I had, therefore, a

few days previously resorted to the expedient of having the huge tussock grubbed up and taken away entirely.

Approaching him now on tip-toe with the utmost circumspection, I knelt within a long casting distance of where he was rising, intently intercepting brown sedge-flies. I changed the small fly I had on for a red quill on No. 1 hook, and sent it forward over him in a line with the natural flies. No notice was taken of it; nor again and again, until, when a puff of wind diverted it to the right, he moved after it, and, with an audible snap and instant spring out of water, hooked himself. For several minutes an exciting time for me followed, and fatal for him, as he was netted out and killed—a beautifully marked fish, weighing 1lb. 13oz.

On the 30th, the last day of the trout season of 1905, an excellent finish was made in a few hours by the capture of three trout, weighing respectively 1½lb., 1¾lb., and 2¼lb.

At the end is a concise statement of the above-described sport—not so good as in many former seasons; but to kill an *excessive* number of fish, especially on a private fishery, is no longer the object of a dry-fly purist and sportsman. And it will be noticed that on most days I have only fished for a few hours, yet quite enough for pastime and recreation, and the full enjoyment of Nature's

many attractions while wandering by the peaceful river.

Date	No. of trout.	lb.	oz.	Date	No. of trout.	lb.	oz.
May 19th ...	3	5	2	Aug. 8th ...	1	1	5
June 3rd ...	2	2	1	„ 17th ...	2	2	6
„ 13th ...	2	2	15	„ 24th ...	2	5	2
„ 22nd ...	6	9	11	Sept. 1st ...	3	4	0
July 1st ...	3	4	2	„ 4th ...	2	3	6
„ 3rd ...	2	2	3	„ 11th ...	5	6	6
„ 14th ...	1	1	14	„ 16th ...	1	1	14
„ 18th ...	1	1	2	„ 19th ...	5	7	15
„ 21st ...	5	5	0	„ 27th ...	5	7	5
„ 29th ...	1	1	14	„ 29th ...	2	3	4
„ 31st ...	8	7	12	„ 30th ...	3	5	8
Aug. 5th ...	1	1	9	Total ...	66	93lb. 12oz.	

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GRAYLING SEASON, 1905.

DURING the season I had the great privilege and delight of fishing for grayling in the very best-stocked portions of the Itchen at Twyford and Shawford.

On August 11th, five brace were killed ; on the 12th, three and a half brace ; on the 19th, four brace ; on the 23rd, four brace ; on the 26th, one brace—their weights varying from 14oz. to $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb.

On August 28th the evening was stormy, and until seven o'clock no signs of flies or of fish breaking the surface of the swollen, breeze-rippled, and strongly running stream could be noticed. I was standing near the swampy margin of the west bank above Shawford Bridge, and with little hope of the prospect for sport improving, when a single dark olive dun floated down, and just as its struggles to dry its wings seemed effectual it rose, but fell on the water again, and instantly a grayling flashed up and took it. And at the second cast my artificial fly. Well hooked and played from the bended rod, it was felt to be a heavy one ; nor

could it be much restrained without risk until it had drifted to the ford, where I was in the act of trying to draw it over the shallow side to dry land, not intending to use the net, when a man watching from the bridge, a black retriever at his side, called out, "Shall I come and land him for you, sir?" At that instant his dog rushed round to the shallows, and, wildly jumping about, repeatedly tried to seize the fish—in fact, to retrieve it as he would a moorhen. The chance of hooking the dog was so likely, and the consequent breakage of my tackle, perhaps losing the fish also, that I promptly used the net handle to beat him off, and as I landed and unhooked the grayling (afterwards found to weigh 11lb. 7oz.), the dog looked on, wagging his tail and barking excitedly—possibly he expected praise rather than a beating.

For the next half hour, at intervals, a few dark-winged Ephemeridæ were seen to emerge on the surface. I knotted on to the fine-drawn gut point of my cast a red quill dressed on a cipher hook, and after many attempts, baffled by the wind, to present it just right, a grayling that could plainly be seen in a clear run close under my bank rose to it and was hooked and brought to net, weighing 15oz. Another an ounce heavier soon followed. Afterwards, about 8 p.m., when the wind had lulled, some sedge-flies hovered over the surface in mid-channel,

occasionally dipping on to it as they dropped their eggs. A larger red quill on a No. 2 hook was therefore tried, as it was similar in size to the natural sedges, and, presented by the horizontal back-handed casting method, it sailed lightly down over the ring of a feeding fish, and when he rose again and snatched at it he hooked himself, giving three minutes of exciting sport ere the landing-net secured him, a grayling of 14oz. making up two brace weighing $4\frac{1}{4}$ lb.

On the 30th, after the total eclipse of the sun in the afternoon, the evening was dull, and low clouds threatened rain. I fished in the same place as last. The river was clear but brimful; indeed, here and away overflowing its banks, and running so wildly that a dry-fly cast up stream in the usual manner immediately dragged, and if thrown across, the line sagged or bellied, and consequently, whenever a fish took my fly, it was most difficult, on the slack line, to strike and hook him. To let the fly drift was easier and the only alternative, and in this way two and a half brace of grayling, from 10in. to 13in. in length, were creeled by 8.10 p.m. At which time, having lost my fly in an overhanging branch, it was too dark to see to tie on another, and I reluctantly had to leave off. It was particularly provoking, for the fish were then rising in that reckless way they often do for a brief time at dusk.

Next evening my practice was between the bridge and the lower boundary of the Twyford fishery on the west side, and for once in a way all the conditions an angler wishes for were favourable; the smooth, clear, and still sunlighted stream reflected white cumuli clouds and the azure sky; flies were in the air, which the *Hirundinidæ* in graceful curves of flight and with unerring sight were intercepting, while olive duns, in straggling, intermittent groups, were floating down, and fish taking them eagerly. And to complete one's satisfaction, a gentle breeze from the west made casting easy. The successful fly of yestereve, a red quill on a 000 hook, was again used, and from 6.30 to a little after 8 p.m. four brace of grayling, scaling from 12oz. to 1lb. 5oz., were hooked, played, and brought to grass, besides several returned. And a larger grayling escaped by the small hook working out just as the net was nearly in position to thrust under him. There is no necessity to further describe this evening's very good sport than to say that for the one and a half hours I was almost constantly at work, and that the fish rose and fastened to my artificial fly as readily as they did to the naturals; but with so good a rise of duns there were, of course, ten chances to one against the red quill. Bearing this in mind, the sport could scarcely have been better.

On September 2nd the fully expected and ardently longed-for repetition of the above sport was greatly interfered with by horses drawing carts, vans, &c., passing through the ford, and as it was Saturday night, the drivers sometimes stopped midway to refresh their horses, wash wheels, &c. At another time a boy was on the back of a tired horse that had done his week's work and was made to stand awhile in the ford for the benefit of his legs, and now and again the boy, evidently delighted to be riding, would take a turn from shore to shore, and once he began to splash up stream until I remonstrated. And twice a lumbering watering-cart was slowly filled from a bucket dipped into the river. With all these interruptions one's patience was much tried, as I had no chance of fishing until about 7.30. p.m. I should have gone elsewhere had I not noticed that within a few minutes after each disturbance had temporarily ceased a shoal of about a dozen grayling came on to the churned-up gravelly bottom to feed, probably on crushed or crawling larvæ, snails, &c. I resolved, therefore, to bide my time, and when all was quiet again fish began to rise, freely taking Trichoptera as they touched or floated on the surface of the smooth stream, and at intervals my counterfeit fly, each time with fatal effect, for when I left off a leash of beautiful 11in. to 13in. grayling, as bright as silver, lay on the

grass at my feet. And while they were being arranged in the creel for presentation to a friend, embellished with the wild flowers mimulus and willow-herb, the clock of Twyford church slowly tolled out the hour of eight. Twilight was passing into darkness ; Mars, the evening star, low down in the south-western sky, showed large and luminous ; birds were mute—the silence was oppressive.

The evening of September 12th was bright, rather cool and windy, but at 6.40 black gnats were dancing in mazy groups under the boughs of trees and pale midges around my cap as I stood near the poplar-tree above Shawford Bridge. The river was very full and flowing swiftly, but smooth and favourable for dry-fly practice. Many small trout were unavoidably hooked and time was lost in putting them back, but one weighing $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. was kept, because an invalid friend wanted it, and I was not likely to fish in this part of the river again until the trout season would be over. Half an hour afterwards grayling were rising to dark-winged olive duns ; I changed my fly for the Englefield quill pattern with silver tag, dressed on No. 0 hooks, and by a little after eight o'clock it had tempted three brace to their fate, measuring $10\frac{1}{2}$ in. to 11in. when I had to hurry away to catch my train. It was very pretty sport, and a good wind-up of the foregoing ten evenings' sport and pastime, on each

occasion obtained within two hours, and aggregating thirty and a half brace.

It was a lovely night ; innumerable stars spangled the clear blue sky, and the landscape seemed to sleep in the soft light of the harvest moon.

On October 3rd, at noon, many large grayling had worked up to the shallows under the pretty little weir over which the water from the Shawford House garden reach was falling in a glassy cascade. The overhanging trees prevented overhand casting, but, by kneeling and crouching low, my fly could be sent forward over them. It was not noticed at first, but at the third essay it was snatched at, and the grayling hooked : fortunately he turned, and, rushing zigzag down stream without disturbing the others, was followed and netted out. After prudently waiting a time, the weir was again quietly approached, and still the grayling were seen there, but now, more on the alert, rising to olive duns. My very poor imitation was nevertheless taken at the first throw as it lightly dropped in the white froth and among the air-bubbles under the waterfall, and a grayling well hooked and landed, his desperate struggling causing the other fish to scurry away out of the pool. It was satisfactory to know, while consuming an *al fresco* luncheon which followed, that a handsome brace was already in the creel—indeed, it gave a zest to appetite.

Lower down, where the broad water is divided by the first islet, the narrowed channel is a favoured feeding-place for grayling. They were now darting up to the surface, taking floating flies—iron blues they looked like—but to pass along the bank would disturb them. I therefore several times let my dry-fly drift down, and at last it was effective in bringing another fish to hand. About 4 p.m. the sparse rise of Ephemeridæ was over, nor did they come on again until an hour after sunset, when dark-winged olives in considerable numbers were on the wind-rippled stream under the low-branching trees at the upper end of the mill-race, where casting was almost impossible, but in an eddy one grayling could be tried over, and he came to grief, the two brace for the day scaling 4lb. 2oz.

The morning rise on November 3rd did not begin until about 11.30, and only lasted for two and a half hours. On the lower reach of the main stream in the park several small rings and splashes were seen on the glide above the second island, such as denote grayling busily taking surface food, but they were many times cast over before my 00 red quill was taken and a fish hooked, who instantly furrowed along the top of the water to the opposite side, and made vain attempts to rub the hook out in a shallow weed-bed; then when held firmly from the rod and played he repeatedly, as if in wrath,

turned wildly over and over on the surface (grayling seldom or never spring *out* of water as trout do), and being thus exhausted and before he could take another turn, as they sometimes do when apparently dead beaten, was drawn near enough to be netted out. Almost under similar conditions another grayling was shortly after lured by the same fly and killed—the brace weighing $2\frac{1}{4}$ lb.

Higher up, twenty yards in the rear of the first islet, a large grayling was observed in a clear bay behind weeds, and, save for the gently waving movement of his tail to maintain his equipoise, showing no signs of life—"Glued to the bottom and very little use to cast over him," an angler would say. Nevertheless, in a desultory sort of way I did send my red quill over him, and his head slightly moved up. Again my fly was floated over, and this time he came to inspect it, paused, and retired. I also retired some thirty or forty yards lower down, and under the dry sedge bordering my bank managed to hook and land an 11 in. grayling. Then I quietly worked up again to the before-mentioned big one, and by a long throw deftly placed my fly a yard in front of him. Like a shadowy flash he boldly rose, touched the fly, and drowned it, no doubt seizing it submerged unknown to me, for in the act of recovering my fly it firmly hooked him, and after a well-fought battle he was

safely landed, and, held on a steelyard, weighed 11lb. 5oz. Then at the extremity of the park where the two streams meet a grayling could be seen quiescent under the opposite branches, but, as before, an experimental cast tempted him to rise from his lethargy and snap at my fly, when, well hooked, and after giving exciting sport, he was brought to bank, under 11lb. in weight.

On four other days in November my sport aggregated fifteen and a half brace, and on seven days in December, to finish the season, nineteen and a half brace.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN ITCHEN BASKET.

IN the early morning and throughout the day light westerly breezes and sunshine sufficient without being too glaring for one's eyes were highly favourable for dry-fly practice in Shawford park, where the main river and a back stream flow together at the lower boundaries of the estate, encircling it. The perfect peace of the whole environment was congenial to the spirit of one of Izaak Walton's "contemplative men," and that there was no competing rod at work was not a matter of over-keen regret, nor that there was nobody to speak to throughout the day any cause of complaining of the solitude. For, with natural objects all around, who could feel dull? The lowly flowers strewing one's pathway along the verdant sward, and those, tall and graceful, on the river banks (of which hemp agrimony, willow herb, and *Lysimachia vulgaris* are at the end of August the most luxuriant and conspicuous) were like familiar friends, welcomed on an annually recurring visit. Rooks, plovers, and other birds passed overhead under a clear blue sky, over which pure white

cirro-cumulus clouds slowly sailed, with spaces between looking like mountain lakes. Wood-pigeons started from covert unexpectedly; rabbits and smaller rodents also; while soft-eyed kine and their calves browsed in the distance, or, sheltered from the noontide heat, stood in groups beneath the shade of noble trees. On the western bank of the lower reach, but some yards away from the brink of the smooth and gently flowing river, I knelt and watched for a rise of the Ephemera and of fish. Nor waited long, for a single dark-winged olive, coming to the surface, was quickly followed by a straggling line of others floating down, amid which my artificial fly was lightly thrown. It was a red quill on 00 hook, a pattern I invariably begin with on our southern chalk streams, no matter what fly is on the water. It was frequently risen to with a small splash, and yet the fish missed it, or purposely came short, for several times I distinctly noticed one move up to the surface to inspect it and sink back; once or twice, indeed, it was merely touched and drowned, but never seized. It was the same at two other places I moved to, and I changed it for a Wickham, or a blue quill to no purpose.

Then the water began to mend because the large hatches were all opened, and where I first tried there was now a swift broad run in mid-channel between beds of weeds. Fish still rose as freely as

before, but more on the alert, "meaning business" as anglers often say, and in eager competition for the floating morsels, and which in the stronger light of noon I saw were small black gnats—perhaps diptera. As a blue quill was already on my cast, I presented it repeatedly over the rings of the quickly rising fish, but because it was not accepted my wonted confidence in the red quill revived, and I knotted on to the drawn gut point of a three-yard cast one dressed on a 000 hook determining not to change the pattern all day, except occasionally on larger hooks. At the first throw not far from the end of the run (it is always best to work up a run by degrees so as not to put fish down) a trout was hooked; and, drawn away for some considerable distance down stream to a convenient place, after a plucky fight was netted out. As I was in the act of adjusting the landing net to the sling at my side, half turning round to do so, the sound made by a feeding fish caused me to hesitate, and I saw under the bank, which was thickly overgrown with the large-leaved butter-bur, the wave of an enlarging ring, sufficiently suggestive to a practised eye to show where the fish had just moved. The difficulty was how to get below without scaring him away. That, however, was accomplished by making a wide *détour* through a swamp, and by kneeling and waiting. Again he rose, nose out of water, indicating

his exact locale, and enabling me, by a trial cast along the grass, to ascertain the right distance. And when he came up again, forth went my lure, temptingly cocked over him, and it was instantly sucked in, as I felt almost sure it would be, for a trout under one's own bank is one of the easiest of captures for a dry-fly expert. Several minutes of exciting play followed before he came to net, when the usual *coup de grâce* was given by three taps over his brain pan, and he was laid in the creel with the other, one leaf of the before-mentioned butter-bur under them and one covering. By the way, there is nothing better than such leaves to be used for this purpose, for the bottom of the creel is thereby kept less contaminated, and the beautiful fish are not marked, as they often are when laid in short grass or nettles.

On my way back, softly treading along the bank, but as much as possible out of the sight of the fish, and yet able to observe their movement on the surface (not unfrequently deceived by the ripple a weed makes when it pops up at intervals and disappears), I stopped now and then to make casts, chiefly experimental over a glide, but only one small grayling came to hand. Then when I reached the broad run and quietly sank on my left knee, casting began in earnest. Olive duns were now floating down, and several trout rose simultaneously, with,

of course, pauses between ; but I was constantly at work, and it was difficult, when at length a trout was hooked, to prevent him rushing up stream, and thus perhaps spoil any further chance of sport in this promising place ; therefore, he was restrained and made to turn back, I following and drawing him over a shallow to land without using the net. The next fish hooked weeded me, and held fast, so that a break away was inevitable. Whether trout hang on to weeds by their teeth, as some leading dry-fly fishermen have lately surmised, I do not know, but I think it likely, as certainly their teeth in both jaws are fitted for the purpose, and those, hook-like, on the palate, tongue, and fauces more so. And, indeed, if the mouth were closed on strong weeds, the hold would be very firm, and for once in a way an angler outwitted. I am inclined to think that if at his first rush a trout is given his headway, even through a patch of weeds, he will not cling on to them, for probably it is the too masterful restraint put upon him that makes him hold fast. I have often seen a trout take a turn round and round weed stalks when being played.

Bearing the escape of this fish with becoming equanimity, and to allow the commotion it caused to subside, I sat on a prostrate tree, and while consuming an *al fresco* luncheon suddenly noticed a long way off down stream a large wavy disturbance.

Thither I hastened, and when the fish came up again and again my fly was sent on its mission half a dozen times, but not taken. He was evidently a travelling fish, at every rise a yard or two further on, probably intercepting nymphæ. What was to be done? Getting well in front of him, and lying prone on the grassy bank, I tried the horizontal back-handed drift cast, and at the third attempt to place the fly straight before him he seized it, making a boil. And by a gentle strike (not too instantly made, lest the hook should be pulled out of his mouth) he was hooked, and, after a game fight, safely landed—the best fish of the day, and making up two brace in the morning rise. It was past two o'clock, and as there is usually, after so good and continuous a rise, not much more sport to be expected until the evening, I put my rod aside and resumed it about 6.30.

As the sun sank behind the downs and I stood facing Oliver's Battery on the east side of the mill stream, which in the glorious afterglow gleamed like molten gold, and distinctly showed up every fly or movement on its surface, trout began to rise, at first fitfully, but by 7.15 my rod had been kept busy casting over fish in view or rising, but only undersized ones came to hand. During the next half hour, however, they came madly on the feed, taking blue-winged olives and phryganidæ

whenever the latter touched the surface to deposit their eggs. Crowds of pale midges in round groups were circling over the water, but, as I have frequently noticed this season, not nearly so many spinners in the air as usual, possibly because vast numbers of the duns have been eaten by birds, &c., and therefore the imago or spinner stage was never reached. If so, that is a bad look-out for future seasons of dry-fly sport. I had no occasion to move far afield, for my artificial fly was risen to pretty often, considering "long odds" of the natural insects were against it. Two fish were only slightly hooked, gave a splash, and were free; one escaped as the landing net was ready for him, and yet four handsome trout were creeled, making up the day's total to four brace. At eight o'clock the moon was shining brightly as I strode back through the park on my way to the Great Western train, and a white mist was rising all around.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TROUT SEASON, 1906.

AFTER six months' rest of the trout-rod, idly hanging by its case-loop in an angler's fishing sanctum and study combined, the opening day of this season found him full of joyful expectations of coming sport with the dry-fly, and in every way, as to tackle and flies, perfectly ready. On every side were indications of the craft, and of his enthusiasm for it. On the walls from many glass cases looked forth the stuffed effigies of bream, barbel, chub, jack, Thames trout, &c., marvels of the taxidermist's skill, reminding him of bygone successes in the gentle art (albeit some of its practices are anything but that), and each recalling the incidents of their capture, time, and place, when, long ago the pursuit of coarse fishing of all sorts, from gudgeon to pike, afforded delightful excitement, and no thought was then given to the enchantment of the fly-rod of the future. Its beginning, however, was to catch chub with black or brown palmer flies, dace with black gnats, or a very occasional Thames trout with a large governor or a coachman fly. Now, as a

dry-fly purist, I have discarded all these things. Nevertheless, my sympathies are with all anglers who fish fairly, nor, having followed their methods myself, may I presume to find fault. At the same time, I must say I am glad to be free of all bait fishing, and that no longer is required the squirming worm writhing upon my hook, or living insect, or fish live bait. The dry-fly practice reduces the cruelty of the sport to a minimum, and, as the fish are killed as soon as landed, they do not die a lingering death, as most others do, especially those hooked and remaining for hours on night-lines, which we daily eat without compunction. And yet how often an angler is said to be cruel, notably by the fair sex.

All through April the weather was too unsettled to offer any encouragement for me to don the creel and take the fly-rod out with a view to fishing, for there were few, if any, duns upon the water, nor, although nearly every day I strolled beside the Itchen for a mile above Winchester, did I see a dozen trout rising during the time. But on May 1st (once the most joyous day in merrie England, and in my own experiences of it, long ago) I killed my first trout, weighing 1lb. 9oz., and that was my only chance that day. I had, therefore, plenty of time to recall to mind the former festivities of May Day, when it was customary for chimney sweeps, cleanly for the nonce and arrayed in parti-coloured

clothes, to dance round "Jack in the green" with their wives and sweethearts, and, after each bout had ended, one of the younger maids, in short white muslin skirts, almost transformed to the appearance of a fairy, would hold out a long-handled, bright brass ladle to the observant throng around, to receive their pecuniary offerings. The more graceful and refined maypole dances and out-of-door amusements were three or four years ago revived at Itchen Abbas and a few other places in England with befitting ceremony.

These reflections were disturbed by the sudden uprising near me of four wild ducks from the sedge, which I watched as they flew in single file, and high up were lost to sight. Then a pair of lapwings (*Vanellus cristatus*), about the size of small pigeons, flew up from the grass, and uttering plaintive cries; one separated from the other and made a wide, irregular circuit, while the other at first flew in short turns about my head, afterwards settling on the bank about thirty yards in front of me; ever and anon as I slowly moved forward, so did the bird—most likely to lure me from its nest. At intervals both would come near, and then repeat these manœuvres. Considering it was May Day, the riverside had a very winterly appearance, and there were few flowers in the meadows except daisies and marsh marigolds; the trees were as yet

thinly covered with young leaves, barely enough to hide the nesting birds, but summer immigrants sang cheerily from the hedge-tops, and in the distance the two monotonous notes of the cuckoo were faintly heard. But certainly all through the month on the reaches of the river which came under my notice hardly any flies came up, nor did the fish rise well, save on the 23rd, when I killed two brace, aggregating 4lb. 2oz. in weight.

Towards the end of May, all arrangements made, and a good selection of favourite pattern of flies in imitation of the great ephemera received, the always sanguine and enthusiastic fly-fisher anxiously watches for a letter or telegram from the keeper of the fishery he rents or is invited to, to announce that "the fly is up." Instantly the exciting news causes his heart to beat quicker. But it is too late in the day to take the long journey thither; nevertheless, he straightway turns to Bradshaw and wires to the keeper to meet him to-morrow morning at 10.30, on arrival of the train at — Station, his mind full of anticipative pleasure and the memories of former sport at the same place a decade ago, when imago May-flies filled the air

"Thickly as motes that people the sunbeams,"

or sheltered from his too ardent rays in the rear of hawthorn and withy bushes, or under trees, danced in a mazy, circling waltz, or in quick ascents and

more leisurely falls, displaying their perfections to each other for a few brief hours previous to pairing, ovipositing, and dying. And as the angler can only spare one day from his office in London, where over his daily task and common round he dreams of halcyon days by the riverside, he orders breakfast to be ready in good time on the morrow, and edibles, including fruit, to be prepared to carry with him ; for he wisely has no idea of leaving the margin of the stream until long after sunset, regarding the whole affair as a sort of lengthened picnic, and therefore delighted to take his needful refreshment *al fresco*. He is almost certain to meet friends and eke competitors, for during the so-called "carnival" fly-fishermen are gregarious, and often it must be thought, if not openly expressed, by those keenest on the sport, very much in each others' way. Especially so is the roving rodsman, who parades along the bank in a listless manner and seldom appears content to settle to his work, and, worse still, is given to gossiping.

Alas ! there is very little to be said about the May-fly sport this year, as everywhere on our southern rivers it was a failure compared with former seasons, and it must have been most disappointing and vexatious to a host of its votaries. At the beginning of June, when it should be at its best, I counted over a dozen fishermen on about a

mile of the Itchen Valley fishery, and in two hours only saw two May-flies.

During June, July, and August, fishing only two or three hours a day, often only one hour in the evening, the undermentioned statement briefly sets forth the sport obtained, all, of course, with dry-flies dressed on small hooks, 000 to 0 in size; chiefly red quills with and without gold tags, pale, medium, or dark olives with or without flat silver tags, Englefield quills, and gold-ribbed hare's ears. I seldom saw a really good rise of the Ephemeridæ either in the morning or after sunset. Spinners were not so numerous in the air or over the water as in former years, nor were so many brown sedge-flies out at dusk, but smaller silver sedges were abundant, and pale midges swarmed around one's cap, on which artificial flies were stuck, probably attracted by them. Nocturnal insects came forth freely, and stinging gnats, deserving the name of mosquito for their virulence, were a great nuisance, as also were diptera, like small house-flies, in the hot days of July and August, crawling over one's face and hands, into the corners of one's eyes, and even entering the nostrils.

					Sport in June.			
					6th	7th	18th	19th
Number of fish...	...	...	...	...	4	1	3	2
Weight in lb. and oz.	...	...	...	...	3-12	1-6	5-4	2-11
					22nd	25th	26th	29th
Number of fish...	...	...	...	...	2	5	1	1
Weight in lb. and oz.	...	...	...	...	3-4	5	1-8	1-6

				Sport in July.			
				4th	5th	9th	14th
Number of fish...	...	...	...	1	1	4	2
Weight in lb. and oz.	...	...	...	1-4	1-8	4-2	4-2
				16th	23rd	25th	
Number of fish...	...	...	...	1	6	1	
Weight in lb. and oz.	...	...	...	1-10	6-4	2-6	
				Sport in August.			
				25th	27th	28th	
Number of fish...	...	...	...	7	8	3	
Weight in lb and oz.	...	...	...	7-8	8-12	3-12	
				29th	30th	31st	
Number of fish...	...	...	...	1	2	1	
Weight in lb. and oz.	...	...	...	1-8	2	1-12	

I will not occupy space in describing the incidents of these captures, preferring to mention more fully some of the successes in September.

After much-needed and refreshing rain in the night, September 5th turned out a perfect day for the dry-fly fisher, and by 10.30 casting began over the limited space (which, however, is full of trout and grayling) between Shawford Bridge and the lower boundary on the west side of Mr. Ralli's preserves. The ford, which near a *shaw* or small wood gives the name to the locality, allows vehicles of all sorts, cattle, &c., to pass through, of course disturbing the fishing for the time; but really it benefits it, for soon after the fish work up from far and near to feed on the larvæ thus rooted out of the chalky bottom. The fish were rising well on the smooth glides, and within an hour a brace of pretty and well-conditioned trout, weighing 2lb. 1oz. (a good average size for the Shawford water) were

creeled, and a brace of grayling put back. I then went into the park, and below the little waterfall at the end of the garden several trout rose to my olive duns on 00 hooks, but only two were takeable, 11lb. each. In the evening, fishing again above the bridge for two hours until it was too dark to see to repair a broken gut cast, much less to thread on a small-eyed hook, three more trout, about 11lb. each, came to net, tempted by red quills on 0 hooks.

Next evening, after six o'clock, in the same place during the last forty minutes of daylight, a leash was landed weighing $2\frac{3}{4}$ lb. Four horses at grass entered the river immediately beyond my fishing right and splashed about, making it turbid, also putting the fish down, and a boy on horseback remained for half an hour in the ford. It was therefore nearly dark before I made a beginning and then I owed the sport to having taken warning last evening when it was too late to see to tie on a fly, to have several all ready attached to gut and stuck in my cap. It was dull all the time, and no after-glow at sunset.

Three days previously an offer of fishing in the Cripstead water below Winchester resulted in my killing three trout, weighing 4lb. 5oz.

On September 7th I took my first day at Abbots Barton, where by favour of the lessee I have had the great privilege of exercising my skill for a

limited but liberal number of days for over twenty past seasons. On reaching the beautiful and bank-high river about 10.30, a sparse rise of Ephemeridæ continued more or less until one o'clock, of which swallows took more than their share. No sunshine till then, when the heat soon became oppressive, the surface of the smooth water shone like a mirror, and not a ripple disturbed it. By 2.30 p.m. I had three trout in my creel weighing 4lb. 2oz., caught on red quills; therefore, in a pleasant frame of mind, I interviewed the two keepers, and showed my tickets, &c., then went home for refreshment.

Out again in the evening, the rod was constantly at work from 6 to 7.15, but I lost some time by casting over promising rises which it turned out were made by undersized grayling. Several were caught only 3in. in length, evidently this year's progeny, which showed how they are multiplying since their progenitors were introduced (wisely or not is a moot question) into this part of the Itchen a few years ago. The trout were rising in a swift run in front of "the plantation," down which short, wispy weeds were floating, continually fouling one's hook, and food of some sort must also have come down that attracted the trout to rise at intervals. But they would not touch any of my favourite patterns of artificial flies, and, because the shadows were hastening on apace, I left them, and as a last resort passed

through the end of the plantation, over a swamp, and half-hidden crossing board to the west side of the open broad shallows. Here, again, trout were rising in a similar manner nearer the bank on which I crouched and knelt, three or four frequently at the same instant, also now and again in mid-stream, most of them large fish, as indicated by the extending wavy ring and the "boil" they sometimes made. But my efforts were all in vain; "'tis not in mortals to command success," and I left the scene, disconsolate. After the morning's sport it was a great disappointment, and the walk back over rough paths through two or three miles of misty meadows was wearying, perhaps more so not having a fish to show.

On September 11th, for two hours in the evening of a sunny day, but with an adverse north wind, I fished at Shawford Bridge. The rise was full on when I reached the water, which was high and running smoothly, but about 6.15 it eased off, and soon after only an occasional break of the surface was noticed. Then, however, some phryganidæ appeared, and trout began to take them, and I had the good fortune to hook and land a specimen trout for this part of the river weighing 11lb. 11oz., and as there was still light enough to see, the after-glow favouring, I walked back to the mill head pool, where it seemed a rising trout was waiting for me,

for at my initial throw in front of him my hare's ear fly was seized, the fish well hooked, played without any quarter being given, and dragged to the landing net. Afterwards, from the east bank of the adjoining old canal, nearly at the extent of Sir Charles Frederick's fishing rights, I threw my fly over any likely place, and at the last almost despairing attempt a trout rose to it, was hooked, and came to grief, the brace scaling only $1\frac{3}{4}$ lb.

September 13th was a day of sadness for me, for it was probably the last time I should ever again fish in Shawford Park, the estate having been sold. Not until two o'clock was I at the waterside. The weather was dull, close, and the wind, of which there was little, kept the vane standing at S.W. In the first half-hour I hooked a good-sized trout, but in his final struggle the hook slipped from his lip just as the landing net was ready, and he swam quietly away. About three, rain set in, and continued all the remainder of the day. Partly under the shelter of trees close below the waterfall and hidden from view of the quarry, I could make casts on the glide above the fall, where a dozen or more trout were taking diptera. They were all alert, and I could easily choose the takable ones to cover, but frequently a yearling intercepted my fly, and was hooked. Every one hooked was immediately drawn down over the waterfall and quietly landed without

disturbing those above it. The trees were much in the way of casting properly, and several times flies were caught and broke off in the branches, but by five o'clock a leash of very beautifully marked trout, weighing $3\frac{1}{4}$ lb., graced my creel. The rain then increased to a stormy downpour, shelter was sought elsewhere, fishing was over.

On seven subsequent days in September my sport aggregated eight brace, weighing 25lb. 15oz.; and my whole bag for the trout season of 1906, forty-seven and a half brace, weighing 116lb. 9oz.

CHAPTER XVI.

A SEPTEMBER BRACE.

ON September 21st, 1906, with only seven more available days to finish an indifferent trout season, I still had six days to fit in for expected sport on the best portion of the Itchen, between Winchester and Headbourne Worthy—days reserved to the last, as frequently good things are, not only by children, but by many adults. Yet not altogether so in this case, for all through the month a north-east downstream wind had prevailed, rough-ridging the very much exposed reaches of the fishery, and discouraging even an attempt to fish with the dry-fly on most days. But, narrowed thus to a few last days, Hobson's choice resulted, and the weather, whatever it might be, had to be faced. Accordingly, this morning at half-past ten I was kneeling watching the surface by the side of the main river about a hundred yards above the first fishing hut, which, like Walton and Cotton's fishing house on the Dove, is inscribed "*Piscatoribus sacrum*," and is a welcome refuge in case of storm, and a convenient meeting and luncheon place. I had already walked up about

a mile along the bank without seeing a fish move or a break indicative of a rise, save in one instance close under the sedge and overhanging tussock grass I thought I saw one. Instantly assuming the correct position of kneeling, I was waiting to make an initial throw, when up popped the small head of a dabchick, only to dive under again and reappear some distance off flying to the opposite side, trailing its legs along and splashing the water. How often this occurs, and for the nonce the angler is outwitted. Soon after, on looking back, the head keeper and three rods came into view, one of whom was the lessee of the fishery. As a matter of courtesy, therefore, and not wishing to interfere with their chances of sport, I went straight away beyond the Great Western railway bridge before resuming operations.

The whole forenoon was dull and chilly until about one o'clock, when the first gleam of sunshine broke through the leaden-hued clouds quite cheeringly; a few of the remaining swallow family skimmed over the river, showing flies were about, and, although the wind had decreased in gustiness, it was still enough to make casting difficult; one's fly was blown back ere it reached its objective, and frequently the gut collar became entangled. Still, in spite of these hindrances, two trout rose to my 00 red quill, and were brought to net, also several

grayling ; but both species were less than the regulation size, and were carefully put back. They were all taken from the broad water in front of "the plantation." Beyond there the river is even broader, and towards the unreachable east bank shallow ; but under the near bank, which is a wide bend, there are deep holes, from which goodly trout come forth when on a fly repast. About 2.30 p.m. a fortunate cast over one of these resulted in my hooking and playing one for a minute or two and drawing him to net, but he was a long, heavy fish, and, balanced on the hoop of the net, slipped off it at the critical moment, and took another wild turn down stream for liberty. But the hook held, and the bending rod seemed to be tiring him out, as he was gradually brought back, when suddenly he sprang out of water, and, before I durst attempt to stop him, bolted into a green rush bed and entangled at the roots. After consideration of what was best to be done in this emergency, the line was lightly pulled by hand and the fish drawn forth, much to my satisfaction. At that instant the hook gave way, and artful *Salmo fario* had won the battle. Then I remembered that on tying that hook to the end of my cast I noticed that a portion of the hackle feathers of the fly covered the back of the eye of the hook (which, as I could not cut away, I knotted over)—hence, perhaps, why it slipped ; so

that in the loss of the fish some blame perhaps attached to me. Soon after, as I walked back for rest and refreshment, pale olive duns were rising in considerable numbers under the east bank, also a few stragglers on the middle of the stream and wherever a bend occurred under the other bank; but the lessee, whom I then met and had some pleasant conversation with, had noticed (and so did I) that, although these tempting Ephemeridæ were floating down, nay, sometimes could be seen actually emerging to the surface, they were only occasionally taken by the fish. Nevertheless, the frequent rings they made clearly showed they were taking something else; possibly the nymph as it ascended. Mr. C. had killed one good-sized trout and lost another.

With an empty creel at nearly four o'clock I began sadly to fear that I should have my first blank day of the season; but fortune and perseverance favoured me when I had passed the Spring Garden Hatches, and out of four fish rising in mid-stream within view, and one within casting distance of where I stood, the latter was selected. Forth over his large spreading ring my fly was sent (a green quill-bodied lure on a blue sneck-bend eyed hook), but several times unheeded. At last he rose to it, and, as I promptly struck, he was securely hooked in the lower jaw (the gape of the 0 hook

fixing tightly round the bone). Instantly he rushed over to the Winnall side, fought through his many wiles, bored into deep water, and tried to entangle in horsetail weeds or round sedge roots; but all unavailing, for, held firmly, and played on the give-and-take principle, without hurry, so that the 11ft. split-cane rod did its work thoroughly, he was drawn to a convenient landing place over the submerged net, the holder of it (I always land my own fish) out of sight. Then the desperate quarry made a final effort to avoid the net by turning head over tail, and, quite exhausted, was lifted out, despatched, and laid on the grass for two men working in an adjacent water meadow, who had watched the sport, to come and admire. A really splendid trout in every way, and weighing 1lb. 14oz.

Out again in the evening from 5.45 to 7.15, a good rise was continuing of pale olives until dusk, when winged black ants hovered over the sedge, and some nocturnal insects were in the air, bats and swallows hawking for them. One of the latter, as my artificial fly was whirled in the air, was hooked by the tip of his wing, and I wound him to the top ring of my rod, where, as gently as possible, I took him in hand and released him. About 6.30 a large trout was rising on the middle, rather narrow, channel below where the boys bathe—rising furiously, as they often do in September, a few

minutes before the evening rise is over. At the second throw over, and a yard in front of him, my red quill was taken, and, after a prolonged struggle, the O hook and careful playing brought him safely to grass, thoroughly beaten, and in the now dim light looking like a log of wood as he was drawn to net—a capital specimen, weighing 2lb. 3oz. The brace for the day, weighing 4lb. 1oz., I then took up to the first hut for the keeper and friends to inspect. As I walked back, rejoicing that a day's fishing which was so unfortunate at the beginning had ended so satisfactorily, the bow of the new moon lighted me on my way.

CHAPTER XVII.

A NEW GRAYLING FISHERY.

AN experiment was first made in 1901 by the lessee of the extensive fishery above Winchester to stock it with grayling by introducing a large consignment of yearlings into the main stream, a portion of the Itchen without shallows, except beyond the Great Western Railway arch, where these young fish, suddenly transferred to the strange environment, would at first be hardly likely to stay or ascend further. Rather they would drop back to seek deep and more restful haunts and suitable submerged food, and, if not found to their liking, they would gradually disappear from their temporary abode in an almost mysterious manner. It was so in this case, for within a few months they all deserted out of the fishery. Nothing daunted, however, by this failure—indeed, profiting by experience—the enterprising lessee towards the end of the same year placed a large number of adult grayling, weighing from $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. to $2\frac{1}{4}$ lb., in the middle, or, as it is sometimes called, the mill stream, which for the most part of two miles up to

Headbourne Worthy Saw Mills abounds in shallows, contiguous to sufficient weed cover, and ensuring plenty of food to the fish. Here during the following April (1902) they were seen to be spawning, and afterwards during the trout season about ten brace were caught by dry-fly fishers. They were, however, carefully put back, so that they might have a fair chance to increase and multiply. This they evidently did, for in October of the above year, on one occasion, several hundreds of their descendants were observed by me in the weirs, from $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. to $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. long, also about forty a few inches longer, and three of some 11 in. But presumably they soon after drifted still lower down.

In 1903 at spawning time a great many grayling dropped down to the narrow part of the mill stream close to the city, and, in a weakly state after ovipositing, some few surrendered to the force of the at times very swift water, and were lost to the above fishery, and three or four were caught and killed by local fishermen, although worthless and out of condition, and an illegal act. In 1904 only four came to the same place to spawn, in 1905, seven, but the next year not one, which (coupled with the fact that many mature grayling are at present to be seen in the side stream a little below the first hut, and all the way up to and beyond the second hut, also round the horseshoe-bend communicating through somewhat

tortuous channels with the main river) would seem to prove that they have at last permanently settled into residence. And it is even more encouraging to know that the large broad shallows in the upper part of the fishery are also well stocked with goodly specimens of *Salmo thymallus*, where they are almost certain to stay, as they are in every way perfect haunts for them.

A day's winter grayling fishing on this water having been offered to me (with the option of choosing my own date), I was most fortunate in waiting until December 7th, as it turned out a typical day for the sport. Indeed, as to the weather, it was rather a remarkable day for the time of year, for from sunrise to sunset the sun shone brightly without once clouding over, but without sufficient warmth to melt the hoar frost from the housetops and out-buildings until noon, nor from the meadows and trees till later, and in shady places not at all. The vane pointed north, but there was not enough wind to veer it all day, and the smoke from chimneys rose vertically, 'only curling as it was lost in thin air. Needless to say, it was bitterly cold. I was, however, well prepared for it, and a brisk walk along the river bank to the starting point put the blood in quicker circulation, and increased warmth. The river was perfectly clear, smooth, and not overflowing its banks, so

that all the usually swampy places were easily passed.

It was a new and odd experience to fish this water in winter, where until 1901 never a grayling was seen, and, compared with the many happy days with trout I have enjoyed on it, the surroundings were now sadly altered and drear. Not a flower could be seen, scarcely any haws or hips among the tangled bushes, or red berries, pendent from overhanging branches; the birds had feasted well. It was half-past eleven o'clock as I put my rod together and looped on a long and fine gut cast (an advantage, I think, for grayling fishing) to a light running line, and selected a hackle fly dressed as follows on an eyed double hook of 00 size: badger hackle, green peacock herle, three twists of gold wire under it, and terminated by a crimson tag. This lure was lately recommended to me by a friend to whom it had brought very excellent sport, especially, perhaps, because the dual barbs held more securely than the ordinary hook in the tender lips of artful thymallus—artful in the sense of twisting off the hook at the critical moment, when least expected, because he seems vanquished and surrendering to the ready net.

I was much taken with the idea of this double hook, but I thought it would float better for dry-fly work if dressed with double wings. I had therefore ordered

a supply with and without wings, and also on the same sort of hooks some Wickham fancies with added crimson tags, and gold ribbed hare's ears. Of course, I had other flies with me. All the above patterns were successful. The broad shallows from the bridge up to the little weir on the west bank, and where the streams are divided, were, on the surface of the moderately flowing water, quite free from upstanding weeds, so that every movement of the fish could be seen. They all rose in the middle or towards the opposite shore, requiring a long throw to reach them. And as the rings they made were the only indication of their locale (for, unlike trout feeding under a bank, they could not be seen), those rings had to be promptly and accurately cast over up stream, or when they occurred lower down the dry-fly could be sent there by the horizontal drift cast, to avoid the rod wielder having to move every time.

Until 3 p.m. I was constantly in practice, either in missing to hook, or oftener presenting the fly without good result, landing, unhooking, putting back, and sometimes measuring the grayling, the excitement varied by the loss of small and haply of proper-sized ones; but I had already landed and carefully put back five and a half brace, measuring as follows; Six under 10in., two 11in., one 11½in., and two 10in., the strict rule being that no grayling be

killed under a foot long, and only one brace taken in the day. Fortunately before I left I hooked and safely landed one weighing 11lb. 5oz. ; but at four o'clock all further chance was over, and a heavy mist was rising, so I failed to secure the brace.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GRAYLING SEASON, 1906.

HAPPY is the trout-fisher who, when his season ends with September, has the consolation of good grayling sport during the following months of the year to beguile his leisure hours at the riverside. But in many respects dry-fly fishing for grayling is different and more difficult than for trout, for grayling rise to surface food less frequently ; do not long remain there in position sucking in flies ; but more often dart up from the bottom now and then at intervals, and down again, when, if hooked, they do not spring out of water and thus securely fasten the hook in their tender lips ; hence, if played too long, or too masterfully drawn against the stream towards the net, they sometimes give a peculiar twist when least expected, and break away. The great hindrance to the sport has been the scarcity of flies upon the water, with one exception, *i.e.*, on October 19th, when I hooked, played, and landed seven and a half brace of grayling. On October 23rd, a gentle south-west wind prevailed all day, and it was cloudy with alternate sunshine : at mid-day as warm as

summer. At the riverside opposite Twyford, by 10 a.m. I saw with dismay that the surface was strewn with sear and yellow floating leaves, amidst which one's artificial fly was with difficulty placed in the small clearer spaces between clinging-together-clusters of such obstructions, and often when lifting the fly a hooked leaf would be brought back with it spinning through the air. Trout for the next two hours rose freely, but were successfully avoided because out of season, and a number of sprat-size grayling caught and returned. Then when the leaves ceased to flutter down from the overhanging trees and nearly bare withy bushes, and the clear and pellucid Itchen flowed placidly along, gleaming in the cheery light, many fish, still quiescent in their weedy haunts, were exposed to view; while (a yet more pleasant sight to the patient angler) those more alert and hungry were rising, ever and anon, to feast on an attractive banquet of dark-winged olive duns and spent jenny spinners dotting the surface. Grayling darted up, dimly seen like a shadow, and snapped at my lure, a Whitchurch dun dressed on a No. 1 hook, the very instant it touched the water, and although striking ever so quickly the hook nearly always failed to fasten. Probably the fish came short, as is too often the custom with over-fastidious *Salmo thymallus*; indeed, after that vicious snap or

small splash near the fly, I noticed that they did not follow it while floating further down, nevertheless, in two instances it must have been taken while submerged, for fish hooked themselves and were safely brought to net, the brace weighing 2lb. 3oz. But when the shadows began to lengthen the grayling became more in earnest, and for the last half hour the rings and breaks they made on the surface were so frequent that I was constantly casting over or unhooking fish, and enjoying exciting sport, with the sufficiently satisfactory result that three more brace of a takable size were secured.

On the 31st I fished in the same delightful environment, but as I intended to stay until dusk in order to ascertain, for my future guidance this month and next, whether there was any evening rise much after sunset worth waiting for, I did not begin operations until nearly 2 p.m. At that time bright sunshine illuminated the scene, showing up all the glory of the autumnal foliage, golden and-crimson, russet and faded green, yellow and red, still clinging to the trees, and carpeting the verdant sward beneath them; while the full river flowed smoothly on, its surface like a golden mirror, reflecting clouds and the blue canopy of space. And although a cold north-east wind was unfavourable for casting up-stream, it happened that a long throw was seldom

needed, because the fish rose fairly well within easy reach whenever an intermittent rise of Ephemeridæ floated down. And then my red quill on 0 hook was as often taken as could be expected, with so many chances of the more attractive natural flies against it. The light on the water enabled me, when kneeling hidden in the withered sedge and still green nettles at the margin, not only to watch the movements of the fish with keen interest, but to discriminate which were rising grayling and which trout, so that I managed to avoid hooking any of the latter, and by the time the sun went down, a blood-red orb of fire leaving no after-glow, three and a half brace of beautiful grayling were in the creel, shining there with a soft silvern sheen, and faintly smelling of thyme. By carefully drawing all the fish hooked down-stream only one broke away. Soon after mist like smoke rose from the river—the meadows became white, formless, and void, like an estuary of the sea, and by 5.30 p.m., when I left off watching in vain for any further movement of fish, the whole landscape was obscured in fog, which, condensed in drops, fell from every spreading tree and bush, and made everything underfoot on my way to the train dank and disagreeable. Only an enthusiastic and seasoned angler would run the risk of being out in water-meadows during such a fog, or then finding pleasure in the

pursuit of sport; indeed, some men may well ask, Where does the sport come in?

On November 12th, after leaving Shawford railway station, and passing through a wicket-gate on the left of the high road going toward the bridge, one enters on a park-like scene of rare beauty, as yet, although near the middle of this proverbially dreary month, barely touched by autumn's withering hand, nearly every tree being still green in full leafy honours. And if on two or three deciduous trees decaying but resplendently coloured leaves still sparsely dangle on the upper branches, and "from the topmost twigs that look up at the sky" their boles and middle limbs are for the most part so thickly covered with ivy, now in blossom, that their general appearance remains verdant, little changed from their prime, save that underneath them the sward is overspread with crisp fallen leaves, now, at eleven o'clock, glistening with ice crystals of hoar-frost, patches of which on every shaded place in the meadows will remain white until the climbing sun, struggling through the mist, has power to melt them away.

The river seemed in good order, but in two hours, persistently trying above as well as below the cow-bridge opposite Twyford School, only three bright grayling, measuring 10in. to 11½in. were killed, all tempted by one fly without once changing it, *i.e.*, a

hare's-ear quill on a cipher size hook. Then, until past 2 p.m., I watched and waited on the west side of the broad upper shallows for signs of moving fish, but in vain, patience was not rewarded by a single capture, when, as it was bitterly cold, I left off for the day, the temperature of the air having fallen to 33 degrees, and, so far, the coldest day since May.

On the 18th, a dull and misty morning with a hint of coming sunshine inspired the hope of some grayling sport later on, if only for an hour or two ; and when at the zenith the sun did break through the clouds, the clear, gently flowing, brimming river glittered on its way through the smiling valley, and fish began to feed in that portion of the St. Cross preserves between the ugly red-brick viaduct of the Great Western Railway and down to Compton Lock on the old canal. But trout and grayling came up in a very desultory manner, because the natural flies floating on the surface were not numerous enough to tempt a fuller rise to develop. And when within the next hour grayling began to move, the breaks and rings they made were so small that only a practised eye could detect them. Evidently, therefore, they were taking midges or smut-like diptera. Consequently, I chose a gold-ribbed hare's-ear fly dressed on a 00 hook, and for two hours chiefly kept to this favourite pattern,

with the fair result (considering the indifferent rise) that two brace of 11in. to 13in. grayling were in the creel by 2.15 p.m., when I left off fishing.

On the 21st the wind was easterly, bitterly cold, and no glimpse of sunshine cheered the landscape or the solitary enthusiast who for an hour or two in the afternoon visited the Cripstead fishery, and, by making good practice over the grayling, soon became indifferent to the weather. Its exact situation is just below Winchester College meadows, between the reach of the Itchen known as Chalkley's Water and Captain the Honourable Guy V. Baring's St. Cross preserves, and it is only in quite recent years that grayling have located there—the unwelcome result of their introduction to the upper part of the river, referred to before—hundreds of them having dropped down since; when, as is their wont if in congenial quarters, they breed very freely, crowd out the trout, and spoil any fishery. Indeed, so little are they appreciated as a sporting fish by the rods renting this Cripstead water, that my invitation was to “go there and kill all you can, large and small.” They were, however, only rising in one place, namely, in the run of rough water from the large sluices near the keeper's bungalow, and in front of the sewage works. But at nearly every throw over a splash or a ring made by a fish, one was hooked, or missed, or sometimes broke away.

Red quills, olive quills, hare's ear, and even old and dilapidated flies out of my cap were all successful, so that before four o'clock I landed four and a half brace. On the 27th I landed three and a half brace. On the 31st at Twyford I killed four and a half brace.

It was not a good grayling season with me, my total sport only aggregating thirty-one brace.

CHAPTER XIX.

AT THE END OF THE OLD YEAR.

ON the last day of 1906, although somewhat daunted by the exceptionally wretched weather of the previous week, I screwed my courage to the sticking point, and availed myself of an invitation to fish from the private grounds of Twyford Lodge, on the east side of the Itchen, fronting the broad shallows where *Salmo thymallus* has for centuries made his headquarters, not caring to work up beyond, and the cream of the sport he gives is to be obtained, but only by the man who has learnt how to approach within a long distance of a rising fish with the very utmost caution—crouching, on tiptoe, almost holding his breath, and kneeling while waiting to make his first cast. For the bank is low, with no sedge or bushes left for cover (and cover is oftentimes a necessity for a dry-fly fisherman's success), while the opposite tree and tangled bush-bordered bank is 5ft. or 6ft. above the level of the rushing stream which undermines it. There the larger fish can remain undisturbed and forage for submerged when not in the mood for surface food.

Nor can a dry-fly be accurately presented to them without wading, and that is only practicable from the shallowest places in the silted-up middle or near the west side. There are also three weirs which bar progress. They were constructed a few years ago, chiefly to aerate and increase the flow of the water, and make haunts under the glassy falls and lively runs below them, where fish would congregate and thrive. But in order to enable an angler to send his fly to reach the quarry rising under the distant high west bank (described above) several platforms stretch out 6ft. or 8ft. from the low east side towards the middle. This important fishery extends down-stream as far as Shawford bridge, and now, since Christmas Day, includes the whole of Mr. Trimmer's rights in the main stream and canal, until a few years since in the occupation of the late Mr. Edgar Williamson. The light suspension bridge remains for the convenience of privileged anglers and the keepers.

Shut in by the rolling Hampshire downs on either side of the valley, and plodding through water meadows ankle deep in melting snow, and crossing ditches and carriers over narrow boards perilously slippery, I reached the waterside about noon, and soon after, while intent in casting over a fish in view, the under-keeper came to my elbow, till then unobserved: "That's a nice grayling, sir,"

said he, pointing at it, while for a few moments I continued to try to place my fly (a Wickham fancy with a red tag dressed on a No. 1 hook) in front of it. But as after each dimpling rise the fish worked up and still continued to feed, it seemed too promising a chance to trifle with. Therefore I quietly withdrew back, showed my fishing permit, briefly exchanged views with the keeper, and then, as is my wont, excused his further attendance on me; changed my fly for a 00 gold-ribbed hare's ear, and resumed the rod, perforce kneeling to keep out of sight, before again throwing over the fish, who seemed to be taking smut-like diptera. After much casting and hope was beginning to faint, my fly was sucked in, when an instant turn of the wrist made the hook fasten, and the usual prolonged struggle began, the grayling scurrying zigzag downstream along the surface, then suddenly turning and boring low down, trying to entangle in the weeds, until tired out and safely brought to net. A first success is very encouraging.

Then I moved up, halting on the cow bridge for half an hour to hook and land two brace of small grayling. Afterwards, climbing over the awkward fence, with the risk of breaking one's leg, and for the present passing the two swampy meadows bordering the west side of the river, I entered the private grounds referred to above. More light was

now on the water, and a great many piled-up redds covering deposited ova came into view, which in most cases the trout had forsaken, showing that their spawning operations had early been completed before the severe weather set in. Indeed, on the shallows very few large fish of any sort were seen, probably because there was a flavour of "snow broth" in the water, and that, in my experience, always causes them to seek deep haunts. Some few breaks of the surface under the overhanging branches of a tree on the opposite high bank soon caught my attention, and, standing at the end of one of the platforms (for if kneeling I had not power to make a sufficiently long cast), I forced my fly, this time a red quill with a gold tag, to its objective, and a heavy fish seized it and was hooked—it must have been slightly, for the bending rod immediately straightened and the fly came back to me. It was, of course, a disappointment, but I tried to console myself that it was only a trout that had escaped. Again from the same coign of vantage the same fly, dried and oiled, was sent on its mission, and, after a dozen essays, a grayling rose to it and was firmly hooked, giving at the end of such a long line excellent and very exciting sport for about two minutes before he or she was safely in the net. Higher up I tried from another platform, and under similar conditions fortune favoured

me, and another grayling was landed, like the last in size and bright silvery condition, and weighing 14oz.

It was now three o'clock, darkling and gloomy, with sleet falling, and dispiriting to a degree; but as I was well protected from the inclemency of the weather, and it was the last day of the old and eventful year, I decided to keep on for another hour, especially as my return train was not due until 4.22. Moreover, from the two meadows close handy that I before passed some further good sport might be expected with confidence, for on one occasion in November a rod in three hours killed seven and a half brace of grayling there. Bushes at the margin prevented easy casting from the lower meadow, and one's hook too often caught in the trees, when tire-some breakages had to be repaired, against time as it were, fulfilling the old saw of "more haste less speed." But from the other meadow everything was in my favour, and on crouching low at the side I noticed three or four small rings, evidently made by grayling, on the smooth glide of mid-stream all within reach without moving, and over which alternately my small red quill lightly fell, with good effect, in two instances luring victims to their fate, and making up four and a half brace in four hours.

A heavy mist was now changing into soddening rain, as the clock from the adjacent church tower startlingly broke the silence and solitude of the surroundings by tolling the hour of four; therefore I had to make all speed to catch my train, putting up my rod on the way.

CHAPTER XX.

THE OPENING DAY OF THE TROUT SEASON 1907.

Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious springtime on the first of April, when trout anglers, alert and hopeful, resort to the banks of the Thames with their spinning rods, and fly-fishing enthusiasts to many other rivers even more sanguine of sport, because the quarry they are in quest of is usually found in greater numbers and will rise to their artificial lures. In imagination I was again in a punt, gliding along the quiet highway of old Father Thames with the crowded retrospect of thirty successful seasons during my residence at Maidenhead and Marlow, albeit of some failures on the opening day; for, whatever the weather might be, I and two friends (the late John Wood, of Woodhurst, Maidenhead, and John Gould, the author of "The Birds of Europe" and forty folio volumes on kindred subjects) always made a beginning trial then, and too often the trio did not land a fish. But in reality on the first of the present April at mid-day I was beside the Itchen, kneeling and bending low, intently waiting for

a trout to rise again, already a minute before seen to suck in a dun, and yet let the next one that floated down pass by.

What may be the prospects of sport elsewhere it would be presumptuous for me to say, but in those reaches of the Itchen which have come under my notice in daily walks during March I can confidently give my opinion that thus early the river was never in better order. It was clear, smooth, save when occasionally kissed into glittering ripples by a passing zephyr, sunlighted, and reflecting the cloudless blue of space. Moreover, minute pale midges were in the air in small, mazy-dancing groups, or circling close around one's head, while at long intervals a pseudo-imago with a yellow-ringed olive-green body emerged to the surface, and made repeated efforts to dry its rather long iron-blue wings, and escape into its new element, and, having avoided its piscine enemies and hawking birds, have a chance of fulfilling its ephemeral existence. One of these flies I managed to intercept on the rod point and bring to hand for examination ; hence this description.

The first good rise of duns this year began between 12 and 3 p.m. on the 25th of March, when the lengthening day was bright and summer-like, with a temperature of 60°, and so it has continued every day since. Very different has the weather been from

that of last spring and especially gratifying to the dry-fly fisherman, who in many ways, if he be a purist, handicaps himself by restrictions, and yet when his opportunities come has this consolation, that the sport obtained is in its highest perfection. That certainly is his aim rather than to make a big bag, for about three brace are usually enough for him, and he rarely kills a fish under $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb. These favourable conditions induced me to bring out my fly rod on the opening day, contrary to my practice for some recent years of waiting until May. It was altogether delightful to be by the riverside, ready and physically fit to wield the trusty 11 ft. split-cane rod again after its long rest, with no jot of enthusiasm abated.

Patience was rewarded when, after about half an hour, the trout mentioned above rose again, and, more encouraging still, remained in position near the surface, ready to snap up the olive duns now coming down in fitful and thinly scattered lines. He was soon so well on the feed that I felt sure he was doomed, and, in fact, directly my olive quill, lightly and well cocked, floated over his nose, up he turned, followed, and unhesitatingly took it, and was well hooked, instantly rushing up-stream in wild affright, and clean through a patch of weeds, nor durst I restrain him until he stopped. Then my turn came, and quickly winding in the unavoidably

slack line, I played him from the bending and bowing rod on the give-and-take principle. He fought valiantly, but against fate, and, after one desperate spring out of water, exhausted himself, caved in, and was drawn to net—the first trout of my season, and a good specimen, weighing 1lb. 7oz. Not another fish was in view, nor, soon after, any flies. I had done what I wanted on the opening day—made a satisfactory beginning.

APRIL, 1907, ON THE ITCHEN.—A HANDSOME
BRACE.

After the perfectly summer-like weather on Bank Holiday, April 1st, cold winds prevailed, and for three weeks all the rigours of a blackthorn winter had to be endured. Dry-fly fishing was out of the question; rod and creel hung idly from their pegs in a saddened angler's room. Laments were useless. Still, one could prepare more casts, overhaul one's tackle, and from time to time admire an abundant stock of well-tied and selected favourite patterns of artificial flies (enough to last through the season) lately received in tiny emerald-green boxes, which to the initiated will indicate that Ogden Smith tied them. They were, of course, exhibited with some pride to friends who called, and a lady's comment generally was "How natural!" although, certes, none of them bore any resemblance to any of the

Ephemeridæ, least of all to one in its imago dress. Indeed, it must be a wonder to all fishermen why trout can be so silly as to rise to tiny wisps of feathers and hooks. Nevertheless, in an angler's eyes they all look "killers," and, in his opinion, will assuredly lead to sport. But, happily, on the 22nd a change came o'er the spirit of his despondency, for the day became bright and genial, hopeful for fly fishing, more especially so because for the previous twenty-four hours a continuous downpour had freshened and aerated the river Itchen, swelling its volume, yet leaving it perfectly clear. A social engagement prevented a trial with the rod on that date, but on the 23rd for under two hours good practice was made, as described below.

As early as eight o'clock the angler rose from his breakfast table to examine shut-in imagine flies vainly struggling on the casement panes to escape into the outward air, where also gnats were disporting, rising and falling in graceful gyrations—all good signs. Accordingly about 10.30 a.m. he was by the riverside, on the east bank, ready for the fray. The wind being west made casting awkward, and the water in mid-channel was rippled. Recently arrived songsters from tree tops and hedges bursting into leaf trilled forth melodious greetings to the spring and to their nested mates, but as yet the sedge by the margin had scarcely

begun to grow, and sword grass was only a foot high, upstanding in serried array, looking like green daggers. Close under a wooden fence, stretching two yards over the surface, a trout could be distinctly seen in a quiescent state, save that his caudal extremity waved. To have made any attempt to throw near him would fail, for one's fly would inevitably be caught up in the woodwork. And as no rise was seen elsewhere, the only thing to do was to watch and wait. Presently a single dark-winged dun floated down and passed over the fish ; he saw it, turned, but did not rise. Then another fly came up, struggling on the way, a striking object, and instantly the quarry darted forward a yard or more to meet, but to miss it. In this new position it was just possible to cover him, running the risk of the hook being held up on the fence ; but fortunately at the first attempt the 00 red quill was taken, and the trout, after the first scared rush up-stream ended, was found to be firmly hooked. Still, as the hook was small, care had to be taken not to hold him too masterfully during the exciting five minutes he fought for life ; but then, when he showed signs of giving in, the net, half submerged, was held behind for him to drift into, a labourer from an adjacent farm watching the play and landing, and considerately not coming to the riverside to interfere ; for it may be noticed here that

interference often causes the fish to bolt and disconcerts the rodsman. It was a very well-fed, shapely trout, weighing 1lb. 10oz.

It was now about 11.30, and several fish somewhat indistinctly seen in the ripples were intercepting olive duns. One, within a just possible cast, was at length covered by the very same artificial fly as before, and it was taken—a splash and a spring out of the water revealing a large trout, seemingly well hooked. He was played for fully twenty minutes, game to the last second ere the net dragged him safely to shore—a splendid fellow scaling 2lb. 14oz. The brace was shown to many people, as perhaps the best one of the season so far in this reach of the river. And although some fish were now rising freely, the dry-fly enthusiast was well content to leave them for another opportunity.

CHAPTER XXI.

SOME ASPECTS OF TROUT FISHING.

ALTHOUGH angling in its several branches may not be of *general* interest, neither, it can be said, is hunting or shooting or any other sport, but it is at the present time the most popular of all, and is followed with very great delight, especially when allied to skill, by a vast multitude of enthusiasts, and in recent years by a growing number of the fair sex. It is also a health-giving exercise, and a diversion from the stress and some of the worries of the battle of life; it is an enduring pleasure of which its votaries, from adolescence to old age, never tire. Moreover, it is comparatively free from danger to life or limb. It has a certain attraction for many readers of the sporting press, who, perhaps not caring for fishing, are yet contemplative lovers of Nature in her peaceful surrounding by valley and stream, by broad lakes reflecting cloud-land and the hilly shores, or by solitary mountain tarns, and who like to hear about an angler's experiences amid such scenes, and in imagination to wander with him there.

Trout fishermen on April the First, after a long winter's weary waiting, are all alert to commence their season on the Thames, and in a wide range elsewhere, and no less so on many of the private fisheries of our southern rivers, including the Itchen, but in a portion of the latter, *i.e.*, in the weirs, the public have a legal right to fish from February 14th, and over which there is much need of a conservancy board, or other controlling power to prevent it. Consequently local rods avail themselves of the opportunity, and chiefly by bait fishing with bread pellets, boiled shrimps, caddis grubs, &c., or occasionally by malpractices such as snatching at fish with naked triangle hooks, greatly depopulate this most perfect trout stream before April sets in, and the patiently enduring fly-fisher (for the past six weeks restrained by his more sportsmanlike instincts from capturing trout thus early and in doubtful condition) makes a beginning.

This part of the river has never been stocked by alien fish bred in captivity by pisciculturists, and although in the heart of the old city of Winchester, and surrounded by habitations, a considerable number of the indigenous trout work up to it at spawning time. For example, on January the 9th, 1907, about thirty were seen on the redds between Marsh Mills and Blackbridge. And next day fifty brace were counted in the short length of the narrow, shallow

back stream in the turning by the side of St. John's Rooms—the same stream that flows through the Abbey Gardens. A sight to gladden an angler's heart, and lead him to reflect that probably ovipositing by fully ripe trout at the critical moments Nature suggests, is more likely to produce healthy offspring than the descendants of *fario*, often, it must be feared, prematurely relieved of their eggs by manipulation, and fertilised by the same process—the mutual inclination of the sexes ignored. In fact, the opinion may be held that, give the Itchen a fair chance by making wise restrictive rules to regulate the fishing, shorten the six months' season at the beginning, limit the catch to four brace per diem, not under 12 inches in length (including Mayfly time), and only artificial flies to be used; also stop the increasing pollutions by drastic measures, and there would then be no need of extrinsic help, the prolific “pellucid and troutful” river (an appellation given to it in monkish times) would stock itself, and the sport become all one could wish. More or less these remarks will apply to some other rivers which are said to be overfished, and the sport deteriorating.

Nevertheless, it must be frankly admitted that in many cases restocking seems necessary, and if a river's natural production (likely enough in these modern days to be interfered with by careless

drainage and other causes) be supplemented by the introduction by vigorous two-year-old and larger trout, wild fish in preference, especially where the high rents tenants pay can only be kept up by good sport, beneficial results will be likely to follow. But trout bred from ova, and daily fed by keepers on boiled and minced horseflesh, &c., while held in captivity for a year or two before they are turned into a river to forage for themselves, are likely enough to become weaklings, and they will often be white fleshed.

Among some of the altered aspects of trout fishing during recent years other than with the fly-rod, many fishermen who spin will have noticed that artificial lures, such as small spoon baits, Devon minnows, halcyon spinners, horn phantoms, *et hoc genus omne*, have come more into use, and natural baits, alive or dead less than formerly, except perhaps on the Thames, and some northern rivers, or where the really artistic method of "swimming the worm" is increasingly practised. But certainly where fly-fishing is concerned the use of the natural ephemera or trichoptera and of lepidopterous insects is more than ever tabooed on most rivers and on a few lakes. Wet-fly experts have also taken a lesson from their brethren of the dry-fly cult, and present their lure up-stream, allowing it to sink as it flows down in front of fish in view, or if not in view over their

likely haunts, which an eye for water will usually indicate.

One of the present most remarkable aspects of dry-fly fishing is that whereas a decade ago the men who made out and published lists of the best 100 patterns required for dry-fly work are now fain to admit that such a multitude is not necessary, and does not increase one's success on any chalk stream more than about a dozen well chosen will do, provided they are placed in front of a trout or grayling well cocked, accurately, and delicately. The writer quite agrees with all this, and he was one of the foremost of the Hampshire school to recognise that too many flies to select from lead to confusion and much waste of time in changing them. Indeed, he has gone through a season using one pattern only with as good a result as with many. It is only fair, however, to state that before starting a rule was made to limit the captures killed to an average of two and half brace a day, not under $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb. each fish, and that the success of the experiment was partly due to its being carried out on about three miles of a very well-stocked fishery every coign of vantage in which was known to the angler, and there were few competing rods. But it would, of course, be absurd in a general way, particularly on any strange river, so to handicap oneself, although most dry-fly

experts have a favourite pattern on which they much rely.

Of the Thames trout-fishing it may be said that on the opening day the prospects of sport are not usually very great, for the weather is often cold and unsettled ; the poet's invocation :—

Come, gentle Spring ! ethereal mildness, come,
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
While music wakes around, veiled in a shower
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend,

is but coyly listened to, nor as yet answered in effect.

The trout are only beginning by short daily stages, often resting between, to work up stream towards the weirs from their winter haunts ; from under shelving banks, or from near their forsaken spawning redds. Nor are many of the small fish, minnows, bleak, dace, gudgeon, &c., on which trout feed as yet showing themselves.

These considerations, however, do not discourage keen anglers—a small but devoted band—from risking the weather and turning out in a punt on most reaches of the river between Teddington and Pinkhill weirs, attended by a professional fisherman, who probably says he knows exactly where a fish has been seen to spring out and scatter the frightened bleak, &c., before him ; but failing that place all other likely ones are spun over. The man whose

spinning tackle is rigged up in the excellent fashion prevailing on the Thames, and who fishes with a recently killed, bright, small bleak artistically impaled on a flight of four triangle hooks and a single lip hook, bound on picked refina gut, will have the best chance. The live-bait fisherman next (and later on he will capture most of the larger trout), but the fly-fisherman has little or no luck at all so early ; indeed, all through the season it is to be regretted that fly-fishing is scarcely worth pursuing. Thames trout, especially over the Conservancy limit, do not often rise to natural flies, much less to artificial, and to have to put back all caught under sixteen inches in length rather discourages fly-fishers from trying.

CHAPTER XXII

A FIRST VISIT TO IRELAND.

ALTHOUGH since the beginning of the year I have watched every opportunity, scanned and answered every likely advertisement, I have been unable to obtain any fishing this season in Hampshire or the adjoining counties good enough to satisfy the fastidious tastes of a dry-fly purist, save at an enormous and, according to my ideas, wasteful and prohibitory rental, nor even to secure a rod on anything like reasonable terms. On the Test, for instance, the river I most affect, as much as £45 is asked for a short season (May 1 to Aug. 31) on two miles of a middle portion of it, eight or nine rods working it. And on the Laverstoke fishery, which is only about three miles in extent, but available from both banks, £75 is the price per rod—one of eight. I was offered a rod on both. Indeed, by reason of the yearly increasing and excessive demand for dry-fly sport, all the rentals of our south country streams, small tributaries, or parent rivers, good, bad, or indifferent, are advanced far beyond their value. Under these circumstances

the unattached rod has to cast about for pastures new and bethink him where it may be best to go. This was my dilemma, but, after much vacillation, I decided that I would pay a long contemplated first visit to Ireland. Accordingly, near midnight on the 1st I found myself at Milford Haven, and in the darkling gloom, over much rough impedimenta confusing to one's progress, stepped from the quay on to the new steamship *Great Western*, a liner in miniature, bound for Waterford, and due there, weather permitting, about six o'clock the following morning.

A night at sea had a special charm for me, and therefore I at once resolved to pass the solitary hours of the night watches on deck. Soon the fog-horn sounded for departure, the powerful engines put into revolution the twin screws, and the vessel gracefully glided down the estuary, and at length into St. George's Channel, only a rather pleasant than otherwise gentle upheaval on swelling waves indicating that we were at sea. The ship was replete with all modern improvements and inventions (wonderful examples of the influence and triumphs of the human mind over matter); two dynamos supplied electric light to the deck saloon and fore-cabin, to the engine-room, and to every other part between decks. The steam power was used not only to propel the ship at an average speed of sixteen

knots an hour, and to steer it, but also utilised to perform all the hard work usually done by manual labour of the crew. For half an hour some boisterous spirits kept the deck, chiefly soldiers and smokers, but then all went below, or to the deck saloon, and I was left alone to my meditations on a summer's night in a scene quite new to me of surpassing beauty and impressiveness, although from July 1st to the 20th there is no real night.

After wandering about to every part I took up my standing position at the stern rail of the vessel about 1 o'clock a.m. I noticed a very long thin cord trailing and twisting behind, which to an angler suggested that an enormous spinning bait might be at the end of it; and a spinner there really was, but it was an invention to ascertain the speed of the ship and to register the same on a patent Cherub log at my side. I was sheltered from the draught by the steering-room at my back, against which I leaned, and occasionally looked into when the rudder chains rapped and scraped as ever and anon the ship's course was slightly altered from the far-off captain's bridge. To me there seemed something weird and uncanny about this steering-room, for it was lighted by electricity, no one was in it, and as one watched through a port-hole-like window the small mechanism within, it was inert one minute and motionless as death, and the next

suddenly moving as if informed with life, without any visible cause. Facing, and in full view of the broad wake of sounding, rushing, white seething waves left behind by the ship's progress, and perhaps lulled to reverie by the monotonous, dull, rhythmic thuds, one-two-three, one-two-three, of the distant engines working the propelling screws beneath where I stood, I gradually lost the sense of being on board ship; say, rather, I was in another world. Overhead the starlit sky was full of mystery. At 3.20 a.m. a heavy dew settled over the deck and everything, and a large solitary bird (not the fateful albatross seen by the Ancient Mariner) hovered near or occasionally swooped down to snatch food from the waves—a harbinger of day at hand. The horned, waning moon, at this date in her fourth octant, with Venus in conjunction, were splendid objects in the now lightening wide expanse of heaven, and soon

The stars from broader beams began to creep,
And hidè their shining eyelids in the deep.

And look! those blushes on the eastern clouds tell that the unrisen sun has lit his beams, and through the soft, grey, misty twilight is about to usher in a glorious day.

After an uneventful journey we made our port in due course, but at that early hour the town for the most part was still asleep, nor could I get my expected

letters at the post-office until nine o'clock. I looked for answers to advertisements I had for weeks past inserted in several of the Irish newspapers to the following effect; "Wanted in Ireland, lodgings in a farmhouse or otherwise as a paying guest (but not at an hotel); must be quite close to free dry-fly trout fishing, so as to be able to fish early and late without much fatigue walking to or from river or lake; amidst good scenery, in perfect quietude, and out of the way of tourists—the more sequestered the better." I did not have a single reply, but several followed me when I went back to England, and one especially, on Lough Derg, would probably have arrested my wanderings.

Carrick-on-Suir, twelve miles above Waterford, was recommended to me as a likely place, and thither, after a roughly served breakfast, I hastened by rail. It looked more like a pike river than a trout river, and no rise of any sort during the two hours I waited met my view. Nevertheless, I hired a boat and a fisherman; who span a Devon minnow, but only five small trout came to hand. There were, he informed me, trout streams and loughs within a short drive, but the best trouting was eight miles off, in Lough Coumshingaun.

In brief, I may say here that this was my experience everywhere. Without a fixed basis of operations, such as I had dreamed about and

advertised for, there was no rest for the sole of one's foot nor of one's troubled spirit; it was hurry here and away, and my dry-fly purist hobby, like a will-o'-the-wisp, led me on and on, only to disappointment as to sport with my favourite lure. On my way back to Waterford to a previously ordered dinner, I made up my mind with a sort of forlorn hope that, in default of answers to my advertisements, I would fix my headquarters for a week or two at Killarney, for the very name seemed to insure everything that a lover of Nature could desire as to scenery, and to an angler a suggestion of Eden with its four rivers, Pison, Gihon, &c., turned into lakes and surrounded by mountains. As we neared Killarney I was approached while in the train by a handsome boy, who invited me to put up at his father's hotel on the lake; another tout, a commercial traveller, next recommended me to his particular hotel, while another man seized my creel and rods from the light luggage rail, nor would he release them until I gave him money. Then a tourist and his wife spoke to me in praise of the temperance hotel they were going to, and I was, unfortunately, caught in the trap. Outside the station a crowd of excited roughs and touts surrounded a dozen Irish hotel cars, all, in aggressive Irish brogue, clamorous for custom or for tips, and there was no getting away from their importunity save by

consenting to extortion. It was the ruling nuisance everywhere; everybody was keen after money, and even the beggar who blessed you in his opening appeal consigned you to Hades in his last speech if you did not cross his hand with a coin. I can think of nothing more likely than this to keep visitors away from Ireland—it is annoying and humiliating. Killarney town itself is two miles from the nearest shore of the lakes, and altogether disillusionising as to the association of ideas connected with the name of Killarney. But no word painting can overpraise nor anything but personal observation realise and do justice to the beauty and grandeur of the lake scenery and its environment of solemn and majestic mountains, on whose summits the clouds often rest.

On Wednesday, the 3rd, I appointed a fisherman to meet me in his boat at Ross Island at noon, provided with all his own appliances for fishing the lake according to his usual methods. I put a box of quill-bodied flies and casts in my pocket and left my inn at nine o'clock to walk two and a half miles through Lord Kenmare's Home Park. The entrance gates are near the Catholic Cathedral, built fifty years ago by Pugin. Within the park gates a clear, broad, circular space, completely canopied by tall, over-shadowing trees, looks like another, but leafy cathedral. At the lodge cottage tickets, sixpence each, are issued to view the Home

and Western Parks, Ross Castle and Island. Turning to the left over a bridge, one follows on the left bank the downward course of a small river, shallow—often brawling, and, as I saw it, weak coffee coloured. The whole walk to Killarney Lake is enchantingly picturesque—under shady trees, through ferny dells and flower-embroidered banks, large groups of rhododendra everywhere in full blossom. Among wild flowers I noticed tall fox-glove, speedwell, privet, dog-rose, loose-strife, ox-eye, orchis, &c., but not half so good, in my opinion, as the Hampshire flora. After ascending the circular stone stairs to the top of Ross Castle and looking at the scenery from the four loopholes or windows, I crossed to the island, and found my boatman waiting, with two rods in readiness, a trout he had caught, about 3lb. in weight (on a trailed spoon bait), lying at the bottom of the boat. Another boatman, wearing a blue jersey with red letters over the chest, told me that he had early in this season caught a trout weighing 9lb. on a fly, and another of 12lb. on a Devon minnow. This seemed satisfactory so far, but whether any Killarney fish would rise to a dry fly, especially on a hot day like this, he thought extremely unlikely. My man then rowed towards a stony beach beyond Ross Castle, where he said a salmon might be caught, and he tried for about three hours with large grilse

flies and with artificial spinning baits, but never had a touch. He could not understand my not trying too, and when I explained that I would not give a pin to catch any fish except by a dry-fly, and showed him my specimens, he shouted, almost in anger, "Begorra, sor, thin you'll get no sport to-day!" However, as we rowed back towards that part of the lake where the little river mentioned above joins it, and where I had seen rings made by rising fish, I rigged up rod, line, and cast, tying on a small pale olive quill (my nearest pattern to the midges in the air), and in about an hour seven small trout were lifted into the boat. The man charged me 7s. 6d. for the few hours, and looked for a tip as well. I gave him the fish. On landing I walked back through Lord Kenmare's demesne the way I had come.

I inspected the cathedral with great interest and becoming reverence. About sixteen lovely paintings of saints adorn the walls: one, of the Virgin and Child, the latter about four years old, a light in a small spirit-lamp burning in front, and overhead is written, "Our Lady of perpetual succours prays for us." Under the altar I read, "*Quam delecta Taberna cula Domine virtutum,*" and many Latin inscriptions elsewhere. But what struck me most, and for half an hour fixed my rapt attention, was a life-size group representing Our Lord upon the cross—nude,

save for a white girdling loin-cloth hanging in folds and golden at the edges; His wounded side ensanguined, as also where the cruel nails are driven into separated feet and hands. On one side there is a figure of the Virgin Mother in light-blue robes and pale-green hood golden at the edges, hands crossed; a fair, most lovely face looking out of the hood. On the other side that disciple whom Jesus loved, in chocolate-and-green robes gilt at the edges, his hands clasped, head uncovered and turned towards the cross, but looking down in deep reflection and dejection; an aureola at the head of both figures. I never saw anything more touching.

The same afternoon, having a letter of introduction to Archdeacon Wynne, I called upon him; and, at the end of a very pleasant interview, he recommended me to see Courtenay, the great authority upon fishing matters in Killarney. I did so, and was quite discouraged to learn that, although there was plenty of good fishing in the lakes or neighbourhood, there was not much available dry-fly fishing pure and simple, to suit my fastidious tastes, that he thought it worth my while to stay for, but he strongly advised me to go on to Killaloe, a long way off.

On the morning of the 4th I went with a party on an Irish car to some of the lake views, but half way down the mountains were swathed in clouds, and a mist was rising at their bases; thus all

distant views were shut out. I could hear of no dry-fly fishing worth having, except at Ballyshannon, nor the sort of headquarters such as I coveted, and I began to be tired of wandering about not fulfilling my object.

But during the night, which bringeth counsel, I asked myself, what was the use of my hurrying thither or elsewhere in Ireland at great expense and trouble, with uncertainty as to dry-fly sport in peaceful surroundings, when in England I could now be certain of obtaining it in rivers long familiar to me?

I therefore next day took the train back to Waterford, and at night shipped on board the ss. *Great Western* for Milford Haven. It was now heavily laden with horned cattle and sheep, not by any means adding to the sanitary conditions of the vessel, engaged in first-class passenger traffic also. I kept the deck all night as before, from 10 o'clock to the following day at noon (fourteen hours), for we were delayed by a sea-fog, which gradually surrounded us as if we were in the clouds from about 3 o'clock a.m. The speed of the vessel was reduced, our foghorn kept bellowing like some wild beast, at short intervals during many hours, and twice, after soundings, we had to let go the anchor and lay to, somewhat uncertain of our bearings, in about nine fathoms of water, once near a shoal, the

mate told me. I have sometimes, metaphorically, been in a "fog," often in a too real London black fog, both of which are disconcerting and perplexing enough, but never before in one at sea, shut, utterly helpless, within four thick walls of vapour rendering sky and land and even water invisible. Therefore, as I sat in the forepart of the ship, on a huge wooden chest labelled "Life Buoys and Cork Jackets," very suggestive of death by drowning, there seemed to my inexperienced mind an element of danger, and I began to think of home ties, soon perchance to be broken, &c. Just then a stranger, John H. Jones, Esq., came up to me—he had no misgivings, assuring me that there was no cause for anxiety. "See!" said he, "if the worst were to come there are plenty of boats on board, you are sitting over life-saving appliances, and we cannot be far from land, for a long-distant foghorn has been faintly heard" (or imagined, I thought, for a *sense* of sound often precedes the certainty of hearing it), "and help would soon come." His hopeful and optimistic spirit gradually restored my equanimity, and as we conversed together on various subjects there was much in common between us; my views, tastes, and ideas were so like his own. Indeed, when we exchanged cards as the bells of the morning watch (indicating 5 o'clock) rang out into the misty air, startling the silence, we were already

almost friends, and quite so later on ; for, on safely landing at Milford, he pressed me to go with him to his house, Barrow Hill, near Cheltenham, and become his guest for a few days. This I did until the 8th of the month, receiving a genial welcome from his family, who put me quite at my ease in one of the most refined and perfect homes I ever had the good fortune to enter. This is one of many similar friendships I have made while on angling tours, and although my experiences of Ireland were not altogether satisfactory, I hope to go there again under happier auspices.

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