An Angler's Basket

by T. E. Pritt

AUTHOR OF 'YORKSHIRE TROUT FLIES'

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AN
ANGLER'S BASKET

FILLED IN SUNSHINE AND SHADE

THROUGH THE SPACE OF FORTY YEARS :

BEING A COLLECTION OF
STORIES, QUAIN T SAYINGS, AND REMEMBRANCES.

WITH A FEW
ANGLING HINTS AND EXPERIENCES

BY
T. ^{Thomas} E. PRITT,

Some years Angling Editor of *The Yorkshire Post* ; Author of "North-Country
Flies," "The Book of the Grayling," &c. &c.

MANCHESTER :

ABEL HEYWOOD & SON, 56 and 58 Oldham Street.

LONDON :

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT & Co., Stationers' Hall Court.

1896.

SH439
P74

TO RECALL

A DELIGHTFUL RENDERING OF "LOVE'S LABOUR LOST,"

9TH AUGUST, 1893.

M846437

INTRODUCTION.

There is always a feeling of sadness, mingled with joy, at the birth of a posthumous child; welcome though the new arrival may be, and doubly dear, perhaps, from the circumstances under which it comes into the world, its friends are irresistibly reminded of the parent whose friendship they have lost, and whose fostering care will be wanting to his child.

Such feelings are evoked by the issue of this book which its Author had prepared for publication, but which, âlas! he was not destined to see through the press. It will appeal, not in vain, to its critics to be kind, and recall, especially to those Northern friends who enjoyed the personal acquaintance of Mr. Pritt, many a delightful hour spent in his company, either at the riverside or in social intercourse, in which they heard, perhaps, not a few of the "Stories" or "Sayings," or received some of the hints which are now "Emptied out of his basket" for the edification or amusement of a wider circle of anglers than they have hitherto reached.

The proverbial generosity of an angler was a marked feature in our late friend's character; personal service and pecuniary support were given ungrudgingly to help a brother angler, or forward any movement for preserving old, or developing new, opportunities of indulging in the "gentle art" of which he himself was a master. This generous

sympathy for a pastime—if angling may be so styled—and its votaries is apt to extend itself in other directions, and consideration for others not infrequently involves forgetfulness of self, with pecuniary results from which a shortened life leaves but little opportunity for recovery.

It was partly so in the case of him whose book is now sent forth, with the hope that purchasers of it may be numerous in view of the fact that every copy sold will be of some pecuniary advantage to her who “halved his sorrows and doubled his joys,” and whose grief is shared by the many friends whom he attached to himself by his spoken or written words.

Kindly and sympathetic notices to this effect of the publication of “An Angler’s Basket” have already appeared in the Press in anticipation of its appearance. As one who was associated with Mr. Pritt in the formation of the Northern Anglers’ Association, and who succeeded him as its President, I can but express my fervent hope that this posthumous child of his brain and pen may find many who will take charge of it and adopt it as their own, and give it a place on their bookshelves for the sake of him who has gone and of her who survives him, as well as for their own delectation as they peruse its pages in those hours of leisure which they are still permitted to enjoy.

C. P. ROBERTS, M.A.

Longsight Rectory,
Manchester, July, 1896.

PREFACE.

READER, fair or unfair, as the case may be, gentle or simple, whichever you think you are, and you, Mr. Kindly Critic, who know *all* the tales and everything—I once heard the showman Barnum say there were only forty original stories to begin with; all the rest that have made us laugh are little descendants therefrom. Now the stories in this book, which are about all sorts of things, from bridecakes to bunions, are some of them new; others, or something very like them, may have raised a smile even on

The face that launch'd a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium.

A good story is like a good woman, it ought never to grow old, and, as a matter of fact, it never does. It is handed down from one generation to another, crosses oceans and continents, appears in the hieroglyphs of Egypt, crops up again among the negroes of South Carolina, and for centuries it goes on making countless thousands of people laugh. It is always new when it is heard for the first time.

The humour of angling is inexhaustible and universal. "The Angler's Rest" was the sign of a French riverside inn I saw not long ago, and underneath in smaller letters were the words "*Fish for Sale.*"

The art of angling is an epitome of the game of life itself: we are all anglers on a large scale. We throw out our baits in the great stream day after day, to find that the

chief prizes not infrequently escape us just when we think we are most secure of them—

Here's nothing to be got now-a-days, unless thou canst fish for 't.

—PERICLES.

But the poorest angler is never bankrupt so long as his imagination consents to honour his drafts upon her. There is certainly something about it, whether it be practised in river, loch, or sea, which conduces to calm serenity of mind and that kindliness of feeling which is the foundation of all good humour.

I was fishing a Scotch river once in the company of a friend who lived in an adjoining county, where, in the ruins of an ancient stronghold, I espied a modern gun commanding a wide sweep of the valley and dominating the approach to the spot completely. On enquiring why it was thus placed, my friend, who was Scotch to the backbone, and under ordinary conditions would no more have thought of making a joke than of saying his prayers on the river bank, and perhaps not so much, replied, "Oh! that is just a cannon that is no fired except when there is a new queen; or when somebody catches a fish."

Is there, think you—always excepting an old lady—anything more delightful than an old man whose head is white with the snows of many winters, and who still carries with him, wherever he goes, something of the sunny spring-tide of his youth? Men who have spent the greater part of their lives in the fields and woods under the blessedness of the great lights and shadows from the blue above, such surroundings as Mr. Ruskin meant in "The unutterable constancy of the sea-shell and the sun," have this merry-heartedness more than any other men, and all old anglers have it in particular.

How many of them do I recall since I caught my first fish, forty years ago! One such old crony I can see now on

the oak settle in an ingle nook, with a bright eye and a fresh face, beneath an ancient hat that might have been built in a dry dock, and a coat white with the dust of the little mill that has crooned its lullaby through the drowsy noontides of a hundred summers, the while the laughing river chorused his own and his father's songs.

"Aye, for sure," he says, "come Michaelmas, I'se be eighty, an' I can catch troot yit; I doan't see 'em quite like I used to could, but what! I isn't done; I'se hev mony a day at the river yit, an' 't please the Almighty."

Then he tells me of a fine fish caught by one of my friends.

"It was a reyt good trout; but what! that's two months sin', and it were three pund weight *then*; and what it's gotten to by this time, may be ye can reckon as weel as I can, for ye knaw a big fish is a thing 'at graws terble fast when it's once oot o' t' watter."

You may see this same old fellow to-morrow lifting up little children to see the eggs in a throstle's nest, or bearing one on his shoulder while he stands still, pointing heavenward, that she may hear a lark sing.

I was going one day along a highway, when an old man breaking stones by the roadside roused himself at the sight of my fishing tackle, and asked where I was going to fish. I told him in a mill pond not far distant. He recommended me to go and fish a beck close by, and pointed in the direction in which it lay, a few fields away. I knew all the fields and all the becks in the neighbourhood, but I knew nothing of this.

"Are there fish there?" I said.

"Eh, bless ye!" was his answer, "I geet 20lb. weight of trout there one morning afore breakfast."

"When was that?" I enquired. The old man paused a minute while he rummaged the lumber-room of his past, and then said:—

“Happen fifty year sin’.”

His pathway through life had been over rugged places, but the remembrance of that one bright morning stood clearly out—

The greenest spot on mem’ry’s waste,

and he was all unconscious that the faithless brook had long been dry.

Some of the stories and sayings that follow came from such men as these; some, I regret to say, I invented; others I have known ever since I knew anything, and a retentive memory and vivid imagination have in places taken naked incidents and clothed them. There is a little angling in the book made up from the observations of a long and varied experience. The rest, it is hoped, you may think is all good humour.

A friend of mine, who was the editor of a great daily paper, once boldly declared at a public dinner that a good story was the personal property of the man who told it at the right moment. If this be accepted as correct, then I may claim some, at least, of those that follow, inasmuch as they were originally used, relevantly and otherwise, to illustrate and brighten a series of articles contributed by me during some years to the *Yorkshire Weekly Post*, and they are now collected and published in this form by permission of the editor of the *Yorkshire Post*.

T. E. PRITT.

Headingley, July, 1895.

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FIRST EMPTYING.

FISH, FISHING, &c.

FISH, FISHING, &c.

AUTUMN FISHING.

The surroundings that greet the late September angler on his playground, begin to assume the rich glory of the time when nodding autumn comes with measured step across the golden fields. The imperceptible hand of Time is once more painting the woodlands amber and red, russet and green and gold, while yet the wayside flowers linger in profusion; the graceful harebell shelters under the hedgerow as it still blooms far up the hillside, and the botanist gathering the little cranesbill reminds us of the long line of the geranium family that own this weed as their common ancestor.

As evening comes on, robins sing their soft and soothing songs—half merry, half sad, in keeping with the time o' year; and, by and bye, the valley fills with colour; the rosy flush on yonder moorland fades first to grey, then blue, deepening into purple, until night draws her sombre curtain over the scene, and shuts out all except the stars; one by one they are reflected in the faithful bosom of the unchanging river, and the stillness of the air speaks silently of the death of summer, while the verdant screens she wove as garlands for the year fall to earth beneath the touch of Time to grace her funeral.

A man of sound mind—he who has not given up body and soul to money making, and nothing more—loves nature

in spite of himself; he cannot help it; and, if he be an angler, he finds no inconsiderable part of his pleasure in the surroundings among which he is placed. It is impossible to wander through the amber woodlands in the soft light of an autumnal day, soothed by the gentle murmuring of the river and the plaintive notes of birds, without being struck with speechless wonder at, and reverence for, the wealth that nature has provided for the meanest eye that cares to look into her care in fashioning what we call common things, for around the feet of every riverside angler are hundreds of weeds, perfect in shape and exquisite in colour, beyond conception beautiful in their variety and purpose. I say we who see these things are better for the privilege in body and in spirit, and that is why the art of angling keeps and will keep its place as a recreative sport, in spite of the latter-day philosophers who would persuade us our business is solely to catch, or try to catch, fish.

A TYPICAL TIME.

If a non-angler, I will not say a scoffer, were in search of proof of the truth of the saying "That the whole art of angling is not comprised in the science of catching fish," let him travel up the Vales of Llanrwst and Llugwy, say in the first week of an ordinary June. The country is all like a garden, as Longfellow described England in spring in his far-off western home. The hedgerows and the umbrageous lanes are fringed with lilacs and laburnums and wild flowers in profusion; the first fresh green of the reluctant spring is on every tree and every blade; acres of apple blossom are all around, and meadow-sweet and hawthorn scent the air; melodious birds are singing among the trembling leaves and in the sky, and white cascades divide deep pine-covered hill-sides, and are foaming and dashing and making merry music everywhere as they go to join the

angler's playground—the river. Call the fisherman's sport dull, stupid, slow, if you will, but at least admit that no other sportsman ever sees nature or has time to see her at home and at her best, pure and unsullied by any of the blackening arts of man. There is a tendency, I know, in this degenerate age to scoff at this and to look solely on the practical side of angling, but that recreation will always be the best which provides food for the mind and the memory, as well as the necessary exercise for the body. This is one of the chief reasons why so many old, and I will add so many good, men have remained ardent anglers to the last day that Time and his attendant Decay would permit them, and then they have remembered it all. What is the finest basket of trout, save in the surroundings in which they were caught, to the grandeur of Llyn Ogwen and the pass of Nant Ffrancon in the glory of this first day of June?

On the left of an extremely narrow gorge rises the spur of Y Glydr Fawr, 3,275 feet high; where we see it, it is a sheer precipice for full 400 feet until it is broken by boulders piled in wild heaps of confusion, as the result of the storms, and frosts, and falls of countless ages. Immediately in front and close to Y Garn, 3,107 feet high, less forbidding in its purple aspect under the setting sun than its sterner neighbour, but apparently blocking up the narrow pass by which the only egress from the valley in front can be obtained, a narrow road winding along a tiny level between the lake and Y Glydr Fawr, and on the right the black waters of Ogwen showing white manes here and there under pressure from the strong breeze. There on the other side of the water, 500 yards away, rises Carnedd Dafydd, 3,430 feet high. I do not know what Carnedd means, but Dafydd is a caution, he is straight up and much straighter down. If you succeeded in getting over him and by any chance dropped, or walked, or tumbled, or threw yourself, or in any other way got off him, you might rely on a sheer drop down a

precipice of 1,000 feet before so much as a lady fern interfered to arrest your progress. And here on the black waters of this awe-inspiring lake, hemmed in by these mountains, which seem to have their summits in the sky, and overhang the very spot where the boat is rocking, we fish, and find sport too; we basket six-and-twenty decent little trout in the course of a couple of hours, until the purpling gloom steals up the mountain sides, and unsuspected clefts appear under the twilight shadows, and ghostly giants seem to stand out suddenly to watch the time-worn cliffs like silent sentinels throughout the night. Never in a long angling experience in many parts of this loveliest and best of all lands have I felt so strongly the irrepressible sense of man's tremendous littleness; and that was what we all felt as we drove away and left the spot to darkness and the centuries that are to be.

FLIES AND WORM FISHING.

The flies will weary you this August morning, but that is only part of the fun. The "black incarnation of freedom," as Mr. Ruskin called him, is as familiar in his treatment of your nose and eyelids out here in the valleys as he is shamelessly blind to the eternal fitness of things when, with a couple of pals, he promenades about your bald head when you would sleep, perchance to snore, through Sunday afternoon. You may smash at him as often as you like, and from any direction; you will only irritate yourself, without disturbing his equanimity in the slightest degree. He will return as certain as a cheque marked "No effects." His perseverance is one of the noblest things in nature, and the state of frenzy to which I once saw him reduce a little man with a big nose was comforting and sublime. A theatrical Richard III. was a baby to him in tragic pose and pathos. You may smoke, you may steep yourself to the eyes in eucalyptus and turpentine and other loud-smelling

stuffs that will prevent everybody and everything, except the flies, coming within a hundred yards of you, or you may put your head in a muslin bird cage, but the fly will be there. The villain will pursue you, and the only comfort I can think of in conjunction with the matter is that the grouse shooter has him, and has him badly. If the language used at the flies during the second half of the month of August could be collected and carefully labelled with the names of its original owners, what a revelation there would be.

Now, when you wade into this little river, which you must be warned is running rather too strong to enable you to throw your worm in those places at which, at this time of the year, you would expect trout to be lying, you must necessarily throw your bait up stream, because the water is clear though plentiful. And when your bait has reached the water, it will either come with the stream back to your feet, you raising the point of your rod gradually as it does so, or it will stop quietly and without the smallest fuss. A trout taking a worm in clear water takes it as gently as an epicure swallows an oyster. He does not rise and make a dash at it, as a big fellow will in the spring when the iron-blue dun is on the water, and then dive down again with a sound resembling that of a Chicago kiss—which the Bostonian girl says is like the splash of an empty bucket in a horse pond—he just takes it and holds on. Give him a second in order to enable him to make sure he has got it, and then let him have it; that is, strike, but gently and firmly. If your hooks are fast to a stone instead of being in a trout, you will derive benefit from this advice, but whenever your worm is checked in its downward progress with the running stream, just give a wee bit strike, as the Scotch say, and, mon, ye hav' him. In small streams worm fishing of this kind needs to be carefully done; it is a most deadly method in skilful hands of clearing out the greater

part of the fish on certain lengths and under favourable conditions, which is one reason why some of the clubs limit the time during which it may be practised. The chief skill is required under ordinary conditions in knowing just where the fish are located in a very thin water, for a trout, and a good one, too, will often lie in water barely sufficient to cover him in hot, sunny weather. If you perceive a fish in such a place, do not throw your worm either at or above him; you will only scare him out of his senses, and he will rush off up stream at a mad speed, indicating to his friends as he goes that there is a man with a pole on the way. See that your worm drops a foot or eighteen inches behind and slightly on one side of him; in almost every case he will return down stream instantly and take it without hesitation. The outside length of the worms used for this kind of fishing should not be more than two inches at their full stretch.

GRAYLING FISHING.

There is no good grayling fishing in winter without the frequency of frost and a constancy of little freshes. In mild weather the fish soon lose condition, and unless keen frost prevails, at least at intervals through the winter, grayling begin to show symptoms of the breeding season by the end of January.

You may laugh as you like about the delights of a frosty winter's day on the banks of the bonny bright Yore, "Ye gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease," but I should like to see the state of excitement into which some of you would get as your mite of a red-tipped float came jauntily down the eddying ripples here, just where this rough and tumbling stream tails off into a fine eddy and runs merrily on for fifty yards or more before it calms down in the broad still pool. There is the rosy atom of a float in the clear water, while all the banks and all the bare branches are

silvered over for your delectation. The January breeze is not so unkind as you imagined early this morning when it caught you by the throat at the corner of the street and whispered asthmatically of bronchitis. Here, in the open, there are no funnels down which it can rush with malignant anger to emerge at the other end like an Arctic fury, and space gives freedom, and freedom begets kindness, so the winter wind touches you but slightly, and you are ready to admit that even to your feet, now deep in the water, you are warm as a husband's toast.

Your little redcap wobbles for a moment unsteadily like a tipsy cobbler—your heart is in your mouth (there is room for it in some men's). What will your wife say if you should really take home a fish? She will never believe you have caught it; you know very well she will say you bought it, begged it, found it—anything but believe that you, your very own self, pulled out the monster you are sure is nibbling. Ah! that's a fish. Suddenly and determinedly your float goes off with a rush under water in a slanting direction. I will strike him for you—there he is! Now what are you going to do? "Pull him out, of course," you say. Of course you are; so pull away, my boy, and let me see you do it. Just what I expected; he has broken you, and gone off with a shilling's-worth of tackle as a trophy to show his neighbours, and sail about the river like a comet.

Now, you really must not use language of that kind; he broke you in honest fight and he was not the fool you say he was, and he was not "at least four pounds," as you insist—he was just a fair, even-going grayling, of three-quarters of a pound, and if you are going to play a game of pull-devil, pull-baker, with grayling of that weight, you will get the worst of it. So, my boy, you must play him; let him make his rushes about the stream, and take a flying leap now and then from the river—grayling though he may be, there is something of the trout's jumping instinct about him—and

then reel him up gently and quietly, ready to let him have another rush at an instant's notice if he should be so inclined, and when at length you have safely run him in (or out, perhaps, it should be), and not until, and only then, wet him with tea—"cold tea" of the Keighley brew—drink success to winter grayling fishing and the time of year when Jack Frost scatters his diamonds on every tree and blade of grass to glisten for us in the feeble sunlight and vanish like a dream to remind us of the instability of all earthly things.

GRAYLING SEASON.

From about the middle of September the grayling is worth catching. From the middle of October until the middle of January he is as good to catch as trout.

POSITION OF TROUT IN THE STREAMS.

The early spring-trout fisher usually finds himself at fault in his first efforts to find the fish at the beginning of each season. Their exact situation in the streams and dubs varies according to the prevailing temperature, atmospheric and aquatic. When trout return to the main river from the tributary becks after the spawning season, they are ill-conditioned and too weak to stem the force of a powerful current. They, therefore, find their first resting-places in the quiet dubs, and usually at the lower end of them, where the current is gentle. As the warmth of the sun increases with the advancing season, aquatic life begins to move from under the stones and about the rocks, gravel, and weeds, and the ravenous fish feed greedily on it, a few fine days at this period of the year having a remarkable effect in bringing trout into condition. Of course, the surface-food of trout, as all anglers know, is a mere fraction of the sustenance they require, and it is tolerably certain that a trout is at all times

feeding on the minute atoms trundled along by the current or found by him in his foraging expeditions. As soon as the fish get a little stronger they move away from the quiet places in the dubs and come nearer to the rough streams, knowing very well that the rapid current is more likely to bring down abundance of food from the ground above. The variation of position thus indicated must be found out at the beginning of each season by the angler; in mild seasons when food has been fairly abundant, trout are frequently in such fairly good condition that the fly fisher who goes out in the latter half of March will probably find fish in more rapid runs than he would otherwise anticipate.

ABOUT STRIKING FOR TROUT.

If I were to cover every page of this book it would not suffice to exhaust all that might well be said on the subject, and even then a novice would probably be but little nearer the attainment of accurate knowledge as to different ways of striking fish in their varying and various moods. Nothing but practical experience, with keen power of observation, will give that. I have myself been a tolerably practical fly fisher for thirty-six years; it is that length of time since, as a very small boy, I caught my first fish with a fly, and yet only last year I acquired a method of striking "short"-rising fish that filled my basket day after day, while others usually more successful had to be content with a round dozen. This is said not in any boastful spirit, but in order to show how, in angling, to the last moment of a man's angling life, there is always something to learn; this, indeed, it is that makes so many keen fishermen—the knowledge that an ordinary lifetime is too short in which to unfathom all the mysteries of the art.

It is all but impossible to describe the different ways in which at different times trout will rise at a fly on the surface of the water, and it is still more difficult to enumerate on

paper their peculiarities in rising "short," as we call it. There are days on which there is no natural fly on the river; when the angler's sunk flies are taken steadily under the surface all day long, and without the necessity of striking at all; the trout obligingly hook themselves, and would, doubtless, apologise if they could for giving the angler the trouble of dragging them out. There are other days when all the conditions are apparently the same—wind, stream, and flies,—and the fisherman cannot hook a fish for the life of him; he experiences an incessant series of tugs and pulls, often of desperate energy and strength, at his flies, but he cannot hook a trout. Why? It is a riddle, and you can give it up as soon as you like. So do I. I have heard it discussed in scores of angling companies all over the country, but no reasonable solution have I ever heard. How can a trout one day manage to give a tug at a tiny atom with a hook in it and never fail to hook himself, and the next keep on repeating his tugs all day long and yet contrive to miss the hook of the angler?

Is it a question of the refraction of light in some mysterious way as the fly is presented occasionally to the vision of the fish? Granted that it is, how do fish escape the hook and yet contrive to convey the telegraphic intimation of a "bite?" Do they, owing to some optical illusion in the water, merely slap the line with their heads or tails at a place a few inches from the fly, or do they take hold of the fly and pull? The latter would seem to be impossible. There are again days on which trout are readily hooked and are as certainly lost after a few convulsive wriggles; a performance which usually results in frequent examinations of hook points, to find they are all as sharp as need be. Why is this? I cannot tell.

Personal experience satisfies me that, granted a very quick eye and the power to strike smartly but not violently, many more "short"-rising fish may be hooked than is

supposed by inexperienced anglers. One of the most frequent remarks of old anglers is, "I can't see now." He can see a splash on the river which every novice can see, denoting an unmistakeable rise of a feeding trout, but he can no longer discern the faint—often very faint—silvery gleam far under the surface which is equally a "rise," and means a hooked fish, if the strike is done at the right instant; miss that instant and the fish will spit out your fraudulent fly with the speed of Vesuvius. The art of striking fish in this way is not to be acquired by any paper teaching; it can only be learned at the river-side, and even then it requires long years of watchful practice and very often different methods to suit the varying antics of fish on different days; perseverance, good eyesight, and attention to small matters will accomplish much, and if you can't manage it at first you must keep it up until you can.

SPRING FLIES.

On any ordinary rough stream during the spring it will be sufficient for any angler to confine himself in a general way to six flies, and with these chosen six he may fish day in and day out, anywhere and at any time, wet or fair, big water or little, sunshine or cloud, hot or cold. Take no notice of what thickheads tell you on strange rivers "that they are no use there"; just keep on fishing, in places where fish are, and if you do not find trout rise at your flies you will understand their refusal is due to one or both of two very good reasons: first, because they do not want flies of any kind just then; second, because you are unconsciously playing the part of a scarecrow. You cannot expect any reasonable fish to have much appetite when a man is in full view brandishing an enormous pole over their heads, which, for ought we know to the contrary, may seem to them as big as the mast of an old three-decker does to us.

And remember that, from their point of vision, it is even possible, I was going to say probable, that things are topsy-turvy, and that all men appear to be wrong way up, and few of us can stand such a test as that without frightening somebody.

I have made these flies up into two casts, and they are named in the order in which they should be on the gut, beginning from the tail fly. Some wiseacres will tell you the March-brown is out of place if the natural fly is not on the water. You may safely ignore that statement.

First Cast.—1. March-brown, hook No. 3, winged from a well-marked feather from the tail of a partridge, dubbed with a little hare's ear and yellow mohair mixed, the whole ribbed with a little yellow silk. This is an imitation of the natural male fly, the best feather being from a hen pheasant's quill; but the darker fly is usually, though not invariably, the better killer.

2. Snipe and yellow (snipe bloa of the north).

3. Woodcock, hackled with a well-marked feather from the outside of a woodcock's wing; body, orange silk, dubbed sparsely with hare's ear.

Second Cast.—1. Water-hen bloa, hackled with a feather from the inside of a water-hen's wing (if you can find one with a blue tinge take that for preference); body, yellow silk, dubbed with fur from a water rat.

2. Olive dun, winged from a starling's quill; body, greenish yellow silk, legs from a hen's neck, and stained to olive-yellow in onions.

3. Dark snipe, hackled with a well-mottled feather from the outside of a snipe's wing; body, purple silk.

Many anglers would reverse the position of these two flies on the cast, putting the winged fly at the top. Lastly, if about the 24th of April, you should find the iron-blue dun thick on the water, take off water-hen and put on the little blue, dressing the wings from a feather which you can find

in a tom-tit's tail. If you cannot get that, try one from a jackdaw's neck, or a coot's breast, or from a blue-cap; but to my mind the blue of the tom-tit's tail when wet comes nearest to the blue of the living fly. Body, orange and purple silk twisted, dubbed slightly with down from a water rat, and to complete this dainty morsel you must give him an orange head. Probably no fly is so eagerly taken as that of which this is supposed to be an imitation, and none is more difficult to imitate.

I said, in the course of the foregoing remarks, that you must fish in places where fish are; and I will add, when you have found out where they are, be careful not to get too near the river in your efforts to reach them. No amount of writing will teach a novice or a duffer these things, but one may convey valuable hints. For instance, nothing is commoner than to see a young hand wading about the very places he ought to be fishing, and in which, until he came into the river, the fish were lying. In the spring of the year, in a moderately full water, trout lie just outside the streams, and on the little flats near where a big stream sweeps by. Before you go into the river, fish these places very carefully, and from a distance, letting your cast of flies come round to the very verge of the river. Then, if you fail to stir any fish in such a place, wade in a short distance only, and fish a little further out. Finally, and this more particularly as the season advances, fish the rough water, and fish every inch of the tail of the stream. There is nothing to be gained by fishing up stream in a rough northern river if there is a moderately full water running.

FLY DRESSING.

Anglers who have not had considerable practice at dressing flies will find it much more satisfactory in the long run to buy them, though it is a great advantage to all trout

and grayling fishers to be able to dress a fly at the river side if necessary. A man who can do this, and finds fish taking a fly which is thick on the water, and of which his stock contains no copy, is able to sit down in a sheltered spot and rig up an imitation that may help him to fill his creel in no time. But to an ordinary man the expenditure of time, material, and labour in dressing one's own flies, is far in excess of their price at the tackle-dealer's.

ON ARTIFICIAL FLIES.

Most fly-dressers fail to make really good flies because they put too much stuff on the hook rather than too little. Many of them, and this applies especially to the producers of London flies, have no knowledge of the living insect of which they are presumed to be making something of an imitation. An exact imitation of a fly, as every old fly-fisher knows, is quite unnecessary; but those who aim to dress flies accurately should certainly take the trouble to examine the living insect on the water, and learn something of its life-history. Without going through all details, he should know that in the last stage before taking wings the insect crawls out of a case, and works itself away to the surface of the water, aided by the motion of six legs. On certain days, if we could see beneath the surface, we might observe trout taking these ascending insects in scores, and, that being so, you will observe that an imitation of a body, mostly yellow, with very few fibres for the legs, is sufficiently good to attract trout. A hackled fly, as we dress it in the north, makes no attempt to imitate the shape of the winged insect; but if you will take a living fly and dip it under water you will find that, in all but the very strongly-winged flies, the shape goes irrevocably, though the colour and size remain, and it is to these two points that the fly-dresser's attention should be directed in dressing flies for all rapid streams.

MINNOWS.

If it is necessary to get your minnows a day or two in advance of your fishing, there are two simple ways of preserving them with almost all their natural sheen on them. One is to give them a flick at the back of the head with the nail of your middle finger, lay them on a dish, sprinkle them over with salt, leave it on for five or six minutes, and then put them into spirits of wine. The other way, the best method known to me, is to put the minnows *alive* on a big dinner dish, sprinkle them well with salt for about two minutes, and then put them, still alive, one by one, with the salt on them, into the spirits of wine. It sounds cruel, but we are taught to believe that the sensory nerves in these cold-blooded creatures are very dull indeed. You will, however, be surprised to see them swimming about for some time in the spirits in a state of inebriated obfuscation. Minnows are brighter and tougher by this method than any other known to me.

CREEPER FISHING.

The first heavy fresh in May in all northern rivers will probably afford some of the best fishing of the year, especially if mild, quiet weather should supervene. The fish are finding the creeper, which is the larva of the stone fly, and are consequently getting into their best condition. The date of the appearance of this interesting insect varies according to the temperature of the air and the water. Lift up a stone just at the very edge of the water; lift it up quickly and make a quiet grab at a thing like a cockroach which you will probably see endeavouring to scuttle away on your disarrangement of his watery domicile. He will neither bite nor scratch nor kick nor exhibit any other vices; get a couple of No. 2 hooks on fine gut, one whipped from one-eighth to

a quarter of an inch above the shank of the other ; impale your captive, the lower hook through the body below the thorax, and the upper through the "chest"; fish a long fine collar, and there you are. You must wade quietly up-stream and cast very gently or you and your creeper will part to meet no more. In a fine water the creeper will sink sufficiently of itself, in a slightly swollen river you may use a single shot. Cast your bait into the necks of little streams and let it go trundling down with the current ; if it stops in its onward course, just wait a wink, and then strike. Cast also on the thins at the edges of streams, and in all other places where your eye tells you trout are on the look-out for stray creepers.

GOOD TROUT FISHING.

Among the questions most frequently put to editors of angling papers is—"Where can I get some decent trout fishing at a moderate cost?" Ideas of what is decent trout fishing, and what is moderate cost, vary considerably. I hear, for instance, of a quartette of friends who have been flogging the streams in the county Wicklow. They got five hundred trout in four days, and now they are making an Irish grievance of it that they did not catch more, or that the fish were not larger, or something or other. You remember the boy with the porridge ; he sat behind "them" (though why porridge should always be plural I am sure I do not know any more than why every dog should be a "poor old fellow" from the first day he is a pup), and made very little headway beyond a series of wry faces. "What is the matter?" said his father. "Why, they are salt and they are sour, and they are burnt and they are raight nasty, and there isn't enough of 'em." But what is decent trout fishing? I know two enthusiastic anglers, members of a well-known association, who, having tried the water and fished for several days, came back with the deliberate

opinion, freely published, that the water was "poached to death," and there were no trout in it. One of them was stating his views plainly, when his hearer thus broke in, "When was that?" "Why, only this week." "And where?" "All about the bridge." "Why, bless me," said his friend, "what were you doing? Brown and Jones and Robinson had baskets of over twenty trout each out of that water that very day." Now, why did not Smith kill a dish of fish? I will tell you in order that all the family of Smiths may read the lesson here. Because, having a pair of waders on, he must needs use them; so he waded into, and up and down, and round about, and in and out all the places where fish were lying thickly until he came, waiting only the advent of a man who understood his business to show decent fishing. The moral being that good trout fishing depends quite as much on the fisher as on the fish. It is only too common for practical fishermen to hear those of limited experience come back from a stream that is just stiff with fish and lay it all on the river.

As to moderate cost there is unlimited scope for difference of opinion on this head. A year or two ago a small party of anglers—and men I regret to say of some position—turned up their noses at a suggested charge of 5s. 6d. per day, all found, at a well-known inn, and marched off indignantly in search of a palatial establishment which might be relied on to do it equally well or thereabouts for four bob—excuse the vulgarism. It is a striking indication of the depth of feeling animating an indignant bosom. It has happened in my piscatorial career to pay on one occasion 16s. for two ordinary meals at a Thames-side hostelry, and the sum of 1s. 6d. at an inn at Clitheroe, in Lancashire, for two meals equally good, and as well served in all respects.

I know an inn at Crawford, on the Clyde, at which I arrived from Edinburgh one Saturday night some years ago. Charles Keene afterwards used an incident of that night for

one of the best sketches he ever made for *Punch*. It related to the possibility of fishing on the Sawbath day. The aspect of the surrounding country was so wild and unpromising that my thoughts began to run, as men's thoughts will, on wittles, and I asked a bare-legged Highland lassie—said lassie being about five-and-fifty—if they grew any potatoes up there. She said she “didna ken, but she didna thenk sae.” Then I spent the rest of the evening in moody contemplation of “Bradshaw,” and wondered why on earth I had come. And yet for dinner next day, being the Sawbath, Mary McQueen got up this bill of fare for one:—Scotch broth; salmon, with parsley sauce and cucumber; lamb; duckling, with potatoes and green peas; pancakes, with cream; cheese, biscuits, &c.; strawberries and cream—price, 1s. 6d. This is a fact; the scale of charges was a simple one—1s. 6d. each meal, and 2s. for a bed.

UNFAMILIAR DAINTIES.

Most old anglers have observed that trout do not take all the natural dainties of the river for some days after their first appearance on the surface of the water. This is the case with all the different flies and the creeper also. Fish require to become familiar with their appearance before they take them greedily, just as, I dare say, you observed was the case with your wife in regard to oysters; but, having once acquired the taste, “ma conscience” how they do go it! A slight fresh of four to six inches is desirable at the beginning of the stone-fly season to wash the insects off the stones and carry them along the surface of the water, otherwise the fly will only rarely go skating about the river of her own accord as a decent fly should. She will make for the dry land, and stop there or thereabouts. In very dry seasons trout frequently decline the angler's stone fly altogether, the reason being that, owing to the absence of a little freshet to

bring the flies on the water, the fish are unfamiliar with them.

“FIRST PRINCIPLES” OF ANGLING.

It cannot be too strongly impressed on inexperienced anglers that neither tackle nor the finest flies in the world will ensure a basket of fish unless several matters of even more importance are attended to. Two “first principles” are necessary in angling: one to know where the fish are, the other to avoid letting them know where you are. Man is a conceited beast of prey, constantly wandering about on errands of destruction or striving to assert his own immaculate superiority, and so supreme in his self-satisfaction that you cannot persuade even half of him that anybody or anything else can be as sharp as he is. A friend of mine once dropped sixteen worms, fat and well liking, off a bridge over a little river to a half-pound trout below. The trout took them all. Then my self-complacent, wicked friend attached a tiny hook and six yards of the finest gut to a precisely similar attraction. The fish eyed the arrangement out of the corner of his eyes, yet he neither winked nor moved. The experimenter dangled it lovingly before his very snout, but here the fish exhibited more sense than the average human being—he kept his mouth shut at an awkward moment. He took ten more worms, unattached, but the telegraphic arrangement he would have none of.

Thus man prowls about, believing he is altogether a superior kind of diddler—a humbug beyond compare. He talks about killing time while time is quietly killing him; but that anybody can be up to his little games is out of the question.

Richard Jefferies, as keen an observer as ever lived, spent weeks in trying to trap a rabbit where there were thousands of them before he discovered that the sense of smell is so strongly developed in this “vermin” that the odour of his

hand about the trap was sufficient to induce all the rabbits to walk carefully round it instead of into it. Just listen to this, which is not a story, but a fact. I saw it—I, with my little eye.

Some time ago a milkman, going his evening rounds, placed a covered milk can at a street corner, and went off to deliver his milk. The can was flat at the top, and the lid opened on a hinge in the middle. As soon as the owner of the can was well out of sight a collie dog appeared in the immediate vicinage of the can. He prospected for a moment, disappeared round the corner, returned with a fox terrier chum, and the two together distinctly satisfied themselves no one was about. They had planned this arrangement, and their time was come. The collie lifted the lid by pushing his nose under it, and took his fill of milk, while his friend supported himself by his paws on the edge of the can and did likewise, until, after a deep draught, they withdrew. The lid fell, the performance was over, the dogs went away as fast as they could, licking their lips and thinking what smart fellows they were, and the milkman came back, satisfied he knew his business, if anybody did, and no mistake. You couldn't diddle him—not likely; and a couple of dogs, too! Fiddlesticks.

STONE-FLY FISHING.

It is a common fault with stone-fly fishers, who have not had much practice at it, to strike at a rise just as they do in fishing the artificial small sunk fly, that is, instantly. The result is exasperating. I am, of course, presuming that you have baited your female fly with the hooks embedded in the side of the fly, so as to leave the wings uninjured and the legs free to enable the insect to skate about the surface of the water naturally; then step quietly into the river, turn your face up-stream; and wading up quietly, with a line not much

longer than your rod, cast your fly, very carefully, or off it goes, above you. Even if there is a mighty rush at it as soon as it touches the water ; don't strike then ; if the fly has disappeared, wait about two seconds, and then strike. A trout usually makes two gulps at the stone-fly, the first being apparently a simple seizure of the insect, either by the big wings or the latter half of the body. The second is that in which the fish takes in the fly completely and does for him ; and it is the latter for which it is necessary to wait, otherwise the angler will surely be taken in rather than the fly, or the trout.

In fishing the natural stone-fly it is almost essential that you should have a breeze blowing at the rate of about two knots an hour up stream. Inasmuch as it is absolutely necessary that you must fish by wading quietly up the river, it is equally important that you and the elements should be of one accord. A strong wind down the river will not only prevent you casting with accuracy, but will assuredly turn your stone-fly into a blow-fly, by blowing it off. (This is a bad joke, but it is not mine, which accounts for it). Given a gentle breeze in a good May-fly season, a fine cast, a good big stone-fly used tenderly, as though you valued it, you throw your bait from ten to eleven yards from your hand above you. If you try to throw too long a line you will soon be in trouble. It is in the nature of the fly to run on the surface of the water as nimbly and as cockily as she does when she plays hide and seek with you among the stones at the river's edge. If you cast well she will come floating quietly down the river towards you, and what you have to do is to raise your rod point gradually, so as not to let the weight of your line drag her either under water or into any attitude unnatural for an ordinarily healthy stone-fly. A trout rarely, if ever, makes a dash and a splash at a stone-fly, but just takes her in out of the way quietly, making scarcely any fuss about it ; he makes sure of it in an

unpretentious business-like way, and there is an end of both of them. You will see your fly skating up and down the surface of the water, when she suddenly disappears in the centre of a small ring more suggestive of the rise of a grayling than a trout. Pause a moment and then strike, drawing your fish down stream to your feet quietly to basket him.

THE SCIENCE OF ANGLING.

In the earliest days hunting and fishing, the two chief sports of primitive man, were necessities rather than recreations. As agriculture advanced, and civilisation developed, he found food more readily at hand, and the duty that lay on his own skill—of providing food for those dependent on him—in time gave way in a large degree to the mere pleasure of the chase. The monks who built their abbeys by the clearest and most prolific streams only followed a natural instinct exhibited by the earliest inhabitants of all lands; the river found them both food and drink. The primitive angler, observant then as he is now, and perhaps more so, noticed fish feeding on certain things which he could procure, but had no hooks, and so some of the first angles used by the early fishermen were pieces of straight thin bone which they buried in a worm or small fish, and tying a piece of twisted flax or a fine strip of hide round the middle of the bait, they threw it in and awaited the result. When a fish swallowed it a pull at the line transfixed the bone crosswise in the gullet of the fish and it was caught; later he used hooks shaped from bones, some of them being double and some treble, most of them “eyed,” and all of them exhibiting a strength and solidity of purpose which says much for the faith of the poor aborigine in that 40 pounder which the poorest angler among us hopes one of these fine days to catch.

The hunter of these days, though still retaining some of the characteristics of his rude forefathers, has long since

departed from the primitive customs of the brave days of old ; he does not mind uncartering a tame stag after which the men and women of half a dozen counties may gallop for hours with a mighty clatter, to end with the peaceful enticement of the terrified brute into another cart, to be carefully wrapped in cotton wool for a few weeks until it is time for another rattling burst, a kind of business about as unsatisfactory as the consumption of claret on a large scale was to the farmer who complained that he "got no forrader." He has brought fire and brimstone into great lone lands of the earth, and his partner, the modern shooter, has practically tamed his prey and arranged a pretty position from which to bowl them over by the score, the hundred, and the thousand. The angler has done none of these things, because of his sheer inability to coax the tamest trout that ever swam into anything like a reasonable faith in man's sincerity. The knowledge of his proficiency as an accomplished humbug remains instinct in all fish. His implements are more delicate than of old ; modern mechanics and unlimited means have combined to give him tackle of a quality undreamt of even half a century ago, but his methods are the same, and his blunders are just as they were on the day when Noah himself looked up his tackle and bobbed for whale from a window of the ark.

DAPING.

When times get dull and the weather is hot, about the middle of July, the bluebottle-bobber's season may be said to commence, and very good fun it is if you can succeed in catching the flies first and the trout afterwards. A bluebottle is no fool. The business he has on hand is always terrific, and if his profits are at all equal to his returns any ordinary business man would be glad to change places with him for a week or two. Looking for a lost bluebottle in a forty-acre hayfield is really an exciting pastime, and at this

period of the year it is a worthy prelude to the endeavour to land a pounder from an almost impossible attitude in a sycamore tree. It seems to me the art of bobbing has a future before it. The best place to land a bluebottle is on a window pane, but you cannot take a window down to the river side with any degree of pleasure. If you succeed in catching about twenty-five of them put them in a medicine bottle, and the next stage in the proceedings is to get them out without getting twenty of them out at the same moment.

But, to be serious, if you succeed in getting hold of a good, bright, busy fly, bait him gently on a No. 4 Kendal hook, which should be whipped on the finest and best gut you can buy; the whole tackle should be the best possible, and the fly should be baited carefully so that after he is impaled he retains a partial use of his wings and legs, and so creates a slight commotion when he touches the surface of the water. He should depend from the end of a long stiff rod, so that he just reaches the water and kicks up a gentle bobbery thereon, said bobbery being most attractive to trout. Not an atom of slack line should be allowed to touch the water, or the fish will be scared in an instant, and the position should be chosen so that the sun, falling under the shadow of the overhanging trees, does not light up the line and gut like a line of light to be visible to all fish in the neighbourhood. The utmost care is required both in approaching the tree, or any other selected spot, and in the method by which the fly is allowed to reach the water. Moreover, as in stone-fly fishing, you should give a trout a couple of seconds before striking him. July and August are the times when the fish most affect the edges of the river, where it is overshadowed by trees. You will understand that when you are astride of one of the lower branches of a good sycamore, say eighteen feet above the river, the real fun of the situation begins when you have hooked a fish and have got to play and land him without making an undignified somersault into the water.

To return to the art of bobbing. Get a stiff rod about twelve feet long, with upright rings, and an easy-running reel. Then have four or five feet of fine but strong drawn gut, so fastened to the reel line that it will go through the rod rings without any hitch. Your hook should be No. 3 fine wire, and, having whipped it to the gut, affix a small leaden bullet (the size of a fairly large pea) about twelve inches above the hook; then impale a living fly, and you are ready. In brilliant, hot weather, seek out some overhanging tree, under the shade of which your knowledge of the ways of fish tells you all the good trout in the locality will seek shelter from the sun. Approach cautiously, and, if necessary, creep out as far as possible over the pool on a stiff branch of the tree, set your teeth together, do not cough or sneeze, hold tight, and begin. Wind your line up until it comes to the top ring of the rod and leaves only twelve inches of line free (this should be done before you begin the acrobatic part of the performance), and then poke your rod point through the leafy branches, taking care that there is a clear course for the bullet to fall to the river; now let sufficient line off the reel to reach the water, and the bullet will take the fly downwards until the latter just touches the surface of the river. Of course you must be cautious to check your line so as to prevent the lead going into the pool with a splash that will frighten all the fish in the neighbourhood. If you let your fly down as you ought to, and there is a trout about, unless he instantly cuts his lucky, he is yours. The woman or the trout that deliberates is won or lost, whichever you prefer. When you have hooked your fish hold tight to your perch, and, if you do not tumble in and drown yourself, or, worse, break your tackle, you may land your victim; but *how* you are going to do it, it were better you did not ask me, because, to tell the truth and shame the thingummy, I do not know—circumstances alter bobbing cases considerably, and this is one of the mysteries known only to bobbers. Nevertheless, I assure

you that when the weather is hot, and the disappointed common fly-fisher is baked out of the river, it is cool among the whispering leaves of the sycamore, and the big trout lie thereunder, unsuspecting of the cruel trickster high above them. Few men, however, live to be truly great as bobbers, but in the apprenticeship to the art the possibilities are unbounded. Why, I do solemnly set it down that I have seen a bobber over ten feet of water astride of the branch of an oak, with his legs tied together beneath it in a kind of weaver's knot—a man who “grows old and is fat”—playing a trout with his left hand, while with his right he strove to repulse the fiery onslaught of an inconsiderate wasp; and still there are men who are not sufficiently educated to see anything in bobbing, the mere game with the wasp, though vulgar, being something the keenest mind can understand.

TYPICAL ANGLERS.

I repeat that as angling is a fine art, so too ought to be the narration of the details of it. There are few things in the ordinary course of life that are worth telling as bald facts; they must be touched up a bit, added to here and there, detracted from in places, to maintain a proper balance and give a greater air of realism to the whole; and if anyone is capable by prescriptive right of doing this as it ought to be done, and as no one else can do it, it is the angler. The methods of the shooter and the hunter lack refinement altogether. Do not, however, you who are a non-angler and may read this, persuade yourself that a gathering of anglers talks of fish and nothing but fishing. Here, for instance, is a famous chemist enlarging on the wonderful beauty of a botanical gem of great price. Here is a geologist, with his pockets full of stones which he tells you are worth a king's ransom to him; a third has been noting a peculiarity in the natural mode of progression in the common hare; a

fourth has heard a cuckoo which he insists was under the influence of drink; a fifth gets into a learned theological disquisition, and I regret to say that drowsiness immediately sets in, and indifference reigns supreme.

Not that all men who take up the gentle art of angling are thus susceptible to the surroundings among which they find themselves. The yellow primrose is still a yellow primrose, and nothing more, to some men, and the tocsin of the soul is still the dinner bell. But these are rarities that only serve to show the delight the angler almost always takes in the freedom of the fields, the breezes of the moorland, and the scenery into which his hobby leads him. There are men who see nothing in it at all, and to whom an exquisite bit of woodland, stretching for miles with the river glimmering here and there among the deep foliage like a silver thread, miles and miles away, is no more beautiful than a Leeds fog. I recall a story of a man of this kind who had been doing Westminster Abbey. He had trodden the solemn dust of Poets' Corner, and gazed on the tombs of kings and queens, and when at length he came into the open air he remarked to his companion, "What I like about this place is, it does so remind me of the Isle of Man." Why, goodness only knows!

ATOMS AND ITEMS.

Brother angler, you who are something more than a mere pot hunter, and are sufficiently interested in your art to look into some of the multitudinous matters that go to make up the whole, have you ever in an idle or unsuccessful hour paused to examine the apparently unattractive cases in which the larvæ of the phryganidæ exist, the cases commonly known as caddis or stick baits? If you will condescend to such trifles you will be surprised to notice first of all that they differ; each kind of fly of this species builds a different

kind of house, and Nature, with her usual liberality, has prepared surprises for those who care to look, even in these lowly insects. Here is one solidly constructed of bits of hard gravel, rough rock and shining sand, but within as smooth, and no doubt as easy to wear, as an old shoe; here is another, in which two or three long chips of weed form the strengthening props of the abode; and here another one (such as a number of us examined through a powerful magnifier on the noisy beck behind the hamlet of Howietown by Ullswater); it is composed of tiny atoms of coloured stone and spar, blue, amber, pink, green, red, and brown set side by side in a truly wonderful way like Mosaic work, and held together by a thin transparent groundwork; held up to the light it is as pretty as anything you can fancy. If you will only take the trouble to look deeply into the surroundings of angling, you will find that every peep will teach you something worth knowing and remembering.

DO FISH FEEL PAIN?

Do fish feel pain? It is more than probable they do so only to a very limited extent. It is clear, from what medical men tell us, that the brain is the seat of the sensation of pain, and that the more active and highly cultivated the brain is, the more sensitive does it become to pain. This is made abundantly clear in certain stages of inflammation of the brain in man; and granting that this is based upon common observations of medical men, when we consider that the proportion of brain in man is as 1 to 60, and in fish as 1 to 3,000, it means, so far as we can judge, that the sensibility to pain in fish is only $\frac{1}{60}$ th part that of man. We can scarcely suppose that fish, or any of the lower orders of creation, are altogether insusceptible to pain, but it is more than probable that fear plays a larger part than pain in producing the cries of some animals and the desperate

efforts of fish to escape so soon as they perceive their danger.

THE RED-TAG.

Why does a grayling take the fly called a "red-tag"? This is one of those things that are likely to remain just as much a mystery as it is why Tommy Atkins' red coat is such an overpowering attraction to certain grades of the female sex; and here a curious reflection presents itself: why is not a fox-hunter in pink as great an attraction? He isn't, not even with his horse thrown in. And if these things, about which we poor mortals are supposed to understand something, are too high for us, how shall we rise to the higher level necessary for the study of such a question as "Why does a grayling take a red-tag"? The main point is that he does take it, and usually in preference to anything else you can show him. So far as we can imagine, it is a new idea to him, and so, for the matter of that, are the one or two other flies presented to his vision in the majority of cases on the same cast. In other words, they are more or less what are called fancy flies; that is, nature never made anything half so wonderful. But it happens that you may have a red-tag and two first-rate imitations of real insects that the fish knows when he sees them alive, and yet he will stick all day to the red-tag, ignoring the others completely. Is it the bit of red? Do colours of different kinds present the same hues to the vision of fish as they do to our eyes? The merciful powers forbid that it should be otherwise, else what tommy-rot some of us have written in our time about being careful to get the exact shade of feather and silk.

NECESSITY FOR OBSERVATION.

A long, steady, and careful system of observation is essential to enlighten our dull comprehension in regard to

many aquatic matters. Some day, I suppose, the hour will come, and the man arise who, after years and years of patient, toilsful observation, will tell us all about it. He will study the life-history of the fly through all its wonderful stages at the bottom of the river; will note how the first creeping stage is affected by intense frost; how many per cent. perish through inclement atmospheres; how many live to feed fish without coming to the winged state; and how many per cent. live to dance out their little lives in "the uncertain glory of an April day," and go through the last necessary stages of their existence in the air; and what a delightful study it will be to a man who has time and opportunity to go into it thoroughly day by day. There is, to my eye and my thinking, nothing in nature that it was ever yet my lot to see more wonderful, more amazing in its delicate loveliness than what the fly anglers call the "iron-blue dun," just newly hatched from the depths of the cool river, and standing suddenly, as by a miracle, in all the glory of wings on the shining water. Look at it closely. Did you ever see such undefinable tissue, veined so tenderly and coloured so faintly, as you see in these wings—wings that even a rude breath will ruin? Look at the tiny body, perfect in shape and soft as velvet to the touch. Even at the bottom of the dark river Old Mother Nature has been busy putting golden rings around the insect and a crown of brilliant orange on his head, a flattering attention which she omits to pay his future wife. Put him under a microscope and see what the sport of angling reserves for those who will look into the mighty surprises the water has in store for us.

EFFECTS OF FRESHETS ON SMALL RIVERS.

Snow is often the ruling factor as regards the hatching of spring flies in all the northern rivers. It not unfrequently happens that a typical warm spring day, in which the sun

shines from a cloudless sky, will send down a singularly cold river, owing to the greater amount of snow melted on the hills by the sun. This is one reason why on some of the most likely days anglers are puzzled to know why there is no rise of fly on the water. Floods in these rivers are most of all to be dreaded. An ordinary fresh coming gently as the result of steady rain seldom does much harm, but a sudden and violent flood tearing down the bed of a river is apt to displace the stones and sweep away most of the bottom food on which so much depends, besides carrying down into some other fellow's water yearling trout on which you have spent so much labour and time. I recall a flood which, between Tuesday and Thursday, in a Yorkshire river, altered absolutely the bed and bottom of the river so that it would have been quite unrecognisable, except for the surroundings, even by one who had known it as I had for twenty-five years.

MINNOW-SPINNING IN HEAVY WATERS.

In spinning a minnow in a rather heavy water, too many anglers make the mistake of working the bait down the river rather than across it. Speaking generally, the latter method will be found to account for more fish than the former. Fish are all lying with their heads up-stream, and a brilliant bait passing along their line of vision is naturally seen by many more fish when it passes across the breadth of the river, than when it is merely worked down under some bank in the hope of securing fish seeking shelter there. A trout is always on the look-out for food; if he is in his hiding-place he always has a weather-eye open for any tit-bit that may come within his reach. Another point worth remembering is that you can scarcely overdo the working of your minnow in the matter of speed, so long as you do not work it out of the water and make it skate along the surface.

LADY ANGLERS.

One of the most pleasing things of the present day is the number of ladies who are taking up angling as a pastime, not only from boats on lakes but also at the river side. Of course there is no reason why they should not do so, or why a lady should not become as expert a fly-fisher as a man. There is even nothing to prevent her wading, if she is inclined to. Not a few ladies have had dresses made something in the style of a kilt reaching nearly to the knee, and under this they wear a pair of ordinary waders. You may depend upon it if there are ways by which these little difficulties can be got over, a lady may be relied on to get over them. There are few things she cannot do, even to sharpening a lead pencil, and she will do that all right in the end if you will give her plenty of time and plenty of pencils. I have seen some very good trout killed from boats by ladies, and for ingenuity of resource I once saw a young lady land a 5lb. grilse in her umbrella, her father having neither gaff nor landing net. A lady fishing on the Yorkshire Anglers' water on the Eamont a year or two ago, landed three big chub in the course of an hour, in addition to the smothered delight of seeing her husband running half a mile at break-neck speed to her assistance, under the belief that she had got a salmon. The marvel of it is they do not scream like they do when they see a mouse, they just behave like enthusiastic anglers, kill their fish quietly, and do not go putting their names in all the papers as they do in some *setts*.

THE VISION OF TROUT.

The eye of a trout is a wonderful evidence of the adaptation by nature of means to ends. The very smallest midge-fly that human skill can dress is often picked up by a trout out of a rough tumbling stream where an angler's feet

can scarcely maintain a hold from the strength and speed of the water. What a wonderful power of vision it must be that enables a fish to seize out of the boiling water a tiny atom not more than one-sixth of an inch in length, and how enormous must a procession overhead of four flies in still water seem to the same fish! Of course there are times on all waters when flies dressed a size larger than usual may be used, as for instance in a very strong wind, on a still water, or on a river presenting a succession of rough and heavy streams, but ordinarily those flies which approach most nearly the size of the natural insects will be found to kill best. The smallest artificial fly will never be a perfect imitation of the real article, and the more the fraud is magnified the more apparent, it would seem, must be the difference in the eyes of the fish.

If a trout does not mean to rise, he will not, and you cannot make him. One hears men say sometimes they caught sight of a grand trout just at so-and-so. He was a pound and a half if he was an ounce, and he just lay there quietly taking it easy. The angler tried him with this and with that, and he put a worm on, and he caught a cockchafer and let that go over him, and did all sorts of things, but the fish just took no notice and practically laughed at him; as well it might. The angler waving about like an animated scarecrow was just as visible to the trout as the trout was to the rag bag, and the fish knew the sinful game prepared for him. Bless you! He had been hooked many a time and had learned to look with suspicion on all proffered baits in fair weather and clear water.

DRY-FLY FISHING.

Dry-fly fishing is ordinarily quite unsuited to rapid Northern rivers, though there are times in summer when it may be used with much effect by a practised hand. I say a

practised hand, because it requires both skill and dexterity to throw a single small fly fifteen or twenty yards and work it so that it will come down on the water right end up—that is, with the wings like a living fly. The great difficulty, of course, in a rough stream is to manipulate one's line so as to avoid dragging the fly in a way which will assuredly scare away every observant trout, and to avoid upsetting it, and so, to a large extent, depriving it of its excellence as a floating imitation of a real insect.

The ancient Romans, who practised fly-fishing and dressed the wings of their flies with feathers about the colour of wax taken from a common cock or hen, understood the idea of making their flies float. They fished with fine tackle, used one fly only, and all their efforts were directed to make the fraud resemble the original. They had not the rough, cold streams with which we are familiar, and speed and temperature are the ruling factors in aquatic life of all kinds; speed—which means the strength of the current—often carries away a large amount of food, and a low temperature results in an imperfect hatch of the season's flies. This is the chief reason why our ordinary North-country flies, dressed as sparsely as we dress them, are sufficient to kill fish in our rivers, and even on the deeper waters of our chalk streams not a few skilful hands are able to use them effectually.

WAYWARDNESS OF FISH.

For being quite incomprehensible in their ways fish are about on a par with the proverbial young maid who does not know her mind. In fact, when we consider the disproportion of brain substance, the trout comes out with the better record of the two. Though his senses, strictly so-called, appear to be of the dullest, his perceptions are most acute. Every experienced fly-fisher knows the futility of trying to diddle a trout that can see him or catch sight of his rod, that is,

ordinarily, though there are times when, in defiance of all the usual methods of procedure, a fish will jump at a chance of making a victim of himself in a way which in a creature of larger brain substance would suggest drink, or, at least, a very ill-balanced mind.

And yet, as if to show what a mystery the art of angling still is and is likely to remain, I can recall several instances in my own experience to illustrate the queerness of fish. I said just now their perceptions are acute, and so, unquestionably, they are, but their perceptions, such as they may be, appear to be due more to an abnormal power of vision than to any reasoning faculty. But that trout must possess some kind of instinct reasoning power (I hope the expression may pass) is made plain to anglers in various ways, and the more one has experience of them the stranger do their ways become; in fact, the wildest contradictions are constantly appearing.

There are a good many things about which I know nothing. I do not know, for instance, that any philosopher has defined accurately the line where what they call instinct ends and reason begins in the lower creatures. An ordinary man is a conceited animal, reluctant to credit anything with sense that is below him in Nature's scale. Fortunately for man and woman, some other animal, a long time ago, taught him to talk, and this has been his chief occupation ever since, when his lungs have not been occupied in the very similar business of blowing his own trumpet; but what, or where, is the dividing line between what is called instinct and reason? Take a dog. Some men tell me a dog cannot reason; plainly, I do not believe this. My experience with a dog, known when living to many hundreds of men and women all over the north of England, was that he was certainly capable of reasoning. I set aside all the tricks he could do, the result of careful teaching, such as turning the handles of all the doors in the house, or any house if the

handles were wood, opening the door and closing it behind him after he had entered; of course, other intelligent dogs might be taught to do this, but if the incident here recorded did not show a reasoning power, what was it? "Tulip" slept always downstairs in the square hall of my house, and under no circumstances was he allowed to come upstairs during the night. But early one summer morning I, being awake, heard this dog shake himself, and then heard the sound of his feet walking over the hall floor. The stairs were creaky, and the third step from the bottom made a very audible noise when even a light foot was put on it. By-and-bye I heard a creak, and then no more for some time; then I heard a second creak. Getting up, I went through a dressing room and came to a landing surrounding the well of the house, and from a point where he could not see me, watched his method of procedure. He came as gently as a kitten from stair to stair, very slowly, until he alighted on one that creaked; then he stopped dead, and paused the greater part of a whole minute until he had assured himself that no word of command was coming to order him down again. Then he progressed again in this fashion till he reached the top of the stairs, taking probably five minutes between the bottom and the top. As he reached the top stair, I said to him from my position, about seven yards away from him, "Now, you be off down again." Never shall I forget the look of astonishment on his face, followed by his instant descent, in which *every foot-fall was plainly audible from top to bottom*. He was conscious that the attempt to deceive was no longer any good, and therefore the extreme care with which he had come up was unnecessary. Now, I cannot see how this procedure could be due to anything but his having reasoned the matter out.

And a fish, even a mis-called silly roach, is not quite a fool; there are some things he is capable of finding out and living up to. He knows mustard when he tastes it, and

even a man cannot get much beyond that. A man I knew passed over a bridge spanning a little tributary of Ullswater at his dinner time every day for months. A small trout lay constantly just in sight in the stream below, and the kind-hearted workman every day dropped the fish a worm as he passed. The worm came as regularly as twenty-five minutes to one o'clock, and no doubt the fish regulated his domestic affairs by the punctuality of that meal. But a day came when the wicked man turned away from his righteousness, put a hook in the worm and attached a string to the hook. That is where the extra brain substance comes in. The fish, with faith in his benefactor, stimulated by appetite and custom, took the worm, and the angler pulled the string, but the fish fell back into its accustomed place in the river and lost his dinner to save his life. For from that day forth, though the wicked man daily dropped him a worm, as usual, without a hook, so far as my informant could observe the fish never looked at a worm thereafter.

Now contrast this with incidents within my personal experience, one of which would suggest the question, "Do fish sleep?" I was coming down the little Yorkshire river Skirfare, one brilliant day in June; there had been no rain for weeks, the river was singularly low and as clear as water can be; here and there trout scuttled away before me into their hiding-places. Suddenly I perceived from the middle of the little river a trout lying apparently half-curved up on a small rock projecting from the bank, and about a foot under the surface of the water. I stood directly opposite to him, and was struck, of course, by the fact that he made no attempt to bolt; therefore I lowered my landing net, pushed it gently towards him, and when at length it was within a foot of his ledge I made a rush, slipped it under him and got the trout. He was a well-fed fish and in good condition, and as lively as need be. Was

he asleep, mad, or was there some peculiarity in the refraction of light that rendered me invisible to him? I cannot tell. I merely quote the facts. Another peculiar case: it was on Ullswater; mid-day; cloudless sky; end of June; blazing hot; not a breath of air; lake as smooth as a mirror. In ten minutes, with an artificial fly totally unlike anything God ever made, I took six trout weighing as nearly as possible 1lb. each; every fish was visible to three of us from the boat before I made each cast; every fish was seen to rise from about five feet of water and to take the fly; every fish dashed about in a distraught condition among his companions after he was hooked. The boat was within twenty yards, and yet as soon as the fly was on the water another fish rose and was hooked. Business as before. If you asked me to account for these proceedings I could not; I have always had a pleasant theory that I had come across an aquatic asylum for imbecile trout.

Another case: Having only an hour to spare, I had gone out for a few throws, having no cast or flies with me but the one attached to my rod. At the first or second throw, before the gut was thoroughly soaked, I rose a fish rather far off, hooked him, and broke my cast short off at the joining with the eighteen inches of twisted hair I always use. I walked back to the inn for another cast, and started fishing again in the same place. In a few minutes I caught a trout with my purloined flies in his possession; not more than ten minutes elapsed before justice overtook him. Question: Was he conscious or not of the attachment he had formed, or, being desperately hungry, was he reckless? Instances of a similar kind may be multiplied *ad infinitum*.

SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL ANGLING.

I will tell you the secrets of successful angling in a few brief sentences, knowing very well that observant anglers

will agree with me on all points. It is not tackle that catches fish; it is knowledge born of observation. I know a workman whose fingers, swollen with honest hard work at his own daily trade, are capable of dressing exquisite artificial flies, which will kill fish, as old Robert Ramsbottom, of Clitheroe, used to say, on any lake or river in the world "if in competent hands,"—an important reservation born of his experience of flies and anglers. Now, I seriously incline to believe that my working man is equal to taking three yards of gas-piping for a rod, and five yards of bell-wire for a line, and with a little gut and a hook and one of his own flies at the end of it, going out and killing a fish on that fly. Mind, I do not say he would care to do it, or that he is likely to try; I only insist that if he did try you might be sure the odds were against the fish. It is the man, my gentle reader,—the man and his eyes, the doors through which he takes in his practical observations. Very briefly, then, here are the secrets of successful angling in the order of their importance:—

1. An accurate knowledge of where the fish are lying. Half the anglers we see are wading where they ought to be fishing.

2. The art of keeping out of sight.

3. A quick eye to detect a rise, many rises being invisible to all but the keenest and most practised sight.

Reasonable imitations, in size and colour, of the flies on the water.

PLAYING A FISH.

A not inconsiderable part of the pleasure of fishing for any game fish is that of playing him when hooked. I have seen men, and among them some of my most intimate friends, haul a fish out hand over hand, as it were, the moment they had hooked him; and once on the Clyde I saw a big Scotchman wading a short distance above Crawford, who

adopted a smart and highly original method of landing his trout. He was attended by a satellite with a basket, who stood on the bank and waited. When the ingenious gentleman in the river hooked a trout he waited not an instant, but giving his double-handed rod a big lift upwards and backwards, he jerked the fish out of the water, fired him up into the air, let go his reel, and the unfortunate trout fell in the field behind at the feet of the piscatorial attendant. Boy unhooked trout: business repeated. Now to my mind there is something far more successful in fishing with very fine tackle which would probably not bear the dead weight of half a pound, and in playing a heavy fish, in circumventing his tricks, his runs, his somersaults and dodges, than there is in fishing with tackle which might be supposed to resemble a clothes prop and a cart rope.

WORM GATHERING.

I saw two novel methods employed a short time ago in order to save time in getting worms. One was to mix half a pound of common salt in a bucket of boiling water and pour it quickly over a vegetable bed in the garden; the other was to drive in a spade and keep on working it about without taking anything out. In both cases all the worms in the neighbourhood came on to the surface of the ground apparently deluded into the belief that it was either an earthquake or the judgment day. They were then picked up and bagged. Such are the triumphs of science.

FISHING AT FILEY.

St. Paul's injunction to the Thessalonians, "Study to be quiet," is not understood of the man whose idea of a holiday is six a side in a railway carriage, with Aunt Sallys and switchbacks to follow. Truly the lovers of these things

must go somewhere, and the delightful little town of Filey, where I have had some excellent sea-fishing, prefers they should go elsewhere, while she rests proudly on her green cliff and looks calmly out to sea, content with what nature has done for her, while the North Sea lashes itself for ever and for ever into sunny foam-flakes, and rears its leaping waves high in spray during the drowsy August noontide, when its progress southward is broken by the mighty barrier of the Brigg. The knell of fallen power rings on the dancing waves over nine fathoms of water off the end of these rocks, where a melancholy bell, tolling listlessly as it rises and falls, sounds like the funeral knell of some lost Kelpie far down among the weeds below. "Pollack?" says the skipper. "Yes, sir; plenty on 'em off the Brig; but they don't come there as they used to. Cannot say why; only knows they doesn't. Whitings, codlings, billet, gurnets, sand-dabs, thousands on 'em; now and then a big codfish, and once a salmon. Yes, with a line. Gentleman fishing off Filey Rocks hooked and landed him; eight pound he were. Ye might fish a long time before anything like that occurred again."

No, no, he won't have it that with a little cayenne pepper and butter, all fish taste alike; he will never give in to that; thinks there is as much variety in their tastes as there is in their shapes and colours. A codling, for instance, won't compare with a fresh whiting; by fresh, he means a whiting straight from the sea at Filey; he has seen fish on slabs at inland shops very near old enough to talk.

"There is a lot of people, mind you, 'at only fancies they can tell the difference between one fish and another. Recollects a gentleman, getting a bit old now, that came to Filey many a year, and a right good fisherman he were. Says I to him one day, 'Do you think, Doctor, you could any time tell the difference between a whiting and a codling?' We were catching codlings and nothing else you see, just then.

‘Tell the difference? Yes, alive or dead; on the line or cooked.’ ‘Bill,’ says I to my mate behind me, very quiet like, ‘while I purtend to be fettling up some baits with my back to him up here, pass me over them codlings, and I will make ’em into whittings afore he knows.’ So Bill he passes ’em over and I takes ’em and skins ’em in the nose of the boat, and a codling ye may know, sir, comes out white and smooth like a whiting when it is skinned, and I sticks their tails through their eyes, and when he was tired of catching codling and went away, I says to him, ‘You will pardon me, I know, sir, for being so bold, but me and my mate caught a lot o’ whittings this morning, and, knowing you like ’em, if you will accept of ’em you shall have ’em with pleasure.’ And he thanked us and said he should be really glad of ’em. So I gives him these here codlings as I had made into whittings, and I says, ‘Now these are a different fish from what you have been a catching on, and a nicer lot of whiting I never see’d.’ And he said they were beautiful; and I said, quiet like, ‘Ye’re sure they’re whiting, sir;’ and he said he were, and he were much obliged; so then I says, ‘Well, if you will pardon me, sir, I am glad ye’re sure, because you said you could tell ’em from codling anyhow, and you have been catching nought but codlings, and them’s them.’”

OPINIONS ON FISHING RODS.

I do not know anything more amusing to an observant man than the varieties of opinion expressed by different anglers upon the same fishing rod. Say you have given Forrest, of Kelso, 50s. for a downright good rod which you think is above criticism, though you invite it. It is eleven feet long, moderately stiff, and what Artemus Ward would have called “a fair even-going critter.” No. 1, asked what he thinks of it, damns it at once with faint praise. “Well,”

he says, "it is a fair rod," but he "should have preferred it a trifle heavier in the butt." No. 2 is more candid, and says at once it is a whippy beggar, and he would not give you tuppence for it. No. 3 thinks it is a first-rate rod, a trifle heavy perhaps, and not very well balanced, but still it is very fair tackle. By this time you are half inclined to send the rod back to Forrest and get another of a different build, when No. 4 arrives, and after handling it carefully and nearly breaking it in two in his efforts to see what it is fit for, he remarks that he would be ashamed to own such a thing, and walks off. Next day No. 5 has a go at it, he says it is too heavy in the middle and too light in the butt. No. 6 says it is a splendid rod all but the top joints, which are very fine wood, but too thin. No. 7 would not have it as a gift, and No. 8 says it is just the rod he has been trying to find; it is rather too stiff for his fancy, but if you are inclined to part with it he will take it off your hands at 25s. And so on. These are everyday experiences and we all meet them. They merely represent the fact that tastes differ. I have heard it said that one of the most difficult things in this world is to preserve harmony amongst the members of a mixed choir; but if you will take the first good rod you can lay your hands on, and invite twenty-five different men to handle it, I will eat it if you do not get twenty-five different opinions about it.

SPINNING MINNOWS.

A spinning minnow revolves in two ways, either on a straight line or with a wobble, the majority of anglers being in favour of the latter. It would seem reasonable to suppose that, as in the case of artificial flies, trout take a revolving bait for something they are accustomed to see, but no natural minnow in his right mind ever took a straight spin of three or four miles on a dead plane. Yet such a bait will kill. On the other hand, a wobbling minnow, with its paralytic

attitudes and variable speeds, will no doubt convey to the mind of a trout, if trout have minds, the idea of a wounded minnow endeavouring to escape, because a live minnow in full possession of his faculties does, when pursued, execute a somewhat similar corkscrew mode of progression until he is in safe quarters.

A trout usually, but not invariably, takes a spinning minnow from behind, but will in some cases follow the bait for a comparatively long distance before he makes up his mind to have it. For this reason it is essential that the hooks about the tail of the bait should be so disposed that they can scarcely fail to strike a trout the moment it touches it. To effect this many anglers have added what is known as a flying triangle to their body hooks, and with success; others, relying on an ordinary triangle fixed in the minnow's side near the tail, have often to lament frequent runs but no fish; one of the principal reasons for this being that the attacking trout is unable to get his jaws over the head and so on to the point of the triangle hook, which is, in fact, too long.

ILL-EFFECTS OF MINNOW FISHING.

In small rivers, such as the majority of northern waters, a day or two's minnow fishing in low, clear water suffices to put the trout down effectually; it is not so much the spinning bait that frightens them into their hiding places as the needful wading up-stream; there is nothing like the sight of a pair of legs for inducing a stampede among thoughtful trout—for trout are thoughtful, and don't you forget it.

A REMINISCENCE.

It is just forty years since I saw my first fish lying in the grass. It was summer, and it seems to me that summers were made differently then from what they are now. I was

indebted to a farmer's man for a stick, a thread, and a pin, and with this tackle, baited with a worm, in due time I dragged out the finest minnow that e'er the sun shone on—a monster of a minnow, two and a half inches long at least : and as it lay kicking about in its death struggles in the grass, over which the sunlight played in golden gleam and shadow, the heavy heel of the countryman came down accidentally on my first prize and blotted it out for ever. Life has many shocks that come in maturer age to sadden and warn us, but to a lad who suddenly finds himself victor in a struggle with a mighty monster of the deep, picture the supreme agony of the moment when he sees his cherished prey, in all its glittering sheen, assume the appearance and consistency of a trod-upon strawberry tart !

SECOND EMPTYING.

ODDS AND ENDS.

ODDS AND ENDS.

The most extraordinary inscription on a gravestone that ever met my eye was brief and to the point, it left so much to the imagination, which is a great matter with this kind of thing. Thus it ran :—

Sacred to the memory of John Hayes, fisherman, of this town, who died 10th March, 1841, aged 39.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.

I cannot for the life of me understand what John could have done to merit this.

* *

I have known some men who have drawn on their imagination for their fish, and on whisky for their imagination.

* *

Two friends of mine, fishing opposite to one another in the Eamont, hooked, one of them a swallow, and the other a chaffinch, at the same moment.

* *

An ancient boatman of Kinross, whose acquaintance I made on Loch Leven many years ago, had been privileged in his young days to row Sir Walter Scott about the lake and round the Castle Island, during the time he was gathering material for "The Abbot"; and in reply to my question as to what Sir Walter was like, the boatman

answered, with unconscious truth and humour, that he was a
 “varra inqueesitive auld gentleman.”

* *

Memory, which makes experience, is like wine: if it be good in the first instance, it improves with age, and losing all its grosser parts, mellows into a valuable article, to be unbottled at a convenient period.

* *

Memory's boundless plain is dotted with little points of light, scattered here and there like jewels at the bottom of the sea; they come upon one as the coruscations of a brilliant from an unseen hand.

* *

When first on earth the truth was born,
 She crept into a hunting horn;
 The hunter came, the horn was blown,
 And where truth went was never known.

—(GERMAN.)

* *

Upon thy mother's knee, a naked new-born child,
 Weeping thou lay while all around thee smiled;
 So live, that, sinking into life's last sleep,
 Thou then may'st smile while all around thee weep.

—(PERSIAN.)

* *

A rod is like an egg, 'tis said;
 'Tis true, though said in joke:
 You never know of what it's made
 Until it's broke.

* *

The largest fish I ever helped to catch was a sturgeon,
 11½ feet long, stranded in the Ribble by the receding tide;

the smallest was a tiny stickleback. The ambition of the latter being in excess of his powers, he hung himself on to a lob-worm, and having disposed of about a quarter of an inch of it, he stopped there for the reason that he was unequal to concealing any more of it about his person. If he could have swallowed four inches more he might have come to the hook; there is, however, a limit to all things, as the hen found when she swallowed a yard and a half of boot lace, and found the shoe at the other end of it.

It is a curious fact that dry northerly and easterly winds have the effect of clearing northern rivers considerably, and usually very quickly. I have never heard a satisfactory explanation of the reason why winds from this direction should have this power, and a westerly wind not have anything like the same effect. A wine merchant of my acquaintance tells me that a pipe of wine in a dark cellar, far removed as it would seem from the influence of the wind, will clear during an easterly wind in half the time it will under one from the west or south. It would appear that, if the effect of the wind is so subtle, there is small reason for wonder that fish do not feed so readily under a wind "from the top corner," as the farmers say, as they do when it blows from a more genial quarter.

The Gwyniad is found now only in Ullswater, and that in diminishing numbers. It is locally known as a "skelly," the word being merely a corruption of 'scaley,' which is, in that neighbourhood, applied to all kinds of coarse fish.

It is true, I suppose, that half the world does not know how the other half lives, and does not want to. High up a certain

Yorkshire valley some years ago, a famous village character—sexton, tailor, barber, bell ringer, and general factotum—gave me an illustration of the fact that the ways of an older world still linger in the remote parts of the Yorkshire valleys. “Ye can’t think where I’ve been to-night?” said Tom. “Ye see yon road,” pointing to a spot about three miles distant on the southern slope of Pen-y-ghent, “I’ve been to meet a man there ’at cum six miles on t’ other side of t’ hill to be measured for a suit of clothes. I’m to tak t’ suit up yonder by next Saturday night and he will come and try ’em on, and if they fit he’ll tak ’em home.” “And is this all to go on on the roadside, Tom?” “Ay! for sure; do ye think we are bahn to build a fitting room up yon for t’ job?”

* *

A friend of mine was driving along a road in Craven when his attention was attracted by a mighty cawing in a field, and looking over a high stone wall he beheld an assemblage of all the crows of the neighbourhood. The most burly and venerable were arranged in a semi-circular line having a clear space in front, and in the space and about the centre of it two crows held an apparent culprit firmly by the wing. He was apparently up for trial for doing some deed the nature of which did not appear. The space behind the semi-circle of judges was filled up by the crow public, who were loud in their clamouring for summary justice on the offender, and after a mighty parley and probable quoting of precedents and such like, the whole assemblage arose as one crow and went for the unfortunate rascal between the twin gaolers, and plucked him limb from limb. Having done this, the business was concluded, the court adjourned, and the crowd dispersed to their ordinary avocations.

* *

Many years ago at Udford, on the Eamont, a then well-known fisherman hooked a young otter with a spinning

minnow, and having succeeded in getting within striking distance of the animal, found himself confronted by the two parent otters, which made a desperate effort to save their young one. But the angler triumphed and carried off his prize. "Christopher North" once caught an owl with a live mouse, (what Christopher was doing fishing with live mice is not clear,) anyhow, he hooked the owl, which sailed away serenely to a neighbouring barn, and passing in through a hole perched sedately and solemnly on a lofty rafter. With the aid of a terrier, and after a desperate struggle on the hay mow, in which it was difficult to tell which was owl, and which terrier, and which Christopher, the bird was finally secured, stuffed, and given to the Edinburgh Museum.

* *

A friend told me he was once fishing a pond for roach, using a set of small flies tipped with maggots. Having used up his maggots he went off to a friend at the other end of the pond for a fresh supply, laying his rod on the bank with the flies in the water. On his return he found he had hooked an eel, and, pulling it out rather too sharply, the fish flew overhead, and the tackle held fast round an overhanging bough; there the fish depended in the dusk, far above my friend's head. While he was considering how to put matters right, a bat took one of the other flies, and thus he had a bat and an eel up a tree at the same moment. He broke his cast and got both.

* *

It is in the nature of womankind, where'er you may roam, to deliberately play the thingummy with suffering man at least once a year. She begins by hiding every portable thing she can lay her hands on. Man—proud man, dressed in a new spring suit, goeth forth in the morning a light-hearted, unsuspecting victim, and returning as hungry as a pike in the cool of the evening, he finds his home broken up, and

everything gone but the misguided author of it all, the youngsters, and the domestics; they revel in it; they sit on the ends of travelling trunks, and perambulate about unconcernedly over whole penn'orths of tin tacks; then the doors are opened to a tribe of abandoned ruffians with step ladders and brushes, and fat women with buckets and soft soap, and the wreck is complete. They are going to make you comfortable, and you know it. One of their ways of doing it is to open every window in the house, with the object, it seems to me, of blowing the master into the next street.

THIRD EMPTYING.

PARODIES.

PARODIES.

THE LOST TROUT.

[WITH APOLOGIES TO A. A. PROCTER.]

Standing one day in the river,
I was casting my line and flees,
When I rose a trout gigantic,
That broke me with desp'rate ease.
I knew not what I was saying,
Or what you will think of me,
But I said one word in anger
Like the sound of a big, Big D.

It rose o'er the noisy river
Like the bang of a showman's drum,
For my cast of flies had vanished,
And my hands were cold and numb;
For that brute of a trout levanted
Like a runaway knock at the door,
And I knew we had parted for ever,
To meet in this world no more.

It went with four lovely killers,
Four at tuppence apiece,
And bolted away into distance
As if it would never cease.

I have fished—but I know 'tis useless—
For that one lost trout so fine
That dash'd down the surging river
With eightpen'orth of flies of mine.

THE ANGLER AND HIS FLY.

[AFTER LONGFELLOW.]

I made a long-cast sweep through the air ;
It stopped half way—I knew not where ;
So sudden it stopped I thought it might
Have hooked a haystack in its flight.

I heard a cuss word rise on the air ;
It came from a friend—I knew he was there ;
It began with big D, was deep and strong,
And rose in the twilight, loud and long.

Very soon afterwards, 'tis no joke,
I found my tail fly still unbroke,
And the barb of the hook, the story to end,
Was half an inch deep in the nose of my friend.

THREE OTHER FISHERS.

Three fishers went trailing out into the west,
Off by the railway, and out of the town ;
Each thought of the fly that would kill the best
In the moor-tinted fresh that was just coming down.
For women must work while husbands fish,
Though they don't catch one-tenth the trout they wish,
And an angler 's always groaning.

Three wives sat up till the midnight hour,
And longed for the trout that would come to the town,
And they gazed at the clock, and they looked for the shower
From each creel of the bonny trout, speckled and brown.
For men will fish, and women can't sleep
When husbands are wading in waters deep,
And chilled by the night wind moaning.

Three fishers came home as the clock struck three,
In the morning pale when the fresh went down,
And the women are waiting, but none of the three
Saw aught that the fishers brought home to the town.
And women must laugh if men will fish,
For they don't tell the truth quite so oft as we wish,—
So drat the whole lot and their groaning.

FOURTH EMPTYING.

SONGS.

SONGS.

COME BRING YOUR RODS.

(*Air*—"John Peel.")

[This song, which owes its popularity to the music, was first sung at the Tenth Annual Dinner of the Manchester Anglers' Association.]

Come bring your rods to the sweet green fields,
O, come, while the grey dawn the bright sun shields,
O, come, share the joy that each streamlet yields,
And we'll all fill our creels of a morning.

CHORUS (after each verse.)

For the day is awake, and the lark overhead,
The bright trout are moving o'er each gravel'y bed;
Come, anglers, arise! ere the dew-drop be fled,
And the sun spoil the Pride of the Morning.

Just for to-day let us fish, while we dream
That Care is drowned in the deep, deep stream,
And Hope kills Fear with her soft sweet beam,
As we all fill our creels of a morning.

Down where the mill-tail gently glides,
Behold how the March-brown gaily rides,
Lo! there, a "two-pounder" with silv'ry sides,
Which we'll put in our creel of a morning.

Our gentle craft is devoid of strife,
As a happy man and a loving wife,
And there is no boon like a quiet life,
Or a well-filled creel of a morning.

THE ANGLER'S INVITATION.

Come lads with me, your ledgers hide,
Fair blows the wind this April tide,
The streams runs free since winter died
So stern and wild ;
And glad is all the country side
As some young child.

Melodious birds sing all day long,
The river choruses their song,
All is pure, for nought is wrong
Where guile is lost ;
We've left behind the noisy throng
In barter lost.

Put on your minnow or your flies,
The clouds are soft, the trout will rise,
To-day we'll cheat their watchful eyes
By honest skill,
And safely landing many a prize,
Our baskets fill.

There's murder in the red-capped king,
The iron-blue, whose saucy wing
Full many a longing eye will bring
In trout and swallows ;
There's fortune in the dainty thing,—
And all that follows.

And should it fail we'll try again,
With moorgame rich from heathery glen,
Red hackle or dark water-hen,
 And purple snipe ;
And should these fail—why then
 We'll smoke a pipe,

And think how oft in Life's dull chart,
Is disappointment's keenest smart
Depicted by the angler's art—
 All cares and crosses ;
Some rises are to profit's part,
 But more are losses.

Oft when some golden prize we deem
Is safely hooked in luck's queer stream ;
Or when we wake from some sweet dream
 Well worth the wishing—
We find all gone save hope's bright beam,
 Yet still keep fishing.

But in Life's river, keen and strong,
For ever hurrying on the throng,
As young and old are borne along
 Its rapid current,
The angler's art, 'mid all the throng,
 Stands one deterrent.

Then let us fish, 'mong birds and flowers,
With curling winds and gentle showers ;
The world has given no sport like ours
 To sing its praises ;
The angler seeks not rosy bowers,
 But modest daisies.

And if misfortune's direful brand
Should strain Life's line—a single strand—
Oh! gentle be the stern command
 To death's dark night;
May sorrows fall like angler's hand,
 E'en just as light!

MY ROD AND I.

My rod and I are ancient friends,
 Long years we've held together,
Through life's bewild'ring odds and ends,
 But most in cloudy weather;
And, angler-like, both keen and true,
 In all good service ready;
In blustering storm, or cloudless blue,
 Our friendship's firm and steady.

And oft my faithful rod and I
 Have tramped with silk and feather,
When merry birds sang in the sky,
 By woodland and by heather;
And when we part, as part we must,
 And lifelong friendship sever,
Old Time may turn me into dust,
 Till then we're friends for ever.

FIFTH EMPTYING.

LETTERS.

LETTERS.

“DEAR SIR,—My husband is a fisherman. I suppose it is not strictly necessary to catch fish in order to be a fisherman, but that is partly what I want to know. His name is Frank; he is a dear, good soul, though I cannot help thinking that he takes advantage of my simplicity and good nature sometimes. I sometimes think you fishermen must be in league with one another, like the Freemasons, to conceal each other's failings and peccadilloes, because often when Frank and some friends get to talking about fishing, they seem to have caught very big fish that I never heard of before, and I am sure Frank ought to have told me if he had really caught them. I must confess that, truthful as I know him to be, the moment he begins talking about fishing he seems to be telling stories. Everything sounds probable enough, because I am sure he is a good fisher, only I never *see* all these fish. If anyone but he told such tales about his exploits, I am sure I should not believe them. Being my husband, I am bound to love and honour him, and I do. But what I want to know is this: Is it customary among fishermen to go out in the snow and rain, and, after fishing all day and catching about forty or fifty great big grayling, to give them all away to a less fortunate fisherman who has not caught any, because that is what Frank does regularly. I know he is kind-hearted to a degree, but I want some clear information on this point. I know his little

ways very well. When he gives me as an excuse for going into town again in the evening an important committee meeting on Church matters, or that it is lodge night, or that there is a very old friend from Australia at the club, or that he promised to attend a meeting for the purpose of raising a fund for decayed anglers, I am afraid I no more believe him than I do when he comes home from fishing on a January night, drenched to the skin and perished with cold, and says he has had first-rate sport, but, knowing I do not care for grayling, he has given them all to a sick friend. *Do you think he has?* That is what I want to know, because, though I do not believe there is a man breathing who can lay his hand on his heart and tell his wife he never told her a fib (as Mrs. Caudle reminded *her* husband), yet I do believe Frank does not tell me fibs, and it is only when I see what exaggerators fishermen seem to be that I get a little doubtful. Secondly, I want to know why you men are to have all the sport of fishing to yourselves? You permit us, out of your great condescension, to play an occasional game at billiards with you, and you are glad enough to get us to join you at tennis. I do not think we should look very elegant at cricket or on the football field, but, from what you write about angling, it would seem to be a sport in which we could join without any loss of womanly grace or dignity, and it is a sport anybody can manage. We should be at a disadvantage, as usual, with you men, because Frank has some horrid things he calls "waders," and I suppose it would be quite out of the question for us to wear them. I sometimes think you lords of Creation arrange your sports on purpose to keep us out. Before I conclude I must tell you that only once in eighteen months of our married life has my husband brought any fish home, and that one fish looked very like an ordinary herring with all the scales scraped off. Cook said it *was* a herring, but Frank laughed, and insisted it was a trout, though I must admit it tasted like herring.

Are there any herrings in the Wharfe? I shall not think any worse of Frank if I find he does tell me fibs about his fishing.

“HARRIET E——.”

“DEAR SIR,—Since I last wrote you a letter Frank has tried to make an angler of me and failed; he took me to a *horrid* place, with the river close by, and nothing else nearer than five miles; it rained all the time we were there, and Frank was in raptures, though, of course, I could not go out of the house; as for going on the grass that was out of the question. At the end of a week we nearly quarrelled, because I told him that when next we went away I hoped we would not go fishing, but would go somewhere on pleasure. The way he went on was shameful to see, but he always does that. Indeed that is what I want to write about, so that if you publish this your misguided readers may see how very patient the patient angler is. And you will please understand that this is not fancy, but fact—indeed, mother says I have not painted him *half* what he really is. Say it is a fine morning; Frank is going fishing. I am upstairs; he is down, just ready to start—indeed, I expect to see him pass down the garden walk every minute with his rod and basket. Suddenly I hear a commotion in the room under me, and I know he has lost something. Such a banging I never heard. ‘Harriet,’ he roars to me, ‘Harriet! Harriet!!’ louder each time, ‘where have you put my reel? I wish to goodness you would leave things where you find them.’ ‘I saw it,’ I reply, ‘in that room not five minutes ago.’ ‘Saw it! of course you saw it; I knew that; if you hadn’t seen it I should not have been looking for it when I ought to be fishing—it would have been here.’ Then he turns my work-basket inside out, upsets bobbins, pins, buttons, pincushion, bodkins, worsted, threads, darning needles, thimble, all in one dreadful tumble on the floor;

lastly, he stands the basket on its head and kicks it violently. 'Not there, you see,' he says, 'I wonder why women can't keep their hands off things when they know very well they have no business to meddle with 'em.' Then he goes to the what-not, rakes off two photos, brings down a lot of shells, breaks a fairy lamp, says a horrid word, and kicks the basket again. 'If it had not been for you putting it away in one of your everlasting tidying crazes I might have had twenty fish by now.' 'Well, my dear, do not be impatient.' 'There is no impatience about it,' he shouts; 'nobody ever can find anything in this house; only yesterday I had to look an hour for a hammer.' Then he rushes upstairs, bangs the furniture about, whirls the pillows round, and actually looks into a brilliantine bottle for a reel weighing a pound, I should think. Then he looks under the bed, bumps his head, and says another horrid word worse than ever, and gets dust in his throat, I think, for he coughs terribly. 'If I do not sack both those rascally servants and have this house better arranged, I will see,' he says. 'Why, what are you thinking about?' I enquired. 'Thinking about?—thinking about? I am thinking about that confounded reel; if you had left it where I put it, I should not have been here now, like a blithering idiot, without the means to land a fish on a day like this; has not been such a day for years.' Just then the reel fell out of the pocket of his mackintosh hanging over the foot of the bed. 'There, Frank, I told you I had not meddled with it.' 'Meddled with it, who said you had meddled with it? but you knew where it was well enough,' and with that he rushed off without a word. 'Are you not going to say 'Good morning,' I called to him. 'No, I am not; I am going out to buy a dozen reels. I will see if I cannot have a day's fishing when I want it, without having to pull the house down because of your confounded habit of putting things where nobody can find 'em.' And with that he goes

off and returns late at night with one reel and two small fish. Oh, you men!—Yours truly,

HARRIET E——."

"SIR,—Things are really coming to such a pass that I can no longer refrain from writing to you about the way you fishermen are going on, and my husband in particular. Oh, you men! if you don't know how to enjoy yourselves and leave your poor wives out in the cold all the time, it is a pity, *there!* Frank says it is almost all your fault, and that if you would be quiet the others would be quiet too, and we poor *slaves* might see more of our husbands. Unknown to Frank I have been keeping a record of the dinners he has been to without me since the middle of November, and find it comes to nineteen angling dinners, three club dinners, a masonic initiation, and what he calls a 'financial refresher,' whatever that may be. I suppose it really signifies a gorgeous banquet. Mr. Goschen was there, and Frank paid a whole guinea for his ticket. Not that he told me so—catch him at it—but I *found it out*, you may be sure. There is nothing mean looking into such matters, particularly when one has to stay at home through it all. I should like to know very much what you men find to do and say at these dinners, buttering one another up, as you call it, all the time, no doubt. One thing I *can't* make out, and that is that the morning after the masonic initiation, Frank could not find his singlet anywhere, and he can give no explanation of it to this day. I think it is time the *law* gave us poor women *power* to enquire into these things. What I wish to write about is to protest against this so-called contemplative man's recreation, as you call it. What do you contemplate, I should like to know? Oysters and ice pudding? Larranagas and Curaçoa? Pine-apple and Romànee? Beauties of nature indeed! Triumphs of apoplexy more likely. Calling yourselves generous, unselfish,

gentle, and all the rest of it, and going on as you do. I wonder if *all* the men go home smelling so *dreadfully* of cigars. I find from some of the *menús* Frank has brought home and left about (he generally locks them up carefully) you began with native oysters and went on to turtle soup, you wicked wretches! Why, once not long since when he *condescended* to let me have a little dinner party at home, just mother and three or four intimate friends, I prepared a pleasant surprise for him, as I thought, and got some real turtle soup. The purveyor sent to London for it and charged me a guinea for a quart, and Frank went on like a *madman*, I declare. After they had all gone he carried on scandalously; wanted to know if I thought he was *MADE* of money, and walked out of the room slamming the door behind him almost enough to bring the globes off the chandelier. And yet you see he can go and *bathe* in turtle for anything I know, and when I attempt to be generous, what a bother there is; wanted to know, indeed, if *mother* would have given *him* turtle soup, and so on, just as if poor old mother had had anything to do with it. I have no doubt there are other wives whose opinions on these goings on are quite as strong as mine if they would only speak out. Going fishing a whole day, too, for a paltry little grayling in such wintry weather as we have been having, and coming home looking starved to death, and with such a dreadful cough as he has. Of course he *said* he was not a bit cold, quite warm, and all the rest of it. I would just have told him my mind that night but that he had promised me a new sealskin, and he flies into such tempers about nothing. But that is just the way of all you men; you are all selfish together. However, I have had my say, not that I suppose it will do any good, but it is a comfort to say it at any rate.

HARRIET E——."

The Editor to his fair correspondent :—

“MADAM,—If you will forgive me saying so, you are living in what Douglas Jerrold called the kitchen of imagination. It is all right about the grayling fishing ; many are cold, but few are frozen. I have, however, published your letter, and am now busy ‘contemplating’ Frank’s delight when he reads it.”

“SIR,—After my last letter to you, Frank was very rude, and called me horrible names. He said I was *cacoethes scribendi* ; and, as he will not tell me what it means, I know it must imply something shocking. Indeed, he went on so that I almost made up my mind to write and let you know the trouble I had got into, and I told him so. Whereupon he said there was no stopping a woman when she began,—whether it was talking or writing, it did not matter. If she had ‘amen’ to say, she would not say it under four pages of notepaper ; and I was never so hurt in my life as when he coolly told me one of the reasons why a merciful Providence had given women no beards was because they could not hold their tongues long enough to be shaved—as if Providence ever thought of such a thing. And then I wrote and asked mother to come and stay with us, just to serve him out, because she can keep him in his proper place, and the next night he came home with a bagpipes, and said he was going to learn the instrument, because he knew mother was fond of music. He practised on the fearful affair for two hours the first night, when a note came in from Mrs. Brown, who lives next door, to say if Frank was no better in the morning she thought he had better be taken to the infirmary. This made him worse than ever, and he continued to make such horrible noises that two or three of the neighbours begged of him to desist, and I promised to telegraph to mother not to come on any account on condition

that he gave the pipes away. So we settled it amicably ; but you see the trouble that came through my interference with his fishing.

Well, since I wrote to you last, Frank has had what he called an angling party, and they smoked to such an extent that I cannot, do what I will, get the smell of stale tobacco out of the curtains and carpets. What they drank I have never been able to make out. Before his guests arrived (of course it was a bachelor's affair) he told me they would drink nothing but cold tea, and cook was brewing tea in the kitchen for hours before the time fixed for the commencement of what I annoyed him very much by calling a debauch ; though how they contrived to get so uproariously merry on such a nauseous beverage completely puzzles me. But that is not all ; at least three quarts of cold tea were sent up to them, and nearly, if not quite, all of it came down again next morning. They appear to have turned some of it into an ordinary sherry bottle before consuming it,—Frank says entirely as a matter of fancy ; but, I must confess, there was a very curious odour in all the tumblers, and what they wanted so many jugs of hot and cold water for I have not been able to make out, as I was rigidly excluded from any participation in the entertainment. On the bottle into which they appear to have poured the tea was a label, which, I must say, seemed to have been prepared by one of the party, and the following is a copy :—

‘C O L D T E A ,

As prepared expressly for the use of Anglers

BY

DIDDLE BROTHERS,

KEIGHLEY.’

There is something suspicious about the whole business, which I am determined to find out, and, in the first place, I wish you to tell me in strict confidence whether the beverage which I see so frequently alluded to in the North of England as 'Keighley Cold Tea' really means Scotch whisky; if so, I think I shall be able to understand a good many things which now perplex me in regard to Frank's party.

HARRIET E——."

SIXTH EMPTYING.

SAYINGS.

SAYINGS.

A trout that is not hungry will no more look at an angler's bait than a respectable man will look at a giblet pie.

* *

Patience and hope are two cardinal virtues in anglers especially, and, like original sin and the whooping-cough, every angler has 'em some time or other.

* *

A fiddle is like a baby, there is only one good one in the world, and every mother and every fiddler has it.

* *

The only place I know where you can rely on finding Nothing is in the bottle where the whisky was. You may shake your head, my teetotal friend, there is nothing in it.

* *

You cannot catch fish if they are opposed to the idea, any more than you can reduce the hump on a dromedary's back by linseed-poulticing it.

* *

You might as well look for whiskers on sardines as expect to rise a good trout after he has once had a fair look at you.

It is a grand sport, a noble sport ; it is the only sport of which it can be said that the man who can wander about a riverside in thunder, lightning, hail, rain, wind, and snow, or sit all day without bite or sup on a wet sod in a cramp-inviting position, surrounded by a fog thick with influenza, asthma, and rheumatic gout, is the same man who cannot be induced to go to church because the pews are uncomfortable.

* *

The fly-fishing novice who goes out believing he is provided with an unrivalled collection of death-dealing tackle and flies which must certainly empty the river, is about as foolish as that other fellow who thinks a grass-widow is green.

* *

I remember asking a Loch Leven boatman if the numerous pike in the loch often took the spinning baits of trout anglers. "Dom them," said he, "the greedy brutes would tak' o' the Sawbath day."

* *

I once heard a farmer's wife say it was possible to get *manured* to anything.

* *

All stuff, like a charity dinner.

* *

"Who made this vile body?" said the parson to the little girl. "Mi mother made mi body, sir, and mi sister Sallie made mi skirt."

* *

A man who cannot pray without a velvet cushion to kneel on, might as well keep his mouth shut.

I never saw a merry party round a pump.

* *

It seems to me that the rule from the Old Book, "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you," is in imminent danger in these rapid times of being altered into "Do others before they have time to do you."

* *

"Catch anything yesterday, Johnny?" "No; not until I got home."

* *

We have to take things as they come and when they come, and cannot help ourselves to anything without fear of the police or the missis—the former for preference.

* *

What is the anatomical peculiarity which makes it impossible for more than one lady out of a hundred to raise a cup of tea to her lips without sticking up her little finger defiantly?

* *

I have always found it a good plan to believe less about anything than one is told; the only time when you may safely believe more than you are told is when a lady, in the strictest confidence, tells you her exact age.

* *

In angling, the weather is as absolutely master of the situation as a first baby, which, by the way, is always an angel; all the rest get peppermint, and, if need be, smacked.

* *

Hope is like the dandelion, it will thrive in cinders.

The scoffer has said that Ananias was the first angler. In my opinion he was either a book hawker or a company promoter.

* *

Cold? I have been as stiff as Lot's wife after the accident happened, but that is all part of the fun.

* *

I would write to the papers on the subject, but that we have no daily paper in our village, though they tell me there is a sewing meeting, which is just as good.

* *

We Christians all love one another, but, naturally, we love some less than others, and that you cannot deny. A pretty kettle of fish there would be if we loved some more than others; if you are unable to follow this reasoning your mother-in-law might supply the necessary information.

* *

I am very well aware there are men, and some of them anglers, too, who tell us this is a practical age, that poetry is dead, and that the only aim and end of angling is to catch fish. They might as well tell us the aim and end of smoking is to be sick.

* *

A juvenile of my acquaintance who had been contemplating Christmas in its most dreadful aspect, described it as "only a greedy Sunday."

* *

Next to an ambitious youth struggling lovingly with a reluctant moustache, there is no more pathetic sight than a six-foot man vainly endeavouring to inveigle a three-ounce trout.

Knowledge is like money, its chief value ought to lie in the power it gives us to enrich others.

* *

Facts will not lie, though they are handy to lie with.

* *

Slander, according to a Scotch farmer, is one good woman telling an ower true tale about another.

* *

It makes a great difference whether you weigh your fish on dry land or in the water.

* *

I never heard a lady swear with her lips, but I have seen many a one do it most successfully with her eyes.

* *

It is the little things in life that tell—little brothers, for instance.

* *

A wife's farewell is often nothing more than "Buy, buy."

* *

One of the most awkward quandaries I know is that of having knocked at the wrong door and not being able to make up your mind whether to run away or stop and apologise.

* *

"Johnny," said one boy to another after two hours' patient fishing from the bank without so much as a nibble, "I have a bite." "Oh! jolly," said Johnny; "is it a trout?" "No; it is a flea."

It is not true that married men live longer than bachelors, but they seem to.

* *

It is not safe to judge a man's character from the sermon he preaches at you; wait until you come to swopping horses with him.

* *

"Them 'at knaws nowt, fears nowt." (Yorkshire.)

* *

Telegram from a proud husband to his wife's best friend :
"Come at once; great upset; another bald head."

* *

A man who is a fool to-day may be relied on to be a fool next week.

* *

Solomon slept with his fathers. An ancient country woman said if he had been as rich as they said he was, he might have afforded a bed of his own.

* *

He gives twice who gives quickly. "Then," said the West Riding man, "I will tak' time to think on it, an' happen I shall save half on it."

* *

"Cab, sir?" "No, thank you; I'm in a hurry." "Oh! that's it; begorra, ye've more time than money, at any rate."

* *

Rich! He was worth nothing. He hadn't as much land as would start a lark.

I was a bad lad when I was a youngster ; indade, I often wonder now that the divil had time to be anywheres else for looking after me.

* *

Some men think they are smart enough to steal the cross off a donkey's back.

* *

There is no pocket in a shroud.

* *

"Do you know where boys go to who go fishing on a Sunday?" said the parson to a band of unregenerate culprits. "Yes, sir," said the leader; "they mostly go to Robson's Rock; there's a gey fine lot of fish about there."

* *

"What sort of person was this Mrs. Montague Barners who called, Parker? Was she a lady?" "Oh! yes'm; perfeck lady. She wore a lot o' rings and smelt o' sherry."

* *

A youngster of six had been told by his governess that he must pray to be made a better boy, and thus, that night at her knee, he did it: "Please make Bertie a better boy; and if at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

SEVENTH EMPTYING.

STORIES.

STORIES.

Two anglers were fishing from a boat on an Irish lough, the boatman being, as usual, at the oars in the middle. The surface of the lough was very placid, when a fine trout rose about twenty yards away, and one of the anglers, making a long cast, succeeded in dropping his tail fly into the middle of the widening rings on the water. In an instant the fish rose again at the angler's fly, and was struck and just touched, and then was gone. "Tare an' ounds," said the boatman. "Ah! that was a grand fish, yer honner. Yez'll not see the likes of that fish again to-day. Oh! be the powers, he was a fine gentleman, he was." "A big fish, was he, Pat?" "Troth, an' he was, sorr; he was the full of a door." "As large as that? Did you see him?" "Shure, an' I did, sorr; troth, sorr, he was a rale treasure of a trout." "How big would he be, do you think?" "Troth, sorr, I can't say to two foot; but yer honner's clothes wouldn't have fitted him."

* * *

If it has ever been your lot to travel from Skipton to the head of Wharfedale, or *vice versa*, by one of the conveyances dignified by the name of a 'bus, you will know how, on wet and busy fair days, an arrangement designed to carry ten people in moderate comfort is capable of expanding its holding capacity by any number up to, say, twenty-five,

every passenger being provided at the same time with bulky impedimenta, and, if you are particularly lucky, the cargo may include a couple of live calves in sacks. The *tout ensemble* is not imposing—it is distinctly alarming; the vehicle lies over to starboard or port, like a yacht in a strong breeze, and here and there a head only can be seen peeping out of a mass of hampers and packages in the trap. On a certain occasion when things were in this condition, at the door of the “The Tennant’s Arms” at Kilnsey, many of the passengers being anglers returning from the Dales, there suddenly appeared at the door of the inn a charming and really beautiful girl of 18. She looked longingly at the badly congested vehicle, and, although the passengers were already in a state of semi-suffocation, there were at least half a dozen prepared at once to make room for her. “Is there room?” she asked in the sweetest of voices, with a delightful smile that begot a universal “Yes, certainly!” “Then come along, uncle,” she said; and uncle came along, a ponderous matter of 16 stones. He ascended the steps of the vehicle, and having squeezed himself in, or rather on, the damsel kissed her hand gaily and retired to the recesses of the inn, while her avuncular relative took snuff in a gale of wind and language all the way to Skipton, and nobody had a word to say about that charmer’s little dodge.

Two garrulous old women were chattering away about everything and everybody, when one of them asked the other what sort of a thing a Jubilee was (this was in 1887). “Well,” said her crony, “it’s in this way: When you have been married twenty-five years it is a silver wedding, and when you have been married fifty years it’s a golden wedding; and when your husband dies it’s a Jubilee.” Oh! woman, woman! “She speaks poignards, and every word stabs.”

A doctor (not the one you know) was going his rounds in an Irish hospital, and, after feeling a patient's pulse, remarked to the nurse at the bedside, "Ah! he is much better. I thought the new treatment would do him good." "Yes," said the nurse, "he is better, doctor; but it is not the same man. Yesterday's man is dead, and this one has been put in his place." "Ah!" said the doctor, "different patient, eh?—well, same treatment," and he walked on.

* *

A certain good old parson passing the night in an Irish hotel was the occupant of one of the three single beds in the same room, two of which were in possession of strangers when he arrived. As soon as the light was out one of the other two lifted up his nose and initiated a snoring performance, the like of which probably no one ever heard. The tumult increased as the night wore on, while the other two lay awake and listened in awe-stricken amazement and self abasement. Soon after midnight when the audience were silently ruminating on the advisability of climbing out of the window and spending the rest of the night on the roof, the snorer suddenly turned over in bed, gave a hideous groan and became silent; and then the parson heard the other man exclaim with deep fervour, "He's dead, thank heaven, he's dead;" the conclusion being that you can now and then have too much of anything.

* *

A trombone player who had been at a festive gathering, still endeavouring to tootle as he wended his way home, had occasion to cross a field in which, unknown to him, was a ferocious bull. The animal roused to a proper spirit of rivalry by the sound of the instrument sent forth a sonorous bellow. The trombone player, in the dark and unable to see whence the noise came, listened for a moment and then said, "Who told ye that ye were a player? aall blow ye low

E for a quart," and forthwith he swelled out the trombone to its fullest length and blew as if it had been the crack of doom. The bull declining to be thus overcome by clamour, put up his tail, put down his head, and coming at a speed of 25 miles an hour, knocked the trombone player and the trombone into cocked hats, and the proprietor finding himself not much worse gathered up the remains of the fearful instrument and triumphantly remarked, "Ye may be a very strong mon, but ye are no musician."

* *

A certain reprobate in his last moments turned round to the parson who was ministering to his wants, and said, "Ah! sir, if I'd only my time to come over again, I wouldn't go and waste my money in anybody's beershop; I'd keep a pub of my own."

* *

The regular minister of a chapel over in the States had exchanged pulpits with an itinerant, and the latter was not to the taste of the congregation. The minister's hat was passed round as a collecting box at the finish, and when in due course after making the circuit of the chapel it came back to the pulpit he turned it upside down to show the brethren there was not a single cent in it; then looking towards the ceiling he said with deep fervour, "I thank God I got back my hat from this congregation."

* *

An old fisherman I met once wandering about the marshes in the estuary of a western river, told me of a highly original method in use there for trapping wild ducks. They cut in the earth small square holes just about the size of the bird; they dig a number of these holes and bait the bottom of each of them with a few grains of wheat. The birds coming on the feeding grounds find the holes, observe

the wheat, and are seized of an avaricious desire to possess it. But the cunning digger of the hole has made it just too deep for the long-necked bird to reach it. He stands on the edge of the hole, ducks his nose into it, cranes his neck, fails to touch it, tries again, overbalances himself and falls neck and crop into it. Exit from this position is impossible, and the downy digger comes along next day, lifts the bird out, and forthwith corkscrews his neck for him. "But," said the fishermen, concluding, "we can only catch the male birds this way; the females are much too cunning, though we found out a way to snare them." "And how," asked a lady present, "do you manage it?" "Well," said he, "we put a bit of looking-glass at the bottom of the hole."

There is a homely, honest comfort about an angler's inn known only to the craft. Times have changed greatly since Shenstone "*Travelled life's dull round*," but in the matter of angling inns, and particularly in the north, the sentiment embodied in the poet's lines is appreciable to a great extent. I think I know them all from Ballyshannon to Christiania, in that phenomenal country where a man can eat and drink like a mediæval fighting-cock for 7d., and where you may even leave an umbrella out of doors all night and find it where you left it next morning—which goes to prove, I suppose, either that the climate is very dry, or that they are very poor umbrellas. But we set out to discuss angling inns. It has been said (by a mother-in-law probably) that the shortest way to a man's heart is down his throat; it is a libel as any man will tell you. In a case of this kind women should not judge us too harshly; we are weak mortals and they rule us. Probably the remark quoted was in retaliation for the discovery of the unquestionable fact that there never yet was a man with a wife who could cook as well as his mother could.

If you are not accustomed to the ordinary angling inn of the northern dales, you will be surprised at the simple excellence of the fare, the matchless white of the napery, and the absolute cleanliness and old-fashioned comfort in each corner of the place. You may, indeed, in June, when the country is all like a garden, sit in this quaint bay window overhanging the river, and look out on a wild sea of apple blossom and neighbouring dog rose, while the scent of hawthorn perfumes every corner of the house. Compare such a spot with the place in which many a town or city man is compelled for weary months to take his mid-day meal. It is a stuffy restaurant; a waiter with a bulbous nose made in a decanter, and wearing a halo of gin and bitters around him as big as a circus, says—"Yessirroast-beefsossigerollmuttonofthejointamsangwidgepastry." You haven't the slightest idea what it is, but you say you will have it, and you get it—and you wish later you hadn't.

And the scenes one witnesses and the narratives one sometimes hears in these angling inns. Just observe the entrance and the general demeanour of the approaching young man; it is known in the village he has caught a big fish, an enormous trout, a perfect demon of a trout, and, as a matter of fact, it really weighs two pounds; it is in ill-condition, but there isn't a brass band in the universe can provide you with as many airs as the proud possessor of that attenuated fish. Of course, if you or I had caught it we should have returned it as unfit to take. Oh! certainly; without any question; there is no doubt about it; we have done so often, and larger fish than that.

Have I not seen an angler with a Gargantuan appetite sitting calmly down to a paste-board pie, deliberately brought from a neighbouring town by an inconsiderate joker? A hot potatoe inserted through the lid underneath, produced the necessary appearance of heat from the little hole in the upper crust. Long and manfully, with tearful

objurgations, did he wrestle to make an impression with knife and fork on the unyielding crust, and then finding out the trick, he seized a carving knife, and we cleared out to obviate murder.

Did I not once hear how two bosom friends had quarrelled over a practical joke played by one of them. A practical joker by the way does not keep his friends, he sells them. One very dark night, one friend induced the other to accompany him along the edge of the river on some pretext, having previously placed a heavy stone in such a position that it would fall from the bank into five feet of water at the slightest touch. As they passed the spot, the practical performer managed to get two or three yards in the rear, touched the stone, which fell with a mighty splash, dashed quickly and quietly back into the darkness, and his friend missing him, of course, thought he was in the river. There was no answer to the alarmed cries for "John," so like a brave man he plunged into the hole to find his drowning friend, and the first thing he laid hold of was John's hat, carefully thrown after the stone, and when at length he was unable to recover John's body, and in due time reached the inn to break the doleful news, he found that faithless friend as dry as a wooden god, seated before the fire as placidly as a baby of six months old. There is something wrong about this idea, I think, but you can alter it according to your own fancy.

Did I not myself once take a hand in an absurd practical joke at Howietown, Ullswater, on a very old friend who had mortally offended nine of us by appearing on Sunday in such an out-of-the-way place in a velveteen coat, white waistcoat, knickerbockers, and patent leather shoes. Considering we were all as usual in the very oldest apparel we possessed, things for which any sane rag man would not have offered more than one shilling and thrippence, it was unforgivable, and when he took to setting night lines and dimmed the

glory of the white waistcoat, we resolved to be revenged on our own ground, and with the assistance of one or two others about the inn, we were; for the following is an authentic list of what there was on his night line when he drew it from the lake early on Monday morning:—1st, a perch with his back fin cut off and carefully stitched on underneath; 2nd, a sole; 3rd, a bloater in an advanced stage of decomposition; 4th, an eel with a row of shirt buttons down his back; 5th, a small crab with a bit of blue ribbon attached to his hard bosom; 6th, and last, a flat iron. And as we gazed at the victim from behind neighbouring trees, while he surveyed the spoil with the air of a man who was not quite clear whether it was a joke or the jimjams, somebody shouted “Sic transit gloria Mundi morning and the white waistcoat.”

* *

With regard to cold weather, did you ever hear this? A village Scot passed his minister with a cheery “Good morning,” and the remark, “It’s cauld.” “Ay, ay, Sandy,” was the answer, “many are cauld, but few are chosen.” “Ah, weel, minister, if ye are no chosen, ye’ll no be long cauld.”

* *

A certain keen angler in one of the Dales, a parson who had married a Scotch wife, had had a day’s angling with another clerical friend, and after dinner they sat talking over old college days and other things, including an odd tumbler or two, until at length the host suggested that his guest should remain all night. A violent private demonstration of grimaces, frowns, and head shakes from his better half against the proposal did not suffice to stop his pressing request that his friend would stay, and eventually he consented. Just before parting for the night, the good lady went off for a Bible, and almost at the same moment the

guest slipped out of the room into the hall to take off his boots, and, whilst stooping at the business, his face and form hidden from the returning and indignant lady, she mistook him for her husband and gave him a tremendous crack with the book on his bald cranium, saying, at the same moment, "There, that's for asking him to stay a' nicht." Thus things were made pleasant for him.

* *

Two little girls were getting ready for school, when one of them chanced to see the clock at five minutes to nine. "Oh! Dolly," said the younger, "we shall be late, let us bese kneel down and pray we shan't." "No," said the other, "let us run along and pray as we go;" so they ran, and practical sense triumphed.

* *

It was a fond parent reading a young hopeful's letter, and thus he began:—"Dear dad,—The first thing I saw when I got here was Psyche." "Gosh!" said the old man, as he put down the letter and let his glasses fall, "that boy will never learn; and after all his schooling, too. P-s-y-c-h-e; what a way to spell fish."

* *

An Englishman and two Scots were travelling in a railway train together. The Englishman ran down Scotland and everything in it, particularly the dirty parts of Glasgow. A Scotchman said all Scotch cities were not like Glasgow, and instanced Aberdeen. Then that Englishman arose in his might and thus delivered himself: "Aberdeen! I lodged there once for two years; the houses are granite, the streets are granite, the people are granite, and if anybody has a baby they give it a granite ball to play with for fear it should break it. I had a granite landlady," he continued,

"and one day her son asked me to go out with him for a day's fishing. I bought the rods, the lines, and the basket, provided the lunch, and paid railway fares and a tip to the keeper; he dug up the worms in somebody else's garden with a borrowed spade. I caught fourteen trout and he caught nothing. When we got home I told my landlady to cook two of the trout for my tea, and she could have the rest. She did so, charging me 9d. for the dripping in which my two were fried, and selling the remaining dozen to the fishmonger round the corner."

* *

A friend of mine gave me this as an incidence of good nature in an Irish policeman. Two officers in a Dublin street were arguing as to the corkscrewy gait of a female who was walking a short distance ahead of them. "She's dhrunk, I tell you," said No. 1. "She's not," said No. 2. "Oh! by the powers, she's dhrunk enough," repeated No. 1. "She's not, I tell you," repeated No. 2, "she's not dhrunk; she's got a crooked heel to her shoe."

* *

A "native" in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield, in attendance temporarily on some trout-rearing ponds, found a fish dead on the bank of the reservoir, having apparently fallen out, as men sometimes fall in. When the man who found the fish was asked if it was dead when he first saw it, he replied, "Oh! yes, it must have been dead some time as it was quite cold."

* *

There was once a negro gentleman on whom the difference 'twixt mine and thine sat lightly. To him said the minister, "Sambo, I am very glad to hear you are a reformed character, and that you have not stolen any hens of late." "No,

massa ; me not rob a single hen roost for six weeks past." "That's right," said his spiritual adviser, "continue in the right way and you will earn the esteem of all men." "Golly !" said Sambo as the minister left him, "he berry nearly had me that time ; if he'd 'a said ducks, he'd 'a had me."

* *

One of a party of three men working on a bog in Ireland is said to have been rudely aroused from his mid-day siesta by a cry from the second man that the third man had fallen into the bog and needed instant help. "How deep is he in?" "Up to his knees," was the answer. "Och ! be jabers," said he, "that's nothing at all ; many's the time I have been deeper than that." "True for you, Pat, that might be," answered the other, "but come and catch hould and give a help, for poor Mike's in head first."

* *

A sexton in Aberdeenshire, (my Scotch friends must forgive me—it is only my play, as the cabman said of his horse when the infuriated animal kicked the entire front of the vehicle in) charged 30s. for dues. The friends of the deceased complained to the minister of the overcharge, and the minister rebuked the sexton smartly, whereupon Tammias replied, "Weel, ye see, sir, the wye was this: When the corp and me was twa lunes, he cheated me out of 30s. in the truck of a watch, and, ye see, it was my last chance, and if I hadna gotten't off him noo I wouldna a' gotten it ava."

* *

A certain angler of a contemplative turn of mind was ruminating in the garden in the twilight of a June evening, when, in turning the corner of the building, he came into violent collision with an absent-minded beetle going in the opposite direction. This particular beetle, according to the

gentleman's version of the encounter, must have weighed about half a pound, and as it struck him full in the eye, the optic was at once closed for alterations and repairs. After it—the eye, not the beetle—had been doctored up with brown paper and vinegar, and raw steak and other remedies suitable to these occasions, the one-eyed gentleman sat for a long time in the presence of his companions wrapped in profound meditation, and in response to an inquiry on the subjects of his thoughts, he said, “I was just thinking that, though accidents occur now and then, nature is tolerably well ordered on the whole. What a mercy it is, for instance, in my case, that cows can't fly.”

* *

You know what the parish clerk said to his vicar, when the old gentleman expressed his intention to put up the prayer for rain. “Very weel, sir, just as ye like; but it's not a bit o' use praying for rain as long as t' wind sticks i't east.”

* *

Two men were fishing on a north country river—one possessing the needful licence, the other without it. They were hard at work on one of their favourite streams when they perceived the water-bailiff coming along the bank. No sooner was he observed than one of the anglers came out of the river, got on to firm ground, and took to his heels as fast as his legs would carry him. The keeper, perceiving what was the matter, at once gave chase, and, after a hard run of half a mile, succeeded in overtaking and collaring his man. “Your name and address, please?” “Brown,” said the culprit. “Christian name as well,” said the bailiff, writing it all down. “Malachi,” said the captured one. “Address?” This was given. “Ah!” said the bailiff, “very well; you have not got a licence, I suppose?” “Oh, yes! I have,” was the answer; “here it is.” “Then what the dickens

did you run away for?" and then it all flashed upon him, but the other fellow was two miles away when the keeper got back to the spot where he had last seen him.

* *

A Scotch angler had hooked a big salmon in the Tay, and the fight with the fish was being closely watched by two gentlemen—non-anglers—from a neighbouring hotel. After about a quarter-of-an-hour, during which the angler occasionally rushed into the river up to his chin, the salmon came near enough for an attempt to gaff it; the attempt was a bad one—the line was cut, and the fish slapped his tail and sailed away. Thereupon the disgusted angler fell upon his face and grovelled on the ground. "Eh! mon," said he, "what a fule I am. Eh! to miss yon grand fush. Eh! was ever siccan a misfortune? Eh! I'm a born fule. Eh! deary me, what a fule I am," and so on. "Come, come," said one of the gentlemen, "get up and be a man, Sandy. By the violence of your lamentations you might have some alarm for your soul." The dejected Highlander caught only the last word, and, leaping to his feet, screamed like an apoplectic bagpipe—"Sole, man! Sole, dae ye say? I'd hae ye ken yon fish was a sawmon, and worth a hundred soles!"

* *

A certain Yorkshire nobleman carried a couple of his fishing rods to a station on the North Eastern line, intending to send them to a distant town to be mended. Standing for a minute at the bookstall, he was thus familiarly accosted by a beery stranger, a labouring man—"Catcht owt?" "I have not been fishing," said his lordship. "Wheer, wheer are ye bahn to fish?" queried the inebriate. "I am not going fishing." This as he turned on his heel—"Of coursh not; ezackly; ye'v jusht browt t' rods out to blind t' missus."

Once upon a time at a riverside inn somewhere, say in New Guinea, a number of Yorkshire anglers were seated before the fire smoking, laughing, chatting. Among them was one who had just come, and he was tired and wanted to go to bed. At 10-0 p.m. he enquired if his bedroom was ready. He was told it would be ready "shortly." At 10-30 he received for an answer "not yet;" at 11-0 "soon;" at 11-30 he heard the cheerful news it would be ready directly now, as they had just finished washing the sheets.

* *

Said a Scotch minister, bilious and long visaged, to a boy who was fishing on the Sawbath Day, "My boy, what wull your fayther say when he kens ye fish o' the Lord's Day?" "I dinna ken; ye mon just ask him." "And whaur is he?" "He is just yon i' the garden." "What! yon puir auld mon with his back sae bent?" "Ay, that's my fayther, he is just digging me some mair worms, ye ken."

* *

A shock-headed lad rushed into the parson's study one night and said, "My mother wants you to come and bury mi fayther." "Dear me!" said the clergyman, "is he dead? when did he die?" "About seven weeks sin'" said the boy. The parson's hair stood on end. "He must," said he, with a cough, "be in a dreadful state." "Not he," said the lad, "he's reyt enough; we were just in t' middle o' hay time when he deed, and my mother hadn't time to bother wi' him, so she just salted him and turned him o'er once or twice, and he's as sweet as a posy."

* *

I recall a yarn respecting an Irishman who went, not to his own priest, but to the priest of a neighbouring church, and said, "Av ye please, your reverence, would ye mind

praying for a wee drop of rain next Sunday? Sorra a thing 'll grow in my garden with the hate o' the weather." "I'm sorry to hear that, Pat," said the priest, "but why don't you ask Father Mooney, your own priest, and not me?" "Ah! sure, your reverence, that's just it; what's the good in axing him to pray for rain wi' them cocks o' hay standing on his lawn?"

* *

A company of working men with whom I sat one evening got on to the subject of large appetites, and one of them told this story:—One member of a company made a wager he knew a man who could polish off a turkey at one sitting, and to the man they all went in a body. He was in bed; but, being aroused, he put his head out of his window and enquired what was wanted. "Bill," said the man who had made the bet, "I want thee to come down and do me a bit of a favour." "What is it?" "I want thee to come and eat a turkey." "Well, Jack," said the man from the window, "I should like to oblige thee, but I have had rather a heavy supper; I've just eaten a young cawf."

* *

Heard on a river bank in a thunderstorm:—Angler, with a steel-centred cane-built rod, who has been talking incessantly about flies, and hair, and gut for ten days, until everybody has had more than enough of it, thus says to his friend, as they hurry off to shelter: "I don't half like this steel rod in my hand in a thunderstorm; one of us may be killed." "Well," says the other, "if you are killed you won't be able to talk any more, and if I am killed I cannot hear you, so pray let us not hurry."

* *

"Whisky," said the philosophic negro, speaking, no doubt, from experience, "will give you a headache, but a

headache won't give you whisky." Perhaps this sound reflection was in the mind of a very intimate personal friend on an occasion years ago just above the falls on the Wharfe at Kilnsey. We agreed to meet for lunch at that spot on the stroke of noon. He sat on a rock in the centre of the river and handed out the victuals. Business proceeded with regularity and satisfaction for some time, until he got the screw top off his flask. At that moment he lost his balance and fell backwards into nearly three feet of water. Nothing was visible of him in the rushing stream but his head and an uplifted arm holding aloft the uncorked flask in manly desperation. "Here," said he, as I went to his assistance, "catch hold of this; never mind me, but for goodness sake keep the river out of this whisky."

* *

Two sailors had been interviewing a publican not wisely but too well, and finally strolled along the quay side in the moonlight. Being both half seas over, one of them fell off the wall into about 26 feet of water. His pal on the quay side, unmoved, calmly watched the struggles of the drowning tar, and slowly removing his pipe from his mouth, as he threw up his arms in search of the proverbial straw, "Give it up, Bill, and be a man; you know you can't swim, what's the use of struggling?"

* *

Two friends had separated to fish different salmon pools, and on the return of one to find how the other had progressed in the meantime, he found him busy playing a flock of about 200 sheep up and down a forty acre field adjoining the river, and apparently well hooked in the whole lot of them. "What in the name of goodness are ye trying to do now, John?" was the enquiry addressed to the busy angler, perspiring profusely. "Well, said the other, "I had the

misfortune to hook a sheep about half an hour ago, and he is somewhere in the crowd; which sheep is mine I cannot well make out, but he is there, and as I would not lose that silver doctor for a sovereign, I mean to land him;" and with the assistance of his friend, the sheep wanted was eventually run into a corner and duly unhooked.

* *

I dined one night many years ago with a gentleman who was an active county magistrate. I met him by appointment in a sweet-scented lane near the Ribble. As we walked on, knowing my interest in fish and fishing, he told me of a case he had had before him that day in which he had sent a notorious poacher to prison for taking smolts from the river. When the first dish cover was removed at table there appeared some little fish, brown, and crisp, and appetising. The bushy grey on the brows of my host, who was a bachelor, lifted themselves in astonishment and then puckered up in a frown. The housekeeper was summoned. "Mrs.——," said he, "what are these fish?" "I do not know," was the answer, "they were brought to the house by a labouring man, and I bought them from him." "What were they like?" "They were little silvery fish with bright bars and red spots on them!" "Take them away said the Justice, "and pray never buy any more; they are worth £5 each according to law. I am rather surprised the poor devil I sent to prison to-day did not blurt out in court that he had had the honour of supplying my table."

* *

A propos of fishing in badly stocked waters, a friend and I years ago once bluffed an old farmer who had the reputation in his village of being a terrible Turk. He was the proprietor of a pond immediately behind his house, the pond being reputed to contain no end of trout of fabulous size.

My friend, being a bold man, knocked at the front door of the old fellow's residence, and calmly requested permission to fish for himself and friend, and this was granted without a moment's delay, and in five minutes we were at it, and we fished that pond from nine o'clock until noon of an early summer's day, from noon until five, and from five o'clock until the light was growing dim, without seeing the faintest intimation of a fish of any kind. Finally the proprietor came to see how our perseverance had been rewarded. My friend having, if possible, more impudence than I, said, "Mr. J——, I don't believe there is a fish in this pond." "You are quite right," said Mr. J——, "it was as dry as a lime-kiln yesterday; we only turned the water in this morning." We went home then.

* *

Two Dutchmen, brothers, who had "travelled life's dull round," ending up a tour in the States, turned into Delmonico's for dinner, which was, as usual, a good dinner, and the bill was to match it. The elder brother, who carried the purse, glanced at the tremendous total, and then rising, with a mighty effort, to a great occasion, let off all the language he had ever heard or could invent, and, having become purple in the face from his exertions and his dinner, finally declared he would not pay a schent. Eventually, of course, he thought better of this resolution, and then, like a defeated general, he proceeded to retire in confusion, using up such odd scraps of infuriated language as he found he had omitted from his first explosion. On the way out a gentleman remonstrated with the irate diner, protesting against the use of such language, and then the younger Dutchman turned upon the elder and said, "Nein, nein, Yawcob, you should not schvear like dot, it ish not right. Besides, Gott has already punished dot man Delmonico." "Punished him?" said the elder, "how?" "Vell," said the younger, "I have got mine pocket full mit schpoons."

A heavy masher found himself at an old maid's tea-drinking, when they suddenly floored him with an unexpected request that he would say grace. Not for years had anyone expected him to say anything with sense in it, and he was upset; but with a mighty effort he pulled himself together, and spoiled the tea party and himself for ever by ejaculating solemnly, "For what we are going to receive, a'—thanks, awf'la."

* *

A well-known man staying at the hotel at Lowood, on Windermere, outraged decency one fine Sunday morning by taking his fishing tackle down to the boat and setting out to make a day of it. He returned in time for dinner with a few perch, and the fact that he had thus been desecrating the day was the subject of many friendly insinuations and allusions at the *table d'hôte*. Lounging through the hall afterwards he was accosted by a frigid looking mortal whose aspect betokened the unco guid, who said to him, "I am surprised, nay more, sir, I am grieved and shocked to hear you have not set a worthier example on this day. Have you thought, sir, where you are going, and what your example is pointing others to?" "I am going at present," said the unabashed Sabbath breaker, "to smoke a cigar on the pier." He was thus walking off when something occurred to him and he returned to old Vinegar and spake as follows: "Do you, may I enquire, believe that if you went out fishing on the lake to-day, you would end up—down there," said he, pointing to the ground. "Certainly I do." "Ah! then," said my friend, "don't you go."

* *

An American gentleman I met recently had been staying at a quiet inn in the State of Maine where he had had excellent fishing. A man, he said, came in one night, and as there were both electrical bells and the old fashioned bell

rope in his room and he had never seen an electric bell before, he immediately pressed the button but saw and heard nothing. Immediately a servant appeared, "Did you ring, sir?" "Ring, no, I guess I didn't ring." The girl departed and the visitor again proceeded in his efforts to comprehend the button. Another press and another appearance from the servant. "Wal?" said the Yankee. "You rang," said the girl, "and please don't keep doing it, as it leads to annoyance and inattention if you do not want anything." But when the girl departed a second time the spirit of mischief entered the man's head and giving her time to get well away he pressed the button a third time. Just at that instant the gong downstairs boomed bang whang for dinner for the space of a full minute, and the mischief maker believing himself the cause of some unknown catastrophe carefully locked and bolted himself in, and sat where he was expecting the police.

My dog, Tulip—who was known for sixteen years to some hundreds of friends—though he loved the water, was never guilty of ruining a good angling spot by entering it when I was fishing it. (He could open all the doors in the house by turning the handle with his teeth, providing it was wood, or pushing it in and pulling it out if the handle was one of that kind, and *close the door behind him*—and that deserves to be put on any dog's monument. It would almost be easier to tell you what he could not do, than what he could.) Anyhow, I had been singing his praises one night to a Ribblesdale farmer—"a merrier man within the limits of becoming mirth, I never spent an hour's talk withal." When I had exhausted the tale of his accomplishments, my auditor thus sat on me. He had a dog, too, a collie of supernatural instinct. Going along the highway one day, with the dog at his heels, the farmer espied some sheep that had broken down a place in the stone wall, and got through

a gap into a wrong field; he sent the dog over to drive them out into their own field and walked on, expecting the dog to follow, but when at the end of a mile the farmer found the dog was not coming, he turned back to discover the cause of the delay. "And what dew ye think he were doing?" said the narrator, with a guileless face. Truly, I could not imagine, but I was prepared for a whacker. "As true as I'm a living man," he said, "he was walling that gap up."

* *

Two newly married ladies were discussing their husbands. "You will forgive me, I know, Madge," said one, "but if I were you, I would not permit your husband to take a whisky flask with him when he goes fishing. My husband, you know, is a fisherman, and he says it is one of the most injurious practices a man can follow—to keep whisky nipping at the river-side." "Oh! Kate," says the other, "you do Uriah wrong; he has not tasted a drop of liquor since we were married; he found out an invaluable cure for it, and now he never tastes." "Indeed, my dear," says the other, "I am delighted to hear it; and what is the cure?" "Oh, it is the simplest thing in the world; it is cloves."

* *

I once heard a man say that if you want to hear sound sense practically set forth, he knew no better place to hear it than in a third class railway carriage. Whether this is true or not, it is certain one may now and then hear a very funny remark or story in railway trains. I remember two men talking at length about an acquaintance, and when they had gone through the man and his belongings, one said to the other—"And is he respectable, like?" "Respectable!" amazed at such a question, "why, man, he blows 't organ at a chapel." Some years ago I was

travelling with others, and in the carriage were a young man and his wife, clad in mourning. The man was rather "merry," and began to pass flattering compliments in respect of his wife's good looks, and she was a very good-looking woman. She objected to this, and was evidently annoyed that he had taken just one glass more than she thought enough. But the more she objected, the more he persisted, in spite of her quiet kicks and impatient looks. Finally, he appealed to us collectively to know if we did not agree with him, that she was "'t best lewking lass 'i Yorkshire?" This was more than her natural modesty was equal to, so she thus explained matters for our benefit—"He is not quite himself, as you see, gentlemen, and I know you will excuse him, he has been to a funeral."

An officer of the United States army told me this one night, with what degree of exact relationship to actual facts I do not pretend to say. He found himself one day belated on his way to a distant camp, and in the country of the Indians by whom he was quickly surrounded. The only thing of any value he had in the trap with him which was not in some way or other secured to his person was a three-gallon keg of whisky, and this he determined to defend with his life's blood if need be. But in order to further conciliate the apparently peaceable intentions of his dusky interviewers, he passed each man a nip of the blessed fire-water, and the nips were no sooner disposed of, and the virtues of the bottle nectar discovered, than the leader of the band offered his horse in exchange for the keg. As this was not accepted, whisky being priceless in the land to which the Colonel journeyed, the horse of the second Indian was added to the offer, then that of the third, the fourth, and the fifth, until at last there were eleven magnificent horses on offer as the price of three gallons of whisky, less 12 nips.

Still the soldier would not part. At this point a friend said, "Well, Colonel, where does the joke appear?" "Joke," said the Colonel, "there is no joke about it. Does anyone suppose I would have parted with that whisky for a whole troop of horses? But it just shows how disgustingly fond of whisky some people can be."

* *

An old angler up at Shap hooked a very handsome trout and played him for a long time with much skill and patience, being frequently in imminent danger of losing him, but finally bringing him within two feet of his landing net. Just as he was about to slip the net under the trout and make things safe, the fish made one despairing plunge and was gone, whereupon the irate angler danced a brief dance of rage on the bank and thus addressed the lost fish: "Gang awa' ye worthless divvle; it would tak a pund o' butter to mak ye into decent meat."

* *

A gentleman in Wensleydale having an Irish gardener, asked him, on about the only suitable day for bobbing with the living fly during a recent summer, to get him a dozen blue-bottles. When the angler was ready to set out, his faithful gardener requested his attendance in the yard for a minute, and, pointing to a row of seedy-looking bottles of all kinds ranged against the wall, said, "Shure, sorr, they are not all blue, but they are the bluest I could find."

* *

I have this from the vicar of a well-known Lancashire parish:—The squire took it into his head to give his annual dinner to the tenants, not, as usual, in the village inn, but in the dining room of the hall. All the splendour of a great house was on the tables, and the quiet-going farmers were

not a little impressed with what they saw, for the squire had laid himself out to astonish them, and he did. After dinner, when what Dick Swiveller called "the ruby" had begun to circulate, and the sound of dreamy music in a neighbouring apartment stole into the room, and the odours of sweet flowers and fruits mingled with the aroma of a cigar or two, touched the senses, a quiet-looking farmer with a bright eye was seen making efforts to attract the attention of the vicar, who was two or three down on the opposite side of the table. At length he called, "Mr. W——, Mr. W——." "Well, James, what is it?" "Why," said James, "I have been thinking you oft-times preach to us about Heaven; now, if it is owt like this, *it will do*."

* *

A man and woman drove a goose, which had been given to them, from Garforth, five miles to Leeds. Just as they reached the key-stone of Leeds Bridge, she, good, thoughtful, better half, threw up her hands and exclaimed, "Ah! Jim, what hev we done; we have gone and forgotten to bring t' giblets."

* *

Two golfers, a clergyman and layman, were playing side by side, when the layman made a terribly bad stroke, and immediately forgetting the presence of the ecclesiastic, said a big, big D; only that, and nothing more. Forthwith he apologised profusely, when he was interrupted by the cleric in these words, "Don't apologise; let us forget it; it is not so much the word as its total adequacy."

* *

Two rival pike fishers were in the habit of pooh-poohing the prowess of each other to all enquiring friends. "John was a fair fisher," said one of the other, "but he was an awful hand at stretching his catches, and it was always well

to see his fish if you wished to be sure of what he told you." "Aye, aye," said the other, in answer to kind enquiries, "there was no doubt James was a very decent fellow, but he was no fisher; lacked patience and practice and knowledge, and never caught anything, somehow, bigger than a sprat." But one day James went and hooked and landed a fine pike of 20lbs., and with a view to settle John for ever, he first exhibited it to the awe-stricken people of the village, and then in the midst of a large company, finished in a blaze of triumphant glory by generously making John a present of it. "Thanks," said John, coolly; you are very good; it is just what I was looking for; I am going fishing myself to-morrow, and it will do excellently for bait."

The captain of a ship about to leave port was making up his crew, when he was applied to by a Scotchman, who was taken on board at once without any inquiries as to character. An Irishman standing by saw this, and at once applied, but the captain did not like the look of Pat as much as he did that of Sandy, and made numerous inquiries as to antecedents and character, and very reluctantly at last did Paddy pull out of his pocket a satisfactory, but dirty, discharge from his last ship, whereupon he was engaged, and at once entered into an argument with Sandy as to why he should have been "tuk on" so easily, while on his part he had had to enter into explanations. Three days out the ship encountered a heavy gale; these two men were together, each with a bucket washing down the after-deck. Suddenly a great wave washed overboard Sandy and bucket and all. Instead of raising the usual cry, Paddy slowly descended to the captain's cabin, and knocked calmly. "Well," said the captain, "what is it?" "Captain," said Paddy, "have ye a minnit to spare?" "What do you want?" said the captain from the interior. "I want to shpake to ye."

"Well, go on," said the captain. "I want to shpake to ye a few minnits in private, captain." "Confound you, go on; what in thunder have you got to say?" "Well," said the Irishman, "ye know that Scotchman ye shipped without a character." "Well, what about him?" "I just want to tell your honour that the dirty thief has *gone*, and he has taken one o' your buckets."

* *

At a football match in Edinburgh a braw policeman was inside the ropes, and his broad back effectually blocked the view of several enthusiastic young men outside. After they had stood this for some time, one of them proceeded thusly, "I say, policeman, dae ye ken onything aboot the game o' draughts?" "Weel," said the officer, "I play noo and then; why are ye asking?" "Because I was thenkin'," said the other, "it was about time ye were making a move." "Aweel," replied the policeman sententiously, "if I mak' a move it will be to tak' a mon."

* *

The late Edwin Waugh told me he was once sitting at a big dinner in Manchester, having on his left hand a jovial Fylde farmer to whom the whole proceedings of the banquet had been a revelation and a glory. When the ice pudding came round the farmer looked at it doubtfully and declined it. Waugh, always bent on mischief, strongly recommended the farmer to take some. "What is it?" he enquired. "It is an ice pudding," said the poet. "Well," said the farmer, "if you say it's nice, ahll hev some," and he helped himself to about half a pound, and began with a table spoon. Up came his jaw with a snap on the icy mass in his mouth, and when he had sufficiently recovered to speak he looked at Waugh, and as if he quite comprehended it as a practical joke, said, "Snowball, by jingo!"

A candidate for Parliament anxious to make sure of a doubtful voter, sent the latter's wife a magnificent pine-apple by way of a beginning. Meeting the voter a few days later, the candidate said, "Well, John, how did you like the pine?" "Pretty well, thank you, sir, but may be we poor folk do not understand how to deal wi' these faldedals, like ye quality." "Did not you enjoy it?" "Oh! yes, sir, but my missus she were a bit bothered how to cook it." "Cook it?" "Yes, sir, so at last she just boiled it wi' a leg of mutton!"

* *

"Divvel a fish there is in this river, sorr," said a raw boned Irishman to his employer, "many's a time in ould days, before I killed the big pike, that I've took 'em in buckets full; sorry a wan yez'll find now." "And what had the killing of the big pike to do with it?" "Troth, sorr, an' it's a quare story, but it's myself that will tell it yez. Just down by them big flag-weeds there, where the river runs so shtill and quiet loike, there used to be a foine pike, maybe a hundred pound weight, maybe more; anyways I don't know, for I killed him outright, and no one seen him." "You killed him and yet you didn't see him?" "That's it, sorr, thrue for yez. They're mighty quare things are fish, sorr, nothing quarer unless it be a young woman. Well, annyways, this pike had come to know everything that had a hook in it, and not one of them would he look at; throth sorr, manny's the time I have fished for him, and half the village as well, sorr, with everything mortal man could think of, onless it may be an infant, and *that* sorr, though there is many purtends they are ready to give 'em away, they will foight shy when they know yez are wanting thum for pike baits. And then, sorr, I set to work to see how I could desave the blagyard honestly and kill him for the glory. An' afther mighty perplexity what kind of a bait I should set for him it came into my head all of a minute, sorr. In my father's house there was

an ould pistol that was tuk from a sodger in the year '98, and I loaded it all ready and tied a long shtring to the trigger and dropped it aff the bridge here just where the shtrame would carry it down to the big pike, an' he tuk it, sorr; he seen it was something new and square loike, and as soon as he see ut he swallowed ut; and when the baste had had time to gorge, I pulled the string and weirasthrue! good Katty, sorr! but there was a divvel's own ruction; yez'll mind, sorr, there was about four charges in that pistol before I put mine in it, and when the pistol went off the pike went off wid ut, an' they both bursted together, sorr, and the air was full of fragments of pistol and pike, water and solid earth. And no man seen the pike afterwards, he just vanished in smithereens, sorr, and all the fish in the water took fright at what they thought was a mighty earthquake, and they went away and have never come back to this day, sorr; and it is the truth I am tellin' yez.

* *

There is a yarn about a sailor who entered a chemist's shop and bought medicines to the amount of seven shillings and sixpence. "Take the odd money off," said the sailor to the vendor. "All right," said the chemist. The sailor tendered sixpence and said, "The seven was odd." The chemist stared, but seeing he was done remarked, "Very well, now hook it; I have made fourpence out of you as it is."

* *

An Englishman, salmon-fishing on the Shannon, had with him as boatman a garrulous native who had wonderful stories to tell of the quare things he saw now and then about the river. "Ah, sir, I am telling yez; I remember poor Mike Clansey, the little tailor in our village with the cork leg; and poor Mike died and we buried him in Limerick church-yard; and the fourth day after poor Mike was put away

there kem down the Shannon a thundering, tattering, tearing flood, and it got into the churchyard and tore up all the new-made graves, and the eels got in wid it, and they got at Mike Clansey in his coffin and rooted him out and carried him off *ex vivo*. And when the flood fell some days after, my father was on the river with his gun in a boat, and he sees something on the top of the water lathering and splashing about; and he took his gun and let fly, and be the powers, sor!—if it wasn't a thundering big eel that weighed about 100 pounds, and he couldn't get down from the top of the water because he had got Mike Clansey's cork leg in his belly."

* *

"Mr. Brown, how much are these trout a pound?" "One-and-four, sir." "Then I will take five pounds, and please throw them to me as I stand here." "Throw them, sir?" "Yes, throw them, I would not tell my wife a lie on any account, so throw them one by one, and I can honestly say I caught them, don't you know?"

* *

I once heard a man, called on suddenly to make an after dinner speech, excuse himself because, although he had much to say, he could not think of any of it. And that reminded me of a certain privileged keeper who, one night after the nightcaps and the bacca had for some time been all agog, thus arrested our attention; "I tell you what," said he, "there were an idea cum into my head the other night at if it could be carried out would be one o't grandest things 'at ever happened for t' working man. It would make him happier and richer, and freer, and it would improve his health; it was t' finest idea 'at ever I even read of. It would" he continued for some time dilating on the advantages of his great idea when one of the company broke in with, "Yes, yes, that is all very well, Jackson, but we

have had enough preface, come to the book and tell us what the idea was." "Well," said Jackson, "to tell ye t' truth, I were a bit fresh when this idea cum, and in the morning I could not for t' life on me remember what it were."

* *

Some friends of mine, a few years ago—anglers every one, especially the man who did it—could not sleep in a certain inn at Douglas for the crowing of a Cochin China cock, with a crow like a miniature cross between a fog horn and a bass voice in a consumption. Just as they went to bed one night, one of the trio opined they would sleep that night, and they did; the cock did not crow. Next morning there were enquiries from the other two as to what had been done to the bird, and hints were thrown out that he had been smothered; he was found at length, however, under a wheel-barrow in the yard, with his tail down, his wings drooping, and his attitude that of abject misery. "Well, Tom," said one, "how did you effect this?" "Oh, easily enough," said the other one, "I just gave him seven pennyworth of Cockle's pills."

* *

I heard, not long since, of a Romish priest holding a theological argument with a Methodist minister. The latter persistently alluded to Paul and others, without any prefix, until at length the good father rising to the occasion, said, "Look here, my good friend, if you cannot bring yourself to speak of Saint Paul, you might have the decency to call him Mr."

* *

A woman went to a certain Lancashire mill, and asked for work as a weaver. The manager asked her if she had got her character with her. "No," she said, she had not, but she could soon get it. "Then," said the manager, "go

and get it." Leaving her bundle in his charge, she departed, and in half-an-hour she returned and peremptorily requested that her bundle might be handed to her. "Have you got your character?" asked the manager. "No," was the answer, "ah hev'nt ; but I've gotten yours."

* *

A certain minister gave it out from the pulpit one night that he had had a call to a larger sphere of labour in a larger town, with a larger stipend. He could not, he said, make up his mind, and was going to take some time to think of it, and pray for light—more light. A fortnight later one of the congregation met the pastor's eldest son in the city, and asked if his father was going to B——. "Well," said Johnny, aged 13, "Pa is still praying for light, but most of the things is packed."

* *

A West Riding manufacturer, in a small way, went home to the wife of his bosom one evening with a Fizziwiggian smile on his face, and ordered her somewhat unceremoniously to put the kettle on the fire. When she hesitated, wondering what he could want with the kettle at 9 p.m., he repeated his order, but still smiling pleasantly, with the pertinacity of a Malvolio. When at length she complied, he said, "Now, lass, I will tell thee ; we have just finished stock-taking, and a right good year we have had, and, now we are on t' right road to fortune, so thee and me will have a glass of grog apiece, and we'll have one every night, because now we can afford it." So the grog was consumed that night, and every night for about a week, when he walked in on one occasion, with a long face, and said bluntly, "Tak that kettle off!" "Whatever is to do?" said his better half. "Why," said he, "yon clerk o' mine is a fool ; t' stock-taking is all wrong ; he has gone and added the year of our Lord in."

A friend of mine was fishing in a sparsely populated district of Wensleydale. He saw a fine fish rise under an overhanging thorn on the opposite bank of the river. It was a difficult cast, but with some risky wading he thought he could reach it, and tried to do so. Only one step remained to a rock from which he could cover the fish. He made the step, missed his footing, and the next instant rolled over into four feet of water. Having regained his feet, he looked at the spot from which he had fallen, then at the one in which the trout was still unconcernedly sporting, said some *a propos* language, girded up his loins and made tracks for dry land. Having gained the shore, it seemed to him that as it was still early it was impossible for him to wear his wet clothes all day, and looking round he could see no habitation nearer than a cottage on the hill side some three-quarters of a mile away, and thither he went with all speed. It was a pretty little cottage, and he felt instinctively as he approached it, sure of all reasonable hospitality. Knocking at the front door, he waited patiently, but as a second and then a third trial begot no satisfaction he went round to the back and knocked there also to no purpose; he then made a general survey of the premises through the windows and keyholes, and came to the disheartening conclusion that the proprietor of the establishment was not at home. But as it was nearly dinner time the probability of an early return of the owner presented itself, and with a view to prevent the possibility of a chill and to expedite matters generally on the arrival of the good man of the house, he forthwith proceeded to divest himself of his garments, and I grieve to say he might eventually have been seen standing in the little front garden with very little on him but his shirt. It was while he was thus wondering how long he would have to continue in this ridiculous situation that he observed coming up the lane, close by, an old lady who was evidently the returning proprietrix. Gathering up his goods and

chattels he disappeared with the agility of a sixty-year-old antelope behind the angle of the house, and from this station bobbed his head round the corner and thus addressed the astonished dame just as she turned the key in the door: "I beg your pardon, madam," and the old lady was more than a little astonished to see an agitated face bobbing round the wall of her cottage. Taking steps towards him for the purpose of discovering what was going on she was thus stopped: "Do not for goodness sake come here," said the head of the invisible body. "Whatever are you doing there?" said she. "Well," was the answer, "I have been fishing, and I have fallen into the river and am very wet, and as there was nobody at home I have taken my things off for fear of catching cold, and I want to know if you would be good enough to lend me a pair of trousers?" "Eh! bless ye, *No*," said the old lady, "I've been a widdy these forty years, and I have not such a thing about the place." The head disappeared round the corner, and slowly and solemnly, hidden by the wall of the house, did the owner of it proceed to re-invest himself in his wet clothing, and, having done so, he emerged into full view of the old lady, who sympathised with him in his trouble and laughed heartily. She said she thought there was a man at a house about half a mile off, and if my friend did not mind going there she was sure they would do everything they could to help him. The direction of the house having been fully pointed out, he set forth and duly arrived. Being himself six feet in height and a very heavy man, he was considerably disheartened to behold the proprietor of this establishment a man of about five feet one inch, and weighing about seven stones. One glance at the owner's garments satisfied the angler there was no room there, and his hopes again subsided. In the end, however, the proprietor of the cottage put him to bed, dried his clothes, and had a good laugh at the story of the visit to Widow Jones.

A good many years ago I was staying with a friend at Howietown, on Ulleswater, and having lunched on shore on the Halstead Estate on the opposite bank, it was necessary to cross the lake in order to get home, or walk ten miles, one way or the other. During the progress of the lunch, a tearing gale came down the lake off Helvellyn, and lashing the water into a veritable sea, drove huge rolling white-crested waves before it sufficient to swamp any small boat going broad-side on and badly managed. Our boatman on that occasion was a man who never under any circumstances looked drunk, possibly because no man of that generation had ever seen him quite sober; nevertheless, he was probably the best boatman that ever rowed on Ullswater. He disappeared while we were feeding, and no doubt he found some liquor close by, as it was the only thing that would induce him to bestow on it his undivided attention and energy for more than ten minutes at a time, unless he was driven as one drives a horse, and he stayed away about an hour and a half. Meanwhile the wind blew a hurricane, and a tremendous sea was running; our craft was small and sat low in the water, but cross we must, unless we were prepared to wait for hours, or it might be walk. When the skipper reappeared there was a festive light in his eye, otherwise he looked as sober as a judge, and though he remarked that the lake was "gey and rough," he laughed to scorn an implied doubt of his ability to take us safely over. So we twain planted ourselves in the stern, took a last fond look at earth, mentally made a disposition of our various properties, and in a minute we were off. I held the rudder lines, and my partner in the sad business had a lading can in each hand to bale out the seas we were sure to ship, as our passage lay straight across, broad side on to the waves and over water one hundred feet deep. No sooner had we got fairly clear of the shelter of a neighbouring promontory than,

although we had been accustomed to boats and water all our lives, we would both willingly have parted with most of our worldly goods to have been safe again on dry land. The frail craft sank deep in the trough of the huge seas, then rose slowly on the crest of the next wave, canted over slowly, came down with a run, and was struck by the white mane on the top of the succeeding roller, shipping gallons of water every time we were so struck. Meanwhile the boatman kept slashing away at the lake with his oars, fighting the air at every other stroke with one, while the other was deep under water, and saying, "By something" above the roar of the wind whenever a big sea rushed up and threatened to swamp us absolutely, which happened about every half minute. Just as we were in the worst of it, sitting as silent and solemn as a couple of wooden gods, and wondering what the verdict of the jury would be, and whether anybody would come to look for us, and, if so, what part of us the drags would catch, that boatman laid down his oars, put his hands on his knees, and, looking helplessly at us with the vacantest of alcoholic smiles, said, "Hey, I is drunk!" The tidings of comfort this imparted must be left to your imagination. Beyond threatening to brain him instantly with an oar if he did not row for his life and ours, we neither spoke nor moved until we jumped ashore, and then we wasted five minutes in telling him what we thought of him.

* *

Two working men had been to Church. The sermon had been about miracles, and when they came out, one said to the other: "Bill, what is a miracle?" "Doesn't 'a know?" said the other. "No." "Then walk on a few yards, and I will shew thee." The man of enquiring mind did as he was told, and his instructor immediately took a flying run at him from behind. "There," said the administrator, when he had delivered a forty-horse power kick,

"did'st thou feel that?" "Feel it!" said the other, "I should think ah did feel it." "Well," said the first, "it would have been a miracle if tha hadn't."

* *

I recall a yarn about a Scottish laird, who was relating the story of a fine fish he had caught one day to some friends at his dinner table. "Donald," said he to the servant behind his chair—an old man, but a new servant, "how heavy was that fish I took yesterday?" Donald neither spoke nor moved. "Donald, are you deaf?" said the laird, "how heavy was that salmon I took yesterday?" "Weel," replied Donald, "it was twal' pund at breakfast, it had gotten to achteen at dinner time, and it was sax-and-twenty when ye sat down to supper with the Captain;" then, after a short pause, he added: "ah've been tellin' lees a' my life to please the shooters, but ah'll be dawmed if aw'm going to tell lees noo, through my old age, to please the fushers;" and, of course, his master was delighted.

* *

A lowly cobbler in a much frequented bye-street of Glasgow used to hammer and stitch, stitch and hammer, all day long, and, however much he had to do, he sang loudly and merrily at his work. When the cobbler was silent the neighbours and the passers-by, who were many, knew that something was amiss, for, however dreary the weather might be, the cobbler hammered and sang as blithely as a lark. One day the minister came down the street when the cobbler was silent. "Bless me," said he to himself as he approached, "what is the matter with Jock the morn?" "Jock, are ye no well that ye are sae glum?" "Weel, meenister, awm no well, as ye sae. I have some sad news. The agent o' this house, in which ah was born, and my father before me, and a' my forebears, has gone and let the

house to a wee bit tailor doon the street, and he says aw mun turn oot o't this day week; ye'll ken it's no easy to part with the auld place, meenister, it's no easy." The minister agreed; he suggested that Jock should see the agent again, but Jock said, sadly, he had seen him sax or seven times, and it was no use at all—he mun turn oot. "Weel," said the parson at this stage, "if all else is of no avail, Jock, have you ever tried prayer?" Jock had not, but promised he would, and a fortnight later when the minister came down the street, expecting to find Jock cleared out and the wee bit tailor in possession, he heard, as he came along, Jock stitching and hammering and singing away louder than ever. "Noo, Jock," said he, as he stood at the open window, "how are ye the morn?" "Eh! meenister," said he, "but awm fine—mon, I'm just fine. Come awa ben the house, and we'll hae a dram thegither, for I'm no gaun to leave the hoose, ye ken." "You are not to leave it, Jock? Did ye try prayer, as I told ye?" "I did, meenister, and the Lord answered it—the tailor's dead."

Mickey Doolan was an Irishman, a little bit good for nothing perhaps, though that failing is not uncommon among the sons of the most distressful country that ever sure was seen. For the peace of his body and soul, the priest of Mickey's parish went to "converse" with him and to bring him to a sense of duty. "Mickey Doolan," said the holy father, "you have been severely tried. You have lost several members of your family by death within the last three months; your brother is under the penitentiary for wiping the floor with your poor old father; your house has been burnt down; you are blind of an eye which you lost in that ruction at Ballyhooley; you are a cripple from rheumatism, and the bailiffs are afther ye this minute; yours is a sad lot: what is to become of ye?" "Father Brallegan," said

Mickey, "things is agen me, but I get it all back again; I have windfalls of good luck. Yesterday I hooked a salmon that must have weighed 60 pounds." "Did ye catch him?" said the priest. "Sorra a bit! I was broke and the fish went off with sixty yards of line," replied Mickey. "Where is the good luck in that?" asked the priest. "Well, your reverence," answered Mr. Doolan, "it was borrowed tackle, and the big fish might have pulled me in the river and drowned me."

* *

"Wilhelmina," said he, hotly and sternly, "it is the first time you ever repulsed me, and it shall be the last," and he rose in all the majesty of four foot nothing, and moved towards the door. "Stay," cried the demoiselle piteously. "Not thus, not thus, O! Cæsar! let us not part thus. Stay, my own, and do not blame me," she exclaimed with a little shiver; "my neck is sensitive; I stood it as long as I could; go and warm your nose."

* *

A tenant whose Christian name was Charles, called one day about noon to see his landlord in Nidderdale, and while talking in the library a bell rang, and the squire said, "Ah, Charles! that is my luncheon bell, and as it is about your dinner time, perhaps you will join me; but I have only some hashed venison." "Thank ye, sir," said Charles, "I shall be very glad, and I'se quite sure that what ye hev will be quite good enough for me." Charles in due time got his first mouthful, and after turning it over and over, eventually managed with a mighty effort to swallow it. Then he looked at the squire, who was eating away with hearty relish. So Charles, feeling a sense of duty, arranged another morsel on his fork, but on getting it within a couple of inches of his mouth he let it drop. The squire observed this and remarked, "I fear, Charles, you do not care for it." And

Charles replied, "Well, ye know, sir, there is nae doubt ye're a real gentleman, everybody knows that; but, by gosh! ye do eat carrion."

* *

A poor old farmer was at his latter end, and his considerate wife had had him brought down to the kitchen so that he might be handy to carry out when he popped off. His daughter saw his almost glazing eye and enquired if there was anything the old chap could fancy before he went, and he remarked in almost inaudible words that he thought he could manage a slice out of the middle of a home-fed ham that was hanging from the ceiling, if it were not cut too thin and not overdone. And his thoughtful wife overhearing this said, "What is that thou says? thou can't have any of it. I have told thee afore, we are keeping that ham for t' funeral." And then, like Tiny Tim, he did not die.

* *

An angler in Teesdale, entering a little inn in a remote district, was surprised to see on the wall of the kitchen the legend, *Ici on parle Français*. "How does it happen," said he to the landlord, "that you find it necessary to speak French here?" "French?" was the answer, "there is nobody speaks French, here." "Then why do you keep that announcement on the wall?—that means that French is spoken here." "Well, I will be shot!" was the reply, "if a commercial traveller from Darlington did not sell me that for a Latin motto: 'Heaven bless our home.'"

* *

A gentleman was staying at an Irish inn. At 7-o in the morning he was knocked up by Boots, who remarked that it was seven o'clock. The gentleman, from underneath the bed clothes, ordered him off, saying he was not going to get

up for hours yet. Ten minutes later Paddy was there again, to tell him it was "ten minutes past seven, sor." This time the gentleman was rude; but it was evident Paddy did not go where the gentleman told him, as he was back again at twenty minutes past to communicate the information. At this the gentleman sat up in bed, and made a speech to the effect that he had not suggested to anybody that he was fond of being knocked up at intervals of ten minutes; that he had no wish to get up; that he would not get up, and if Paddy came again to knock him up, he would most certainly knock him down. At half-past seven Boots walked straight into the room, whisked the clothes off the sleeper, who instantly arose in his might and demanded to know the meaning of this outrage. "Whist, your honour," says Pat, "be aisy; haven't I called yez four times? Shure, the company is waiting for breakfast in the coffee room, and we can't give it to 'em becace your honour is sleeping on the best tablecloth."

Sometime ago a party of anglers in Ribblesdale were surprised by an active policeman who found them indulging in the reprehensible game of tossing for money in the village inn. The policeman reported, and in due time the culprits appeared before a magistrate. One of the male-factors, a local luminary, assured his Worship they were not tossing at all, they were only "having a fly." "And what is that?" said his Honour. Thereupon the culprit dived both hands into all his pockets in search of a coin which was not there, and being unsuccessful he said, "Would your Worship lend me a shilling for a moment or two and I will show you what a fly is." His Worship handed down a shilling. "Now," said the angler, tossing the coin in the usual fashion and catching it as it came down, "you to me, your Worship. 'Heads or tails?' Say 'tails,' your Honour,

if you please." His Honour did as he was told and said "tails." "It is 'heads,'" said the culprit, putting the coin carefully into his own pocket, "there, your Worship, that is what we call a fly." And during the laughter which followed, his Honour let them off.

* *

A newly-married couple had ventured on a little dinner party with a new cook, an Irish lass fresh from Dublin's great city. All went well until the close of the dinner, when there appeared a sweet omelette which was freely tasted by everybody; and then a solemn gloom overspread that party and silence ensued. Nothing more awful to taste and smell had ever been encountered by any of the unhappy guests. Dinner over, the hostess sought an early opportunity of interrogating Bridget as to the meaning of this *contretemps*. "Well, mum," says she, "I will not deceive ye—the eggs as I put in it was bad; but shure the fault was none of mine, for when I axed the man as brought 'em to the door if they were fresh, says he, 'To be shure they are; the hen that laid them eggs is twelve years ould to-day, and if a hen of twelve year ould does not know how to lay fresh eggs I don't know what does.'"

* *

Two anglers, one of them I much regret to say a much esteemed friend of mine, were recently returning from a fishless expedition on a west country river, when, passing a barn close by the stream, they espied two newly killed ducks hanging. The contemplative one of the duet contemplated for a moment and then said he thought they could "land" those ducks if his fellow conspirator would go to the farm close by for two pints of milk and bring the farmer back with him. Done; and when my friend returned with the farmer, the first thing that struck his conspiring eye was a

collection of maggots on the floor of the barn immediately under the ducks and with every appearance of having just dropped therefrom. "What a pity," said the other conspirator to the farmer, "to see two fine ducks like these get into such a dreadful state," and as he said it he stroked them gently down, and dropped another tablespoonful of maggots as he did so which he had concealed in the palm of his hand. "Why, bless me," said the unsuspecting owner of the ducks, opening his eyes to their widest stretch; "they were only killed late last night, and what a state they are in!" The contemplative anglers opined they were not fit to eat, and the farmer agreed with them. The fishermen offered him a shilling for them "for the feathers for flies," and at that figure business was transacted. In due time both the birds and the anglers were stuffed with sage and onions, and I have the words of both reprobates that the birds were fresh and delicious. Unluckily for their peace of mind, however, during the repast one of them thoughtlessly quoted from Old Isaac, "this dish of meat is too good for any but anglers or"—(it was obliged to come)—"or very honest men." Then remorse, gaunt and grim, followed in the trail of villainy, and conscience stricken they sent the farmer that night a postal order for five shillings.

* *

"Good-evening, Brown," said Mr. Black, as he walked into a fishmonger's shop with his fishing tackle in his hand and his basket on his back. "I want you to give me some fish to take home with me, and place them carefully on some green leaves in my basket, and make them look as if they had been caught to-day, will you?" "Certainly, sir," said the fishmonger, "how many will you have?" "Well, you had better give me three or four pounds—make it look a decent catch without overdoing it you know. I prefer salmon trout if you have them." "Yes, sir," said the fish-

monger, "but had you not better take whiting?" "Why," said Mr. Black, "what makes you think so?" "Oh! nothing, except that your wife was down here early this afternoon and said if you dropped in with your fishing tackle and a general woe-begone look about you, I had to give you whiting, if possible, as she liked them better than any other kind of fish."

* *

A friend of mine found himself recently in the company of a fellow railway traveller who bragged tremendously and talked very largely of all the places he had seen, and the countries he had visited. After a while he got on to the lakes and praised in turn Ullswater, Wastwater, Derwentwater, and Keswick Lake. "But I always thought," said my friend, "that Derwentwater and Keswick Lake were synonymous." "Ah, yes," was the answer, "yes, they are synonymous, but Derwentwater is much the more synonymous of the two, don't cher know."

* *

Two men were fishing together, and one fell in; the other succeeded, after great efforts, in getting him out insensible, and, to all appearance, dead. As he lay on the bank an inanimate mass, his rescuer gazed unconsciously at him, and, scratching his head, said to himself, but audibly, "There are sixteen rules about the treatment of drowned persons, and I cannot remember any of them." "Is there one about whisky?" said the drowned man in a quiet voice. "Yes," was the reply. "Then never mind the other fifteen," said the corpse.

* *

A few years ago I heard an Irish landlord tell this story at a dinner table:—He, or a friend of his, I forget which, had received no rents from his Irish tenants for some time,

and he therefore went over to look things up. To one of his largest holders, he said, after the usual preliminaries, "Now, Dolan, I must have some rent; you have paid nothing for three years, and times are very bad in England, and I must live." "Well, your honour," was Michael's answer, "times are worse here than ivver they were. I tell ye, sorr, a while back we could have a landlord shot for a sovereign, and now, begorra, it costs £5." He came away without the rent.

* *

Two friends of mine were staying at a quiet little inn up the remote valley of the Hodder. Feeling a bit dull one night, they sought the ancient couple who kept the house and inquired if they knew whist and had a pack of cards. Both questions were answered in the affirmative, so down they sat, my friends being partners; they were both club players, and when the old man unhesitatingly proposed six-penny points they agreed at once, and thought they had a good thing on. But they could make nothing of the game as played by their companions, and went down like chaff before the wind, being at the end of an hour and a half about 7s. each out of pocket. Then they retired to cogitate on the vanity of human hopes, and the fact that, after all, they knew nothing about whist. Next morning they met the grown-up son of the old people, and, telling him all about it, asked if he could throw any light on it. "Why," said he, "they have never had but one pack o' cards sin' they were married five and forty years ago, and they knaws t' backs on 'em as well as t' fronts."

* *

A yonng Irishman died; the order for his coffin was given to another Irishman, who was a first-rate joiner but no scholar. He got on all right until he came to painting the name and age on the coffin plate. He got down

"Michael O'Rafferty, aged ——." It should have been "28," but he was unequal to making the figures. So he went out into the road and said to a small boy, "Patsy, my son, how do yez make 28?" "Why, said the boy, "four sevens is 28." So down on the coffin plate went four sevens, and when they got to the grave side, and the coffin lay on the bier, and the priest was saying solemn words to the mourners and descanting on the brevity of life, he said, "There was a fine boy for ye—taken away from us in the prime of life; a young man—a very young man, he was only ——" and he saw something on the coffin lid which he could not make out, he was only ——" and then he went nearer, and put on his glasses and looked again, and said suddenly, "My good Katty, he was seven thousand, seven hundred and seventy seven! How did he escape the flood?"

* *

A farmer's lad in the North was asked why he left his last place. "Well," he said, "the victuals were all wrong. He got nothing to eat but salt meat, and he had had enough of it. First a pig deed and it was salted and eaten; then an old coo deed and it, too, was salted and eaten; then a billy-goat deed and shared a similar fate; lastly, his mistress deed and when they sent him out for 7lbs. of salt he ran away."

* *

Two acquaintances of mine met a year or two ago on the Yorkshire Anglers' water on the Eamont. One of them had been laid up for some months and this was the first time his brother angler had seen him since his recovery. With a view to making up some lost time, perhaps, the convalescent had had sundry short and strong pulls during the morning at his flask, and the odour of whisky is powerful, at any rate I have heard people say so. "Holloa! Jack, my boy, how are you? Glad to see you out again; are you quite better?"

"Well, yes," said the other, "I think I am all right, I feel very strong." "That is right," was the answer, "you smell very strong."

* *

The coxswain on a west coast lifeboat told me that one wild winter's night they went out to help a Norwegian vessel in distress. When they reached her, most of the crew had been washed off, but four men and two boys remained with the captain and his wife. The wife kept her head, as wives always do (I think this will meet with no opposition), but the captain begged, entreated, prayed, implored the crew of the lifeboat to save him at any price. A thousand pounds for himself should the coxswain have if he only put the captain safe ashore, and there was a yawl at Bergen which he could have as well. All his earthly treasures, in fact, were the coxswain's the moment that Norwegian captain set foot once more on dry land. "Well, sir," said the coxswain to me, "we landed them all safe." "And did he give you all these things," I asked. "No, sir," said the skipper, "no; when we had put 'em safe ashore he just turned round and gave me sixpence."

* *

A famous English artist who died only a year or two ago, and whose works are among the most treasured of art collectors, was visited one day by an enthusiastic amateur from a distance, who purchased three pictures as they stood on the easel in the artist's studio for twelve hundred guineas. There was no "2½ off for cash," nor anything of that kind, it was money down and no nonsense. The old gentleman could sell as many as he could paint at that price. Business concluded, the buyer, who had come a long way, naturally looked for lunch; but the artist was a close-fisted man of business, and there was none forthcoming, not even a glass of wine to clench the bargain. "Come," said the painter,

"and I will show you my garden." So they strolled out together, the pangs of hunger growing on the buyer at every step. Gradually the proud owner led the way to a bed of truly magnificent cucumbers. "There," said he, "did you ever see finer cucumbers than those?" "Never," said his patron, "never in my life," and he meant it. Now, thought the buyer, if this old skinflint would only give me one of these to take home to my wife it would do something to relieve the monotony of the proceedings. Slowly the artist bent down as if to cut one, and then after stroking one down as he would a kitten, he reared himself up again and said, "Yes, they are beautiful, aren't they? Next time you come if you will bring a salmon with you, we will have one of these cut up with it?" Then the amateur suddenly remembered an engagement in a distant part of another county.

* *

A gentleman and his newly-married wife went for their honeymoon for some fishing in the Scottish lochs. They took with them an Irish servant, who was strictly enjoined, under penalty of dismissal, not to betray the fact that his master and mistress were only recently married. On the second day after their arrival, Pat's master perceived that a vast amount of curiosity was being bestowed on him and his wife, not only at the inn but about the village. He summoned his servant, and the following dialogue ensued: "Pat, have you been telling the people here we are newly married?" "No, sorr." "What have you told them?" "Well, sorr, they axed me if you and the missis was a new married couple, and, faix, I said, 'No.' I told 'em ye was not married, and, begorra, I'll stick to it."

* *

A certain old man who had made his fortune, had one son who idled his time away week by week, until at length

the old fellow got tired of it, and one night thus addressed the young man, "John, I had to work for my means, and I do not like to see a young fellow idling his time away; now I am determined that you shall do something for yourself; to-morrow morning I shall give you £500, and you will leave home for twelve months; go where you like, do as you like; but when you return in a year's time, bear in mind I expect you to bring every penny of the £500 back with you, and something in addition; you will start £500 better off than I did, and you ought to be able to make something of it." Protests were vain, the old man meant it, and John was duly turned out. Twelve months elapsed, and he was on his way to the paternal mansion, when he met a friend in the road who knew all about the old man's action, and after the first greetings, he said to him, "Well, John, how have you gone on?" "Oh," said John, "I have spent all the £500, and I owe money in addition; I do not know what my father will say." "Oh," said his friend, laughing, "the old fellow will be glad to see you back, and will kill the fatted calf." John was not quite sure about this, but in due time he interviewed his father, and the next day met his friend in the road again. "Well, John," said the latter, "how did you get on? Did he kill the fatted calf?" "Not exactly;" said John, "but he precious near killed the prodigal son."

* *

A travelling Hebrew called at a roadside inn and asked for food. The landlady did not much like the look of the man, and said she had nothing she could let him have. Just at that moment, however, a delicious odour of something roasting reached him. "Ach! vot is dat I shmell?" said he. "Oh!" said the landlady, "you will not eat that, it is pork." The man groaned audibly, but he was very, very hungry, and he thought he could screw his courage and

his conscience up to the pork, if the landlady would but cut him "just von leetle bit off de outside." So she did, and he sat down to feed. But as he raised the first mouthful to his lips there was a flash of lightning and an instant peal of thunder that shook the building to its very foundations. "Fader Abraham!" said he, dropping his knife and fork, and rising instinctively to go, "vot a jolly row about a bit o' pork."

* *

"John," said a friend to the plaintiff in a County Court case as they left the Court, the verdict having been in favour of the plaintiff with costs, "that is the most astounding decision I ever heard; you had no case whatever, and even your own witnesses told against you. How was it managed?" "Well," said the winner, "to tell you the truth, I sent the judge a £5 note." "W-h-a-t," said his friend, "do you mean to say he is open to take a petty bribe?" "Ah! you mistake," was the answer, "I sent it with the defendant's compliments."

* *

They were burying a deacon out in America who had been a big gun in his time, and they gave him a great funeral when he went off. There were six horses to the hearse, and there was a brass band, and a whole town full of disconsolate mourners. The solemn procession was slowly wending its sad way to the grave-side, the band discoursing an appropriately doleful dirge, the mourners being thoroughly dejected and miserable, when suddenly the man with the trombone played just one note, so tremendous, so awful, that a general stampede instantly took place; the horses took fright and bolted with the hero of the occasion; the crowd of mourners followed after, and even his fellow-bandsmen retreated to a safe distance, leaving the gentleman with the trombone in undisputed possession of the cemetery. As soon as the leader

of the band had recovered something of his equanimity, he timidly approached and thus addressed the trombone : “ What on airth are yew doing ? ” “ Wal,” said the trombone, looking closely at his music for he was short-sighted, “ wal, I’ll be gosh-dalled : I thought it was a note, and it is a hoss fly, and I played it.”

* *

The late Archbishop Thomson used to enjoy telling a tale to the effect that some years ago he was staying at a quiet little inn up one of the Dales, and having made himself known with an intimation that he had no wish to have his rest broken by daily callers, was properly attended to during his stay. When he proposed to leave, his bill was duly brought in answer to his request, and His Grace forthwith filled up a cheque for the amount and signed it, as usual, “ W. Ebor.” The would-be cute landlord looked dubiously at the signature and then unblushingly remarked, “ I thowt ye were leein’ when ye *said* ye were t’ Archbishop.”

* *

A certain lady who had not been born in the purple but had risen by her husband’s industry and integrity to a position of great wealth, had,—being provided with a splendid mansion and troops of friends—issued invitations for that most awful event—the first dinner party. The great day came, and the homely matron, ever busy with her household cares, could not be satisfied to leave the arrangement of the table to anybody but herself. All day long she worked and tittivated (I think that is the lady’s word) here, there, and everywhere ; and then at length when the finishing stroke had been given and the last flowers added to the epergnes she summoned her friendly confidante, the cook, who had known her all her life and been with her through her progress, and solicited her opinion on what the Ettrick

Shepherd used to call the "towt an sammel." "Now, cook," she said, "will it dew?" "Well," said cook dubiously as she surveyed the inviting prospect with arms akimbo, "Aye, it will do, if thou keeps thy mouth shut."

* *

A working man in a Yorkshire mining district got married, and a week or two after they settled down at home. An old friend of his called to spend the evening with them and see the new wife. When he left, the husband accompanied him to the door, and when they were fairly out of hearing of the better half, the husband said to his departing guest, "Well, Jack, now thou has seen her, what does ta think on her?" And his candid friend replied, "Well, to tell ye t' plain truth, Dick, nowt." "No," said the husband, "no more do I."

* *

A working man in a West Riding town had ordered a pair of new trousers, which were duly delivered at his cottage about eight o'clock one Saturday night. Full of the importance of the event, he went upstairs at once to try them on, and coming down again, said to his wife: "I say, lass, thou'll be obliged to alter yond breeches; that fool of a tailor has made 'em four inches too long. I'se nivver get to chapel with them as they are." Then that busy lady, surrounded by her pledges of affection, thus replied: "I'se do nowt o' t' sort; I'se six hats to trim for these lasses, or they can't go out to-morrow, and I isn't bahn to start tailoring for thee at midneet." Whereupon the disappointed man vanished to spend the evening elsewhere. By and bye, the eldest daughter, a girl of seventeen, who had heard what had passed, taking pity on her father, went quietly upstairs without saying anything to anyone, and took four inches off the trousers legs. Very late at night, the mother relented, and knowing nothing of what had happened, she

also took four inches off, and what was said when the unfortunate victim got into them next morning may be left to the imagination.

* *

The skipper of a coasting vessel, sailing from Bristol, had among his crew an Irishman whose knowledge of seafaring matters was almost limited to knowing bow from stern. The captain put him on the look-out one very dark night, giving him strict injunctions to report anything in the nature of a light. By and bye he approached the skipper and said, "Cap'n, there's something foreinst the vessel." "What is it?" said the captain. "I don't know," said the Irishman. "What is it like?" asked the Captain. "Well, sorr," says Pat, "there's a red light, and a white light, and a green light, and it looks like a chemist's shop."

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The common or garden type of angler is usually such a fair even-going fellow that it is perplexing to meet with one out of the ordinary run. In the views, the wishes, and the ambitions of most of us there is as little difference as there is between a rich man and a dog's tail—and there is less than you might imagine—one keeps a carriage and the other keeps a wagging, at least, it does until you muzzle the other end of it. This is a bold flight, I know, and perhaps you had better forget you have read it. I was seated not long ago next to a genial soul in a very remote corner of the land, of course, and I ventured to sound him as to the depths and shoals of his piscatorial experience and particularly as to fly-fishing, and as I cannot improve on his own narrative it must be told in the vernacular of the county in which it occurred. "Nay, I've nivver done much fly-fishing. A friend o' mine telled me at it were superior to coarse fishing, soa I thought I'd try, and I bought all t' tackle 'at were

necessary and gave thirty shillin' for it. An' one day I went off, and I'd gotten into t' waders and were reyt well rigged out; my rod lewked splendid, and my flies fluttered about in t' breeze. Eh! barn, but it were grand, I tell ye, an' afore I geet tut t' river, I hed to cross a grave-yard and there were a chap sat on a tombstoan eatin' a pasty, and he axed to lewk at my tackle, an' I showed it him, and at after he'd lewked, he offered me two and thirty shillin' for it; soa I selled it him, an' I've nivver bought none since, and that's all t' fly fishin' at ivver I hed."

A little fellow, who had been dining not wisely but too well in the town of Kirkcaldy, took a short cut across the parish graveyard, and had the misfortune to take a header into a newly-dug grave. There he fell asleep—not being much worse for his fall—and he slept on comfortably in his cold quarters for some hours, until at length he was awoke by a tremendous blast from the foghorn of a steamboat moored at the jetty just below. It was natural, I suppose, that as he opened his eyes and saw where he was, he should mistake the portentous trumpeting for something much more awful. Raising himself slowly, he calmly looked round the graveyard and surveyed the other tombs with an anxious eye, on the look-out for someone else. Finding, however, that no one else put in an appearance, he thus delivered himself, "Ma conscience, I'm the only man saved! It's a poor show for Kirkcaldy."

A correspondent, who said he had had the misfortune to be "run" by bulls on the river bank, wrote to know the best remedy for bull. Personally I have never seen a bull that would listen to reason; that is the worst of a bull, he is so stuck up and wants so much of his own way. For my

part I consider it lost time to stop and try to wheedle him ; you might as well try to humbug your mother-in-law. My advice is, hook it. Not the bull, mind, but hook It ; cut, run, skedaddle, mizzle, up the sides and down the middle. "Stand not upon the order of your going, but go at once." I have heard it said that the most uproariously funny bull will become quite tractable, and even affectionate, if you scratch him behind the head, at the same time talking to him nicely. I only give you this on the authority of others, and, for myself, shall prefer to "cut my lucky."

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A good many years ago, I was going down the bank of the Wharfe when I perceived a man's head and shoulders sticking out of the water at the edge of a deep hole. As I came alongside him (he was on the far side), I perceived B——, an angler I knew, who had come out for the day with S——. Close behind him on the bank was a bull, breathing snorts and groans of vengeance at his victim in the water. "What are you doing there, B——?" I shouted. "Cannot you see? Do you think I am here because I like it?" he answered. "I cannot get across to your side because it is too deep, and he won't let me go back; I suppose I shall have to drown at last. I wish you would throw stones at the brute." "Where is S——?" I enquired. "He is up that tree; he has been there half an hour or more, but I fancy he thinks I am drowned; or else he is dead of fright; I haven't heard him speak for a long time. We are having a day out I can tell you. Throw stones, there's a good fellow; kill him if you can." I am afraid some of the stones I shied fell nearer B—— than the carcass of the bull, and B—— protested I was doing it on purpose. But after a steady bombardment for some time the bull retired in good order, B—— came out of the river, S—— came down the tree, and the engagement was over.

An artist angler was sketching, when he perceived a bull, prepared for active business, coming towards him at the charge. Down went paint-box, easel, and stool, and the angler struck a bee-line for a wall fifty yards off. He got over just in time, and when he gathered himself up on the other side he found himself within six yards of a very young bull calf. Being a choleric man, he arose in his passion and pounded that bit of infant veal into one mass of bruises. He banged it about the nose, boxed its ears with his fists, screwed its tail round, called it opprobrious names, and finally sat down out of breath; then, arising once more, he resumed the assault, and, concentrating all his energy into one tremendous kick that was not unlikely to dislocate some of the animal's ribs, he concluded by saying, "There, take that; and now thou can go and tell thy father."

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Five men were crossing a field when a bull gave chase. Four of them succeeded in getting over a stone wall into the next field; the fifth was too late, but managed by great dexterity to hang on to the bull's tail. Forthwith the bull tore round the field at about twenty miles an hour with the man hanging on, and as they came to the spot where the lucky four were safely quartered behind the wall, they burst into a guffaw at their comrade's expense. Three times the bull and the man went round the field in this fashion, and three times his friends had laughs at his expense, until at length as he passed them on his wild career once more, he yelled "Aye! ye may laugh now, but ye'll not laugh when his tail breaks, and this is t' last time round."

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It is no use staying and endeavouring to argue with a bull; the only thing to be done is to run for your life if you are not too fat, and, if you are, lie down at once, like a man,

and let the bull dance on you. There was a drum-major in the American Civil War who bolted from the field of battle at the sound of the first gun, and remarked to his captain, who arrested him and called him a coward, that he would rather be a coward all his life than be a corpse fifteen minutes. There is sense, but no valour, in this argument. Valour is of no moment when bulls are about. Someone has said that an onion is a potent leveller, being the most democratic product of nature; eaters thereof are on a level of absolute equality, whether they are kitchen-maids or queens. A bull is as strong as an onion, anyway, and can bring the tears into your eyes quite as quickly. Take my advice when next you encounter a bull; act with promptitude and alacrity. Delays are dangerous; remember Campbell's boy; he was seated on his father's kitchen chimney flying his kite, when his father in the kitchen having been told it was a good thing to fire a gun up a chimney to clear it, took it in his head to let fly. Young Campbell knew something had happened, but do you think he stayed to enquire what it was? On the contrary, he rolled off the roof instantly and went to bed, where he lay for three weeks, I have been told, with his face downwards.

YB 10486