THE

ANGLER'S COMPANION

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

ANGLING REMINISCENCES

OF THE

RIVERS AND LOCHS OF SCOTLAND.

A VOLUME OF COLLOQUIES.

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THE

ANGLER'S COMPANION

A POPULAR AND PRACTICAL HANDBOOK

TO THE

ART OF ANGLING

BY

THOMAS TOD STODDART

Author of
"Angling Reminiscences," &c. &c.

THIRD EDITION—REVISED

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EDITORIAL PREFACE.

In placing a revised and cheaper edition of the present work before the public, little need be said regarding either the book or its distinguished author, both are so well known. The work has been a standard one, on this attractive and interesting subject, ever since its first appearance. Indeed, by the time the second edition appeared, the author had spent nearly half a lifetime in little else, than angling and writing on matters connected with the gentle art. Since the publication of the second edition, it having become illegal to fish with salmon roe, the portion bearing on that matter has, of course, been omitted from the present issue. Likewise the information that appeared there, regarding the various lettings for rod-fishing, has been omitted, being now quite superseded by that contained in any recent Sportsman's Guide. The son of a distinguished naval officer, Mr. Stoddart studied for the bar. Finding this profession ungenial, he withdrew from practice, and settling at Kelso on the banks of the Tweed, spent his life as already mentioned; became a voluminous writer, and at the same time probably the most noted

angler in Scotland. The productions of Mr. Stoddart's pen may be detailed as follows: "The Lunacy or Death Wake: A Necromant in Five Chimeras;" "The Art of Angling;" "Angling Reminiscences;" "Angling Songs and Poems;" "Abel Massinger, or the Aeronaut. A Romance;" "The Angler's Companion," two editions; "An Angler's Rambles and Angling Songs;" "Songs of the Seasons and other Poems"—all now being out of print save "The Angler's Companion," and "Angling Reminiscences." The latter volume, though comparatively little known, is an extremely racy, interesting work written in colloquial style throughout, and forms an agreeable companion to the former book.

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THE

ANGLER'S COMPANION

A

POPULAR AND PRACTICAL

HANDBOOK

TO THE

ART OF ANGLING

THE ANGLER'S SONG.

I.

Bring the rod, the line, the reel!
Bring, oh bring the osier creel!
Bring me flies of fifty kinds,
Bring me showers, and clouds, and winds.
All things right and tight,
All things well and proper,
Trailer red and bright,
Dark and wily dropper—
Casts of midges bright,
Made of plover hackle,
With a gaudy wing,
And a cobweb tackle.

II.

Lead me where the river flows,
Show me where the alder grows,
Reeds and rushes, moss and mead,
To them lead me—quickly lead,
Where the roving trout
Watches round an eddy,
With his eager snout
Pointed up and ready,
Till a careless fly
On the surface wheeling,
Tempts him rising sly
From his safe concealing.

III.

There as with a pleasant friend,
I the happy hours will spend
Urging on the subtle hook,
O'er the dark and chancy nook,
With a hand expert
Every motion swaying,
And on the alert
When the trout are playing;
Bring me rod and reel,
Flies of every feather,
Bring the osier creel—
Send me glorious weather!

THE ANGLER'S COMPANION.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is no river in Great Britain which affords so many facilities to the angler for the pursuit of his art as the far-famed Border stream. Taken in connection with its tributaries, it includes a range of water sufficient, throughout the season, to engage the skill and assiduity of thousands of the gentle craft; and this it does, without giving occasion for a single dispute, on the ground of interference with his sport, to any one individual of the whole number. Extending upwards of one hundred miles, the Tweed itself furnishes sufficient elbow-room for the daily plying of at least twice that number of rods, and when I include along with it the Ettrick and its twin sister Yarrow, the Gala, Leader, Teviot, Till, and Whitadder, not to mention the streams of the upper valleys, and the countless rivulets, swarming with trout, from which one and all are supplied, I have expressed in the above statement no over-drawn estimate of the resources, in point of amusement, which this river comprehends.

Of all our waters, from its fountain head to the sea, Tweed is unquestionably the most amply stocked with river trout; it is frequented also throughout the greater part of the year, by different species of the migratory *salmonidæ*—the *salar*, the *eriox*, and *salmo albus;* these

distribute themselves, on their ascent from the ocean, over a large proportion of the main river. They occupy, for a long course of miles, its pools and shelter-places. At certain seasons, they push up in great numbers into the smaller feeders, and although, to the wandering brother of the angle, not always affording the same measure of successful sport that he meets with on some of our Highland streams, yet their presence and taking humour are more to be relied on. They continue haunting the fresh-water throughout a much longer period of the year, and are more independent of rains and temperature, while, by their distribution over a large extent of current, they yield, what is the case on few of our northern rivers, abundance of exciting recreation for a whole host of salmon slayers.

But while such are the general features of this river, its individual superiority in this respect will be more clearly exemplified, when I limit my observations to the particular portion of its course, which, extending five or six miles upwards, and as many in an opposite direction from Kelso, may be said to lie in the vicinity of that town. In this stretch of water are embraced, unquestionably, some of the finest salmon casts, as far as rod-fishing is concerned, in Great Britain. Spring, summer, autumn, and winter all furnish their fresh-run supply of the scaly tribe. The clean, firm-set, eye-delighting fish of March and April is succeeded, during June and July, by the whitlings and early grilses; these again, throughout the remainder of the season, are followed by others of older growth intermingled with breeders of every description, while to crown all, the "grey-schule," cleaving undauntedly the December torrents, brings up the rear; nor is it until they have escaped the perils of the net and coble, and found their way through the arches of Coldstream Bridge, that these—the migratory fish of Tweed—discover much appetite for the baits of the angler, or seem inclined to come right venturesomely, towards his tinselled lures. Here it is, in the stretch of water alluded to, that they most freely exercise their capricious tastes, and here they are found in more abundance and perfection than in the upper portions of the river.

Nor, while Tweed, in the vicinity of Kelso, excels as a salmon stream, is it less famed as affording, along with its tributaries Teviot and Eden, the choicest of sport to those

preferring the humbler but not less delightful branch of the art—trout-fishing. There, at all seasons, and in all varieties of ways, has the angler an opportunity of showing his address; he is not, as on some of our northern rivers, liable to become surfeited with an over-abundance of rapacious and unwary fish, or tired with the uniformity in point of size and appearance which these present to his eye; on the contrary, he has to deal, as befits him, face to face, with craft and caprice, while there is this, moreover, to excite and interest him in the pursuit, that there are ever and anon hovering, within cast of his line, trout, which, on being hooked, will not submit without a struggle, and when captured, cannot fail to call up those feelings of exultation which none but anglers comprehend.

A ten years' residence on Tweedside, and in the neighbourhood of the town alluded to, along with the further experience of two seasons on the banks of salmon-streams in the North of Scotland, has naturally enough, since the publication of my "Scottish Angler," contributed in a large measure to deepen my acquaintance with the practice of the art. During the whole of this period, I have pursued it with a measure of enthusiasm little inferior to that which actuated my boyish years; and were I to relate instances in order to prove my attachment to river-side recreations, I should only excite the wonder of many "grave and reverend seigniors" who draw their life and enjoyment from very different, but, by me, unenvied sources.

Thus located, I have had, besides those already mentioned, various facilities afforded me for bettering my information on points connected with rod-fishing. I have been brought, for instance, much into contact with able and intelligent craftsmen—have listened to the exposition of their notions, as regards the tastes and habits of fish, the attractive nature of such and such a lure, as well as the advantage to be derived from this or that form of tackle. The opportunity also has often presented itself of witnessing their feats and good fortune; and I have frequently, with the solemn delight of a child, drank in the wondrous exploits of some river-enchanter,—credulous while I listened, and willing, in spite of reason, to be credulous still.

Surrounded with these advantages, and encouraged by the solicitations of numerous friends, I have ventured to throw together the following chapters. They involve, all

of them, plain matter-of-fact subjects, which are dealt with in a corresponding style. I have avoided, as much as possible, dressing them up for favour, expunging, where it could be done consistently, whatever savoured of the superfluous; and although impelled, now and then, to embellish my remarks with a dash of the ideal, I have resolutely disclaimed its assistance in the relation of all matters of fact and experience.

The first portion of the volume is taken up principally with what relates to river trout, and the various methods of capturing them. My treatment of this subject I have not allowed to interfere, except in a corrective and elucidatory form, with what lies embodied in my former treatise. The views presently under submission are the result of more extended practice and enlarged information. They present, it is true, little or no claim to originality; but, as the cullings of yesterday from a new field of experience, may possess, perhaps, freshness enough in their details to attract and interest the angling enthusiast.

On the subject of trouting with the fly, as well as the method of dressing fly-hooks, I have dwelt briefly and generally. So many treatises have been written upon these matters, that no room remains for their further exposition; and when I behold the catalogue replete with entomological science, which forms the *sine quâ non* of the modern angler's pocket-book, I shrink to confess my own unpardonable ignorance in regard to them. On the practice of worm-fishing in clear waters, minnow and parr-tail spinning, etc., I have entered into circumstantial details. These two branches of the art are considered by all anglers of experience to rank as highly as the pursuit of the fly-fisher. They are certainly, although a degree more troublesome, as exciting; and they require, even under the most favourable circumstances, a greater exercise of skill and judgment in order to command success.

In that portion of the volume which treats of salmon fishing, I have drawn out lists of the most approved flies. These have been extended by me considerably beyond what, to my own idea, forms in point of material, an efficient stock or variety, under ordinary circumstances, and my inducement to swell the number further than what seems absolutely requisite has proceeded simply from a wish to include every favourite and tried hook. In selecting the

fly-stock described in these lists, I have received considerable assistance from various quarters, and indeed, throughout the remaining chapters of the volume and much of the foregoing matter, I stand indebted to the friendly aids and suggestions of more than one intelligent angler.

But while drawing liberally upon the oral communications of others, and from those sources which my own experience has opened up, I have not neglected the sinewing of a large portion of my work with details and quotations from written authorities. In doing this, however, I have taken especial care to avoid pressing heavily upon the original matter of the volume, or interlarding it with extracts which, although confessedly to the point, are not in critical demand. The great bulk of these details has been taken from statistical sources, and stands incorporated in the concluding chapters of the work. It consists, indeed, of facts already recorded, which are at the service and within reach of every one who has leisure and inclination to seek out and arrange them. This portion of my task I have found to be more laborious than I at first anticipated, but the principal difficulty lay, not in the mere collecting of materials, but in condensing and putting these together, so as to form a summary of correct and useful information.

I feel it unnecessary to add anything further in the shape of introductory matter. What remains to be done is to discharge, simply, an act of duty. It is to express my acknowledgments to more than one individual for the encouragement as well as assistance I have received, while penning these pages. This means of excitement withheld, I should have ventured to the task with a much greater measure of diffidence than has been cherished by me throughout its performance. There are many, I feel assured, more qualified to have engaged in it than myself—many, at least, not less enthusiastic, and who have attained, as anglers, to a much higher degree of excellence. I have been bold enough to take possession of their vantage-ground—inconsiderate enough, it may be said, to unfold some of the secrets of their proficiency, but it shall not be added that, in doing so, I have neglected to tender my acknowledgments, and give expression to my obligations.

CHAPTER II.

THE FRESH-WATER TROUT.

ASTONISHING Variety of Species.—Instances in Point.—Effect of Transference on this or that Breed.—Cross Breeds.—Food and Habits.—Growth and Size Affected by Sustenance, Range of Water, Breeding Accommodation, &c.—Loch Trout.—River Trout.—Size of Tweed Trout.—Illustration of the Effects of Superior Feeding.—Leet and Esk Contrasted.—Growth of Trout.—The Salmo *Cœcifer*.—Salmo *Ferox*.—Swallow-Smolt.

WHAT is a river without its trout? What is the ocean without its navies? What are the heavens without their stars? There is scarcely a scene or landscape, in Highlands or Lowlands, with which this fish is not in some measure associated. Climb yonder hill, and gaze around and before you. See there an earl's proud mansion, his parks and pleasure-grounds. See there trees of twice a century's growth,

> "Whose very shadows
> Are histories on which to legislate;
> The veteran boughs are hung with oracles
> And legendary song."

But mark! seemingly at your feet, the life-blood of the picture, a broad, shining, rejoicing river! Gaze in turn up along the valley; yonder, as if from a huge cavern in the distance, you behold it issuing; you catch with your eye the gleam of its progress; now, at the base of a green ascent or sheep-walk; farther on, amid pastures and corn-fields; now, skirting a forest; now forming, as it were, the moat of a tower or castle; and, again, at yonder point, gathering in fresh tribute from a silvery stream. How it progresses! like the everlasting march of a king—music at every step—homage and increase at every turn. See, now it winds onward below us. The sward freshens where it flows; the flowers are more varied and abundant. It laves the walls of a town. It glides under a bridge of many arches. It pursues far on, far as the eye can stretch, its radiant and welcome course.

And this river, one of the noblest of our streams, would it be the same—would it be equally endeared to us anglers—were it a fishless, unpeopled water, devoid of the "mottled

par," the star-sided trout, the glittering salmon? What a blank, dreary aspect it would have, unassociated with these! What chasms there would be in the mind and memory—in the forethought and expectation of the beholder! Not the landscape, not the lore, not the minstrelsy, not the warble of birds, not the chiming of the sunlit river itself, could fill them up. Unpeopled! desolate! The fortunes of a thousand rills are woven here. The dew of the mountain, the overfill of the lake, the upwelling of the spring, the boon of the cloud, have met and are mingled in this one great artery. Its material is life, its flow is life, its sound life; the shadows that fleet over it are all life, and yet, imagine it, ye that can, it is an unpeopled river! No anglers' festivals are held here; no fisher moves along the bank; no wily nets are cast across the pool; no torch-light reveals the secrets of its channels. It is an unpeopled river! The salmon is a stranger to its fords and strongholds; the water-fly sports unharmed on its surface; the otter refuses to frequent it; the heron over its own shadow languishes and dies.

Visionary! there is no such stream in broad Scotland. The chemist's art, the bleach-field, the paper-mill, the railway, acids and vitriol, gases, lime, sheep-washing, manures, and machinery combined, have not yet produced this result as respects a single rivulet. Our very mill-runs still contain trout—our lakes and rivers abound in the scaly tribe. Ramble with me from shire to shire, and I warrant thou wilt cull from each a measure of sport, ample enough to satisfy a man of moderate wishes. Art thou otherwise, I have no key to thy humour; in these times, alas! of exclusion and selfishness, I have no power to assist thee. But there are trout enough for all, for the sport of the peasant as well as that of the peer; and a malison seize the churl who would grudge to the labouring man his snatch of pleasure, or deny him, although obtained through his own skill and industry, the morsel that economises or adds life-prolonging zest to his homely and everyday fare.

Unquestionably, there exists no species of fish, which, judging of it by the external marks, holds claim to so many varieties as the common fresh-water trout. In Scotland, almost every lake, river, and streamlet possesses a breed peculiar, in outward appearance, to itself. To prove and illustrate this, I do not require to go farther than the

district in which I reside. Within a circle of about twenty miles from Kelso, I find embraced the following streams and rivulets!—Tweed, Teviot, Ettrick, Leader, Ale, Kale, Eden, Blackadder, Whitadder, Leet, Coquet, Till, Colledge, Bowmont, Gala, Rule, all trouting waters; yet, strange to say, there is not one of the whole number but lays claim, as far as regards the point of distinction in question, to its own variety of trout; and this is the more remarkable, that, with the exception of Coquet, all the streams I have mentioned have connection with the Tweed, or ultimately contribute to it.

To describe, within reasonable compass, the marks and features which characterise and distinguish each of these varieties is utterly impossible; and the task, happily, is not required. They consist, generally speaking, in the size, number, disposition, and colours of the beads or spots; in the formation of the head and tail; in the shape and proportions of the fish; its tendency to become thick, deep, or round; to fatten, or remain lank; in the tints also, changeable as seasons and even states of water will render them, which most frequently pervade the skin. Nor, in fact, is it to be wondered at, when we consider the almost infinite number of changes which even the size, disposition, number, and colours of the beads alone will effect in the external appearance of the trout, that the breeds or varieties thus judged of should baffle all power of computation.

But in regard to the waters above mentioned (and I have omitted none, within the limits assigned, of any note), the trout peculiar to each are distinguished, not merely by their external features, but by another point of character as well; to judge of which, in relation to so many different streams, may be esteemed a matter of some difficulty. I allude to their edible qualities, the flavour and degree of curd and richness they possess, when in season. Now, in regard to this feature or point of character, I can safely affirm that it is almost as varied as the outward marks which distinguish the fish of one river from those of another. I make this observation, not merely upon my own judgment, although I have exercised it oftener than once, as regards the produce of all of the streams in question; but I do so on the authority of others, and there are many such, who can attest as to the truth of what I have stated. In Kelso itself, there is scarcely an inhabitant but what can at once,

by the exercise of his palate and organs of taste alone, distinguish betwixt a Tweed, a Teviot, and an Eden trout, or the produce of the main river and its two tributaries that flow in the vicinity of the town. Externally, the legitimate breed of each is unmistakably marked, (there occur, I allow, mixed varieties or crosses, frequenting in common all the three waters, and the presence of which may be accounted for in various ways); but, more than this, the very colour, and consistence of the flesh when cooked, the flavour and richness it exhibits, are all severally unlike. The true Eden trout, for instance, is a deeply-shaped fish, small-headed, and of dark complexion on the exterior. The stars or beads are by no means numerous, but they are large and distinctly formed; those on either flank being of a deep crimson or purple hue, and encircled with a whitish ring or halo. Its flesh, when in season, on being cooked, is of a fine pink colour; the flakes interlayered with rich curd. At the table, it is highly esteemed for its firmness and general excellence.

The Teviot trout, externally, is a more beautiful fish than that of the Eden. The back is finely curved, and the head small. It wants depth, but possesses considerable breadth of form. The spots, which are large, stand well out, and engage the eye. They are generally of a purple colour, inclining to crimson. A fine gold or orange tint pervades the exterior of the fish, which, towards the belly, fades away into pearly whiteness. In its edible qualities, the Teviot trout is certainly somewhat inferior to that of Eden. When beyond half-a-pound in weight, it cuts red and possesses considerable richness of taste. What are caught in the lower parts of the river, from Oxnam downwards, are much superior, both in size and flavour, to those taken higher up; and I have noticed that in certain pools, they are firmer and better shaped than in others.

As regards the proper Tweed trout, it is quite easily distinguished from those of Teviot and Eden. The general shape of this variety is by no means faulty. Its head, except in the case of overgrown individuals or such as are found in the rocky parts of the river, is moderate-sized. Its paunch alone has the appearance of being out of proportion to the rest of the body. This receptacle is capable of holding a large quantity of food, and is usually met with much distended, or in a loose flabby state.

In Tweed, the cross breeds are very numerous, and they all, in some degree, grow to partake of the peculiarity I mention. The true stock, however, is easily distinguished. It inhabits the river from its very sources, as far down, I may say, as Norham. The cross breeds, on the other hand, are severally, according to their varieties, found in the neighbourhood of such tributaries as contribute to their production; for instance, in the Tweed below where Teviot discharges itself, trout are frequently met with which unite the characteristics belonging to the fish of both rivers.

The trout of Tweed, I allude to the pure *bonâ fide* breed, is plentifully decorated with stars or spots. Of these, the most attractive are of a vivid crimson hue. The general colour or outward complexion of the fish is yellow; its back having an olive, frequently a grey shade or tint. In its edible qualities, it is much inferior to an Eden or Teviot trout. It seldom possesses any tendency to redness in the flesh, and unless cooked shortly after being taken, becomes soft and curdless. It is, however, when in season, quite sweet and palatable, and in some parts of the river, where there is good feeding-ground, acquires a considerable degree of richness.

I have described the trout of these three streams, all running within a short distance of each other, in order to exemplify the existing varieties of this species of fish. It is needless to extend my observations upon the subject any further. The most lengthened inquiry can only lead to the conclusion, that every lake, river, or streamlet, be their connection with each other what it may, possesses its peculiar breed of trout; and all I shall do further to establish this fact is, to instance, in general terms, a few additional localities where it has fallen most strikingly under my own observation. I take the neighbourhood of St. Mary's Loch, in Selkirkshire. The loch itself is contiguous to that of the Lowes, and united with it by a small run, not a hundred yards in length. The two sheets of water contain distinctly marked varieties of trout. Of streams connected with these lakes, there are the Chapelhope and Corsecleugh burns, the Summerhope burn, the Meggat water, with its tributary, Winterhope burn; Yarrow, with its feeders; Douglas burn and Altrive lake, —every individual water possessing its own peculiar breed of fish. Extend the range to Ettrick, and the same obser-

vation holds good. The main stream, the Back burn, Faahope burn, Rankle burn, Timah, etc., all have their own varieties. Go to Dumfries-shire, to Loch Skene, Moffat-water, the Annan, the Esk, the Liddle, and the case is exactly similar. Ascend the rivers of Perthshire—the Tay, the Earn, the Almond, the Isla, the Tummel, and the Garry: or its smaller streams, such as May, Ruchil, Erochty. Go to Lochs Tay, Earn, Tummel, Rannoch, Freuchie, Broom, Turit; or retreat northward, as far as Ross-shire, to the Conan, Blackwater, Meig, and Orrin,—to Lochs Luichart, Ledgowan, Achnanault, Garve; or to a spot in that county embracing, within a short distance of each other, four small lakes, Lochs Laran, Nech Beann, na-Dhream, and Achilty; each of which has its own peculiar breed of trout, differing in size, shape, quality, and external appearance. To every stream and range of water mentioned, and I have caught trout in all, the fact here stated applies; and to adduce, as could easily be done, additional evidence in corroboration from other districts, I esteem quite unnecessary.

In entering, as has been done, into details upon this subject, it may be asked what purpose I have in view; or, in other words, does the fact of their being such numerous varieties of the fresh-water trout assist in forming any conclusions beneficial to science? I leave this to be judged of and considered by others better adapted for the task than I am. One or two observations, however, I venture to make relative to the varieties in question; and first I hold, that trout, on being transferred, whether by accident or otherwise, from their parent stream or lake to another range of water, rapidly undergo a great change; one, however, that does not affect their external marks or embellishments, which features I therefore regard as best denoting the breed or variety.

For instance, the trout of Teviot carried accidentally into Tweed lose, in fact, after a few weeks, many of those distinctive points which the superior feeding of the first-mentioned stream afforded them. They lose their redness of flesh, their strength, liveliness, etc.; but in no case can it be proved that the change has so affected their outward appearance as to alter the character and arrangement of the stars or maculæ. These they retain as the indices of their origin; and they are as essentially theirs in this character, as are its spots the distinctive property of the

leopard. With regard to the general colour or complexion of the fish, that is quite another matter. Nothing is so readily operated upon, even within the precincts of its own parent stream, as the skin of the trout, in relation to colours. In this respect, it is like that of the chameleon. During a top-flood, when the river is clayed or thick, and fish are only to be captured by the pout, hand-net, or some such contrivance, they present a white, I might almost say sickly, look. On the water becoming brown or porter-coloured, they assume a fine yellow, healthy, and inviting appearance; and on its recurring to the ordinary size, they are again transformed, and partake of a complexion agreeing to that of the stream itself. The character of their retreats also, the nature of the stones or banks they lurk under, influence, not unfrequently, the general complexion I speak of, and sometimes lend a parti-coloured appearance to the fish, quite independent, however, of its fixed decorations in the shape of stars, etc.

I have stated that fresh-water trout, on being transferred from the parent stream to another range of water, are capable of undergoing great changes. To what extent these, in any instance, will take place, must depend upon the nature of the transference. I have mentioned very cursorily the effect upon a Teviot trout when shifted to Tweed; but in respect to such a case, the transference is far from being violent. Besides the relation that exists betwixt the two rivers, as the tributary and its recipient, there are other accommodating circumstances which prevent the occurrence of any great change in the size, appearance, and flavour of the trout. For instance, the action and qualities, nay, in some measure, the feeding capacities of Teviot become diffused on its junction through Tweed; then there is the similarity of climate; the fact, also, that both rivers abound in trout of a similar size,—all of which circumstances operate as I have stated.

In order, therefore, better to illustrate my position, I shall assume the transference to be one of more violent character. I shall take the produce of a small stream, say, up to the number of four or five dozen trout. The breed or variety inhabiting this stream, I shall suppose seldom attain the length of nine inches, or weigh more than half-a-pound; as food, they are of inferior quality; in point of shape, they offer nothing attractive. These individuals I

transfer to a pond, or lake, hitherto devoid of fish, and occupying a space of several acres. Its soil or bottom I shall suppose to be composed of marl, or some such feeding substance. It is provided with ample shelter, and every requisite that can encourage the growth of trout. Well, what will be the effect of this change upon the character of the fish in question? It will not alter the setting or arrangement of their stars or distinguishing marks; but it will, and that most materially, improve, in a short space of time, their size, shape, and edible qualities. A single season itself would, in all probability, suffice to fatten them up to thrice the weight which it was possible for these trout to attain to in their own native stream. They will acquire more seemly and captivating proportions, and derive from liberal and luxurious feeding a corresponding richness of flavour and firmness of flake. That these latter results are frequently accompanied by a heightening of the internal colour—a change from its pristine whiteness to pink or red, I do not deny. Where there is shell marl, or abundance of insect food, this transmutation is likely to occur; but it is by no means, even under these circumstances, an infallible result of the transference. I am acquainted with a natural sheet of water, forty or fifty acres in extent, and stocked, as I have described, from a small streamlet, or hill burn, where, while the trout acquired large dimensions, and improved both in shape and flavour, they still retained the original white colour. Nor is redness in the flesh always an indication of superiority, as respects the edible qualities of the fish. I have partaken at table of trout distinguished for their high colour, and yet, in point of taste, they were soft, rank, and mud-flavoured; while, on the other hand, I have met with white-fleshed trout, firm, curdy, and good.

In regard to this matter of redness, peculiar to the flesh of salmon, trout, and charr, I am led more naturally to refer to it in a future chapter: it is therefore, at present, quite unnecessary to expatiate on the subject. Nor, in renewing my remarks relative to the transference of trout from one range of water to another, need I multiply instances. What has already fallen from me will suffice to bring out and illustrate some points in the natural history of the fish hitherto unrecorded. Their astonishing variety, every lake and river possessing its own distinct breed—the effect of change of circumstances on their appearance—the

chameleon-like transitions in point of hue undergone by them during a flood, and while it continues to abate—their shape, growth, and edible characteristics, have all cursorily been brought under view.

Of the food and habits of the trout, however, I have said comparatively little; nor have I called direct attention, while treating of their varieties, to what may be termed the cross breeds, in contra-distinction to the true or original breed, peculiar to each stream or lake. This last-mentioned subject I shall dismiss with a very few observations; and, first of all, I may notice, that the cross breeds to which I refer are simply those which have their origin in varieties of the common trout (*fario*) brought into contact with each other at the breeding season, and do not implicate the questionable produce, or mule breed, arising from any haphazard connection betwixt the *fario* and bull-trout, or whitling; a connection altogether discountenanced by nature, and which (if my notions respecting the breeding of fishes be correct) is not likely to take place. I may also remark, that, although cross varieties may, for a season or term of seasons, rival in number the true breed belonging to this or that stream, and threaten to extirpate it altogether, yet there is no fear or likelihood of such a result; the peculiar nature and qualities of the water, aided by the remaining original stock, always tending to reinstate the breed.

Thus, for instance, it has happened in the case of the upper part of Eden, above Stichel Linn; where, owing to the accidental escape of considerable quantities of another variety of trout from inclosed water at Mellerstain, the stream itself became the haunt, and continued so for three or four successive years, of a cross breed, which vied in numbers with the proper stock, and appeared, during the greater part of this period, as if it would ultimately supplant them altogether. This breed, however, and its after-crosses, have nearly disappeared, and the original trout are resuming, in point of numbers, their old position. I cannot add in point of size. In this respect there is a marked falling off, attributable, no doubt, to drainage and various agricultural improvements, which have been carried on at the sources and along the banks of the stream.

Again, in the case of Yarrow, in Selkirkshire, where, owing to an excess of trout having descended during the

spawning season of 1832 from St. Mary's Loch, the stream in question, its sole drainer, became in a manner over-run with the Loch variety, so that the real "yallow fin," as the Ettrick shepherd used to term them, was, for a space of some years, a fish of rare occurrence. Crosses betwixt it and the Loch trout occupied completely the upper part of the river, as far down as Yarrow Feus, and extended themselves from thence, in thinner distribution, to the vale of Ettrick. I am happy to state, however, from recent experience, that the original stock once more prevails in Yarrow.

The trout is unquestionably a voracious feeder. It consumes, in proportion to its size, a greater quantity of sustenance than other fresh-water fish; nor, in respect to the quality of its food, is it quite so scrupulous as is generally imagined. Look, for instance, at the variety it indulges in, according as the seasons, hours of the day, and state of the water or atmosphere prompt and direct it. In this variety are embraced the whole of the insect tribes, winged or otherwise; frogs, leeches, worms, slugs, snails, maggots, cad-bait, every sort and size of fly, beetle, and moth, the water-spider, etc. Then there are fish—the smaller ones of its own species, parr or fingerlings, minnows, loaches and sticklebacks, along with the roe or ova of salmon: and I doubt not even young birds and water-rats are occasionally made prey of by hungry river-trout. Examine the stomach, and you will generally find a large mass composed of insect-remains in a partly digested state, and superadded sometimes to these, the remnants of a parr, loach, or minnow. The carp, the tench, the perch, are not more ravenous or varied in their feeding than the common fresh-water trout. Even the pike itself, although a fearless, vindictive, and rapacious fish, is less gluttonous in its habits, and in its tastes infinitely more simple and congruous.

What is it then, it may be asked, that renders the trout difficult of capture? Its greedy propensities, one might imagine, would naturally allow little room to the angler for the exercise of skill and judgment. But experience has taught otherwise, and the simple reason of this is, that with these propensities the trout unites epicure habits, caprice in its hours and seasons of feeding, cunning, shyness, and watchful distrust. As an epicure, it battens one day upon surface or winged food, and the next upon ground susten-

ance. Sometimes the minnow will attract it, sometimes the worm; sometimes, turning from both with dislike or satiety, it will amuse its palate with delicacies of the minutest description, the larvæ of water-insects or pellets of ova, picked up with address and assiduity from among the interstices of rocks and stones, from the foliage or roots of water-plants, or while floating past it in the descending current. And this caprice as to its food, while it tests the skill and experience of the angler, is assisted in doing so by the cunning and natural mistrust of the fish; its quick, vigilant eye; its keen, distinguishing sense of smell, and similar instinctive endowments and perceptions.

The wariness and caution observable in trout frequenting certain localities are often, in fact, the result of circumstances, and indicate the existence of memory and other reflecting powers. It is not necessary, however, that a trout be pricked with the hook in order to give so uncommon a degree of acuteness to its faculties and render it more than ordinarily circumspect; the circumstance of its being frequently disturbed by the apparition of an insect clumsily imitated, or tackle of any other description, will of itself produce this effect. The disposition, also, of light and shadow near its haunt, the description and quantity of sustenance yielded within its feeding range, all subserve to create or banish distrust, to add to its wariness, or lull its suspicions. On the other hand, the pricking of the hook, unaccompanied by any exposure of the angler's contrivance wherewith the pricking was effected, will often fail to excite alarm; sometimes, when it does so, the pang will be of brief continuance: nay, in my experience, I have met with instances where the fish actually, a short time before, broke and carried away tackle, yet, retaining the willingness to feed, on a new lure being presented to it, returned eagerly to the charge, and, I may add, became captured.

One of these instances happened several years ago, when angling in Yarrow. A gentleman who preceded me on the river had the mischance to have his tackle, comprising a set or cast of flies, three in number, carried away by what he described to be a fish of unusual dimensions. On his relating the circumstance, at the close of the day's fishing, I produced, much to his amaze, the identical cast he had lost, and along with it the fish, an ordinary-sized trout, from whose jaws I had abstracted it.

A similar instance occurred to me in 1845, at the Makerston fishings, on Tweed, when angling with the worm in clear water. Happening to capture a trout of about a pound and a half in weight, I observed, while extracting the tackle from its mouth, the presence of another hook, quite free from rust, and with a small portion of gut attached to it. On mentioning this afterwards to the fisherman's assistant, he inquired if I had caught the trout at such a spot on the river, naming the foot of a particular stream or gullet, the South Clippers. He also described the hook and piece of gut attached to it, remarking, that on the previous day, a gentleman whom he attended had, while trouting with the worm, his tackle broken by a large trout at the place in question. His conjectures were correct.

I could relate, were it necessary, other similar occurrences met with from time to time, which prove that trout, although pricked and actually retaining the hook in their lip or jaw, are not necessarily excited to distrust or suspicion, or thereby, through the continued irritation, deterred from feeding. Not two days ago, during the week in which the above was penned, I caught a trout presenting the same appearances as the one just referred to, only that, in this case, the abstracted hook, No. 12 Adlington, had actually been swallowed; and as a proof of this having been done recently, the worm with which it had been baited still remained, occupying the shank and portion of broken gut attached to it. The marvel to me is, how, with this choking substance (it was a lob-worm, and of large dimensions), filling its throat, the fish could live, much less feed or swallow. Such instances, however, although occasionally met with, are not to be held as hostile to my prior statement, that the river-trout is of shy, cunning, and capricious habits; that it is a fish wary and vigilant, possessed of much natural discernment and strong instincts. They only show how circumstances will render these defensive qualities of little or no avail, and how, on certain occasions, its very instincts endanger their possessor.

I am not possessed of any authentic information, with regard to the greatest size attainable by the *fario*, or what is erroneously termed the parr-trout. The largest individuals are undoubtedly to be found in our lochs, where they batten most securely and luxuriously. There is one fact, however, to be urged in respect to the size of the

trout, namely, that it depends entirely upon the quantum and quality of food yielded to it, whether from channel or surface, and not upon the age of the fish. The range of water also is a matter to be taken into consideration in connection with its growth; for let a single trout be planted in a spring well, and tamed to such a degree as to take its food from one supplying it regularly and abundantly, still it will not increase much, if at all, in weight; and this is owing solely to the circumstance of its being confined, and not at liberty to choose its aliment according to the caprice of the moment: whereas in localities where the food varies with the seasons, and where there is choice at all times, and room for exercising it without challenge or interruption, trout will grow rapidly and to a great size.

In all lochs characterised by good feeding-ground and abundance of shelter, trout have a tendency to acquire large dimensions. This tendency, however, is frequently counteracted by the breeding accommodation in the shape of streams or feeders, which afford great facility for spawning. Under such circumstances, the stock, instead of attaining to great size, become numerous, as is the case in many of our lochs, where the feeding-grounds are both extensive and of good quality. The introduction of pike into such lochs aids, no doubt, in improving the dimensions and quality of the trout, but has not always this effect.

For instance, St. Mary's Loch, in Selkirkshire, contains pike and perch in considerable abundance, and yet the trout continue comparatively numerous, and are not distinguished on account of their size, seldom exceeding a pound in weight, and averaging little more than half-a-pound. The breeding waters, consisting of Meggat, Yarrow, and five or six hill burns which help to people the lake in question, are, in this instance, quite sufficient to keep up the supply, notwithstanding the ravages presumed to be committed by the fresh-water tyrant, which fish, I may mention, infests only the weedy portions of the loch, and is not found equally distributed, as is the case in Loch Leven, and many of our Highland sheets of water, around the margin. Were it so,—were every point of access to the shallows held in keeping by pike, most assuredly the trout would decrease in number; and should a fair proportion of their feeding-grounds remain at the same time accessible to them they, as certainly, would increase in respect to size.

We have illustrations of the fact afforded us by what has been noticed in a number of our Highland lochs: for instance, in Loch Tummel, in Perthshire; in Loch Vennachar, near Callander; also in Lochs Garve, Achnanault, and Ledgowan, in Ross-shire. In all these expanses of water, the pike are numerous and pretty equally distributed along the margin, having the desirable shelter and accommodation. The trout associated with them are consequently not abundant: but, generally speaking, of large size. They vary in point of weight from one and a half up to ten or twelve pounds weight.

It may be remarked, however, that lochs containing few or no pike, and where small trout, averaging from a quarter to one pound weight, are found in great abundance, not unfrequently, along with these, possess large individuals of the species, chiefly predatory in their habits, and which unquestionably commit havoc to a great extent among the others. Such fish have frequently been taken by trolling in Lochs Laggan, Tay, Ness, and Earn, where the trout captured with the fly seldom exceed a pound in weight, and are generally not so heavy. These monsters, I may observe, are quite different in character from the *Salmo ferox* of Lochs Awe and Shin; they are merely over-grown loch trout, of the same variety as the general stock of the lake they inhabit, or one or other of its tributaries. They have been captured, I am told, weighing 20 lbs., and upwards; nor shall I dispute the accuracy of this statement, but feel inclined to give it full credence.

In July, at Fort Augustus, I remember seeing a fish of the above description captured from the boat with trolling-tackle in Loch Ness—its weight being fourteen pounds. This, with the exception of several stuffed specimens of the *Salmo ferox* of Loch Awe, is the largest fresh-water trout I recollect ever to have seen. In point of shape, I may state, it was, to my eye, symmetrically faultless, being deep in the flank, small-headed, and beautifully curved in the back and shoulder—properties not always possessed by the description of trout I am alluding to, which, as overgrown individuals of their species, are inclined to show a monster front; big, bony jaws; a long, straight, thick-hided hull; and huge, flapping tail: in fact, all the characteristics which age, hunger, and roving habits are apt to engender.

The above observations regarding the size of fresh-water

trout hold reference entirely to those contained in our lochs, and to such, no question, the precedence ought to be allowed, for undeniably they excel our river-trout in many respects. Not only do they attain a greater size, and that, considering their advantages in point of shelter and feeding-ground, naturally enough, but in general, also, they possess a finer quality, and bear away the palm with regard to external beauty. River-trout, however, although inferior in all these respects, command to a larger extent the esteem of the angler. They afford him sport of a more varied and delightful character than that which he obtains from the exercise of his art over lakes and fish-ponds. The passing from stream to stream—from rough water to smooth—from shoal to deep—from rock to weed and gravel, is of itself enjoyment, and increases one's zest for the pastime; whereas in loch fishing, there is a certain degree of tameness and monotony arising from the circumstance of there being no great essential change in the position of the angler. Whether the surface be calm, gently rippled, or wrought into foam-covered waves, still, be it from boat or marge, he has to ply on, without relief, in the same uniform style. No wonder, therefore, that he attaches more consideration to the trout of the stream than to those of the lake, and holds in higher repute a three-pounder captured with gossamer tackle out of some wandering rivulet, than one of twice that weight—a lumbering, wiry-jawed, disheartened monster, hauled by main force through a medium whose resistance, at the best, is of a sluggish and passive nature.

I am unable to state accurately the largest size to which trout, bred and nourished in our Scottish rivers, have been known to grow. It is probable that individuals, purely of the river sort, have attained the weight of ten or twelve pounds. In the "Aberdeen Journal," September 1833, one is made mention of, caught by the gamekeeper at Haughton, in the Don, with rod and line, which weighed eleven pounds, and measured in girth seventeen inches. On Tweed, they have frequently been captured in the cairn-nets, and otherwise, upwards of six pounds; and more than once, above seven pounds in weight. I have taken them with the rod on this river, and its tributary Teviot, weighing four and a half pounds; and I make no doubt but that there are many scattered up and down its pools and streams fully as heavy. The trout in Tay occasionally grow to a large size, but I

am not aware that any surpassing in weight the biggest found in Tweed have of late years been taken from this river or its tributaries, those excepted which have made their way into its streams out of the loch above Kenmore, Loch Tummel, or some other sheet of water bearing the same relation to it, and containing trout of considerable weight.

Sluggish streams, that traverse a rich soil, or have a marly channel, are greatly favourable to the growth, I do not say the increase, of trout. Of this sort are several of the Fifeshire waters—the Orr, the Leven, and the Eden In all these, river-trout were wont to be caught of a large size, excelling in point of shape and quality those of our more notable streams. Machinery, drainage, and other agricultural improvements have, however, contributed greatly to thin the breeds in question, and in their place, pike, perch, and eels hold to a certain extent the ascendancy.

Of all streams that I am acquainted with, the Leet, which discharges itself into the Tweed above Coldstream, was wont, considering its size, to contain the largest trout. During the summer season, it is a mere ditch; in many places, not above four or five span in width, and where broadest, still capable of being leapt across. The run of water is, comparatively speaking, insignificant, not equalling in the average a cubic foot. This, however, as it proceeds, is every now and then expanded over a considerable surface, and forms a pool of some depth; in fact, the whole stream, from head to foot, pursuing, as it does, a winding course for upwards of twelve miles, is a continued chain of pools, fringed during the summer on both sides with rushes and water-flags, and choked up in many parts with pickerel weed, and other aquatic plants. The channel of Leet contains shell-marl, and its banks, being hollowed out beneath, afford, independent of occasional stones and tree-roots, excellent shelter for trout. Not many years ago, the whole course of it was infested with pike, but the visit of some otters, irrespective of the angler's art, has completely cleared them out, and thus allowed the trout, which were formerly scarce, to become more numerous.

On the first occasion of my fishing Leet, which happened to be early in April, before the sedge and rushes had assumed the ascendancy, I captured with the fly twenty-six

trout, weighing in all upwards of twenty-nine pounds. Of these, five at least were two-pounders, and there were few, if any, small-sized fish. On the 2nd day of June, the weather being bright and hot, I killed with the worm, out of the same stretch of water, betwixt Castlelaw and Boughtrig, forty-two trout, weighing upwards of twenty-three pounds; also, on a similar day in June, betwixt ten and two o'clock in the forenoon, I managed to encreel three dozen and five fish, the largest of which was a three-pounder, and there were at least twelve others that weighed a pound a-piece. The gross weight on this occasion I neglected to take note of, but it certainly approached two stone.

I mention these facts, not by way of recounting anything extraordinary achieved with the rod, but simply in order to show that the size of trout does not depend greatly upon the size of the stream they inhabit, but to a large degree upon the superiority of the feeding, and the accommodation, or shelter, afforded them. As a contrast to the above-mentioned rivulet, I may name the Esk, in Dumfries-shire, a river entitled from its width and discharge to be reckoned among our second-class waters. The trout which this river contains seldom attain the weight of half-a-pound. They are also, comparatively speaking, thinly scattered throughout its streams; and these circumstances are owing, partly to the scarcity of food, and partly to the inconvenient nature of the shelter which is furnished, not, as in Tweed or Teviot, throughout the course of the channel, but only here and there, in irregular pools, among rocks and shifting gravels. It is the same on the Dee, and other rivers of a similar character; while streams, wholly insignificant in point of dimensions, often produce large and well-conditioned trout, or, what is equivalent, an abundance of small and middle-sized ones. Leet, Eden, Kale, Bowmont water, are instances of this sort, in my own neighbourhood; in Perthshire, the May water; in Selkirkshire, the numerous burns that fall into Ettrick, and so on.

The trout, if well fed, grows with astonishing rapidity; under any circumstances not absolutely hostile to its existence, it acquires, in the course of four or five months, dimensions which entitle it to a place in the angler's creel—at any rate, in the frying-pan. Its growth, in point of fact, is not greatly disturbed by lack of food during the first

season of its existence; and, accordingly, in almost all rivers, it attains a certain size, I do not say condition, in the same extent of time. This is easily accounted for. During what may be termed its infancy, it requires little nourishment, and this, the quantum it requires, the most barren streams can afford; whereas to a fish of more mature growth, such waters are quite inadequate to furnish it in the requisite sufficiency. Accordingly, in streams of this nature, trout seldom or never attain to a large size. They naturally become dwarfish and ill-conditioned, obliged as they are to subsist upon a measure of food, not a whit more ample than what they had the power of obtaining and actually did engross, without either craving or surfeit, during the first year of their existence.

In the generality of our Scottish rivers, for example the Tweed and Teviot, furnishing an ample, but not extraordinary supply of food, the growth and age of the trout inhabiting them may be reckoned as follows:—The fry, I presume, hatched in the month of April. They continue growing, during the first year, as long as a regular supply of ground and surface food is afforded them, until the latter end, probably, of October. By this period, they have acquired a length of six or seven inches, and a corresponding weight of from two and a half to three and a half ounces. Feeding precariously during the winter, they gain no additional weight, but rather the contrary, until the spring months. About the latter end of March, the river-flies making their appearance, they begin to feed regularly, and as a consequence, recommence growing. By the time the supplies have again become stinted, they have acquired an accession to their length of about a couple of inches, and weigh from five up to seven ounces. A considerable proportion of the trout of this, the second year's growth, are in spawning trim during September, and others part with their milt a few weeks later, but a great number there are among them which do not arrive at breeding condition until the autumn and winter following. The trout of the third year's growth form the generality of those captured by the angler with fly about the end of April and beginning of May, averaging, as they do, from seven to nine ounces each, and occupying at that period, to the exclusion of smaller fry (which still hold to the pools and deeper portions of the river), the main streams and currents.

During the first showers of March-browns, these, the trout of the third year's growth, are generally foremost on the feed, interspersed, however, with a few of their seniors —the survivors of a former generation. Of this latter description are those approaching to or upwards of a pound in weight—a stage of growth, on reaching which, I believe that many of our river-trout cease progressing. Others, however, which have taken up a convenient haunt or post of attack, and instinctively prefer coarse and abundant feeding, attain to a much larger size. A few individuals also, the inhabitants of the rivers I speak of, owing, in the same manner, to the advantages they possess in acquiring food of a finer quality, locating themselves, for instance, under a range of alders, or at the mouth of a feeder, reach, without any loss of proportion, more than the average weight of full-grown trout. These latter subsist, almost entirely, upon ground and surface food, and only occasionally, as a change, and when the other is scarce, resort to the minnow or parr.

The above remarks bear reference, as I have already stated, to the trout frequenting a large number of our Scottish streams, both main rivers and their tributaries, and, with such modifications as are imposed upon them through some peculiarity in the feeding afforded by this or that water, may be held as of general application. When the feeding supplied by a stream or burn falls—I am talking of quantity only—below the average, trout seldom attain to more than a quarter of a pound in weight. They may abound in numbers, but these, in general, are lank, large-headed fish, that give little or no sport. Many of our Highland streams are of the description above mentioned. They have no winter supply of food at all. They travel, at least half their course, over rocks. Their banks have undergone little or no tillage. They are incapable of receiving it. Here, like the channel itself, they are solid rock! there, they are the debris of the torrent; sometimes they present to the eye a fringe of heather; sometimes a miry swamp; sometimes a forest nurtured by its own sheddings; seldom do they give indication of being supplied, during a flood, with loam or rich soil, yielding insects and their deposits; but, on the contrary, the occurrence of a winter spate only despoils their courses of such unappropriated aliment as found lodgment therein during

the summer months. Such, along the greater portion of its career, is the Dee; such are the Coe and the Spean; such, also, are many of the mountain feeders in Perthshire, Inverness-shire, Aberdeenshire; in fact, throughout the northern highlands of Scotland. Hence we find the trout inhabiting them dwarfish in size, lean, and unhealthy. Even in the course of summer, when insect food is tolerably abundant, they make little improvement, and seldom do we see them encroached upon by varieties from neighbouring streams or lochs, unless with the intent, on the part of larger trout, to assail and devour them; or, it may be, when forced by circumstances to deposit their spawn.

Should the feeding, however, greatly exceed the average, I still speak in respect to quantity, although it rarely does so without the implication also of a superior quality of subsistence, trout will not only attain to a weight exceeding what I have mentioned to be that common to a full-grown Tweed fish, under ordinary circumstances, but they will arrive at it, in a far shorter period of time—in the course, it may be, of two, or at most three years; whereas the Tweed trout needs four to acquire its sixteen ounces, and then ceases growing. Thus, in Leet or Eden, a trout of the second year's growth is as heavy as a three or even a four years' old fish pastured among the channels of Tweed or Ettrick; and were the trout of these insignificant waters suffered undisturbed to reach their full size, which there is no question they would do in the course of five or six years, numbers would be found among them, as was the case not long ago, weighing severally upwards of two pounds. Thus, also, in respect to many lakes, fish-ponds, and old marl-pits, into which the fry of trout have been put. As long as these possess a superabundance of both ground and surface food, the young fish will thrive astonishingly, and arrive, in an incredibly short space of time, at dimensions exceeding those of average sized river-trout.

But without enlarging any further upon this subject, I shall conclude, with a single observation, all that is essential to be said in regard to the growth of fish, namely, that as sheep and cattle will not fatten and thrive on stinted pastures, or barren, exposed moorland, so neither will the finny tribe, be the stream ever so pure and abundant, acquire size and condition, unless sufficiently sheltered and amply and regularly provisioned. On the other hand,

possessed of these advantages, they have all that is required in order to do them justice; while breeds or varieties of fish, hitherto pronounced shapeless and impracticable, will, when transferred to such favoured localities, become seemly in their proportions, active in their dispositions, and relishable, if not rich-tasted, as food.

Besides the *Salmo fario* and its countless varieties, there are three other species of fresh-water trout, held by naturalists to inhabit our Scottish lakes and rivers. These are the Gillarroo or Gizzard trout, the *Salmo cœcifer* or *Levenensis*, and the *Salmo ferox*.

THE GILLARROO, I have every reason to believe, is nothing more than the common *fario*, and that the gizzard or indurated portion of stomach which distinguishes it, is entirely the result and not the occasion of its peculiar feeding. This is true, at least, that all fresh-water trout engross some measure of testaceous food, and, when the opportunity offers, will greedily devour, and abundantly thrive upon small shell-fish and horny substances. These, as well as grains or pellets of gravel, I have frequently taken out of the stomachs of common river trout, mixed with their ordinary fly sustenance; and I have reason to believe they can digest them without difficulty.

Of the strong digestive powers possessed by the river trout, I recently met with a singular illustration. Last year, while taking a cast with the fly, for the amusement of my children, in Maxwheel pool, below Kelso Bridge, among other trout, I caught one not exceeding six inches in length, which, from the circumstance of its being slightly extended in the paunch, I was induced to cut open. On my doing so, a large Irish-tempered bait-hook presented itself, the barb and turn of the wire imbedded in the fleshy parts of the fish, while the shank lay in the stomach, exposed to its action. On making an attempt to remove the silk dressings, with which the latter portion of the hook was still encircled, the iron beneath crumbled away, like lamp-black, betwixt my fingers, leaving only an irregular skeleton of wire, in some parts not one-fourth of the original thickness. The remainder of the hook, which I have in my possession, was not in the slightest degree injured or corroded. The effect described being, as I am inclined to think, produced solely by the action of the digestive organs, and not in consequence of any chemical

process put into operation by the contact of the resin and silk with the iron below, what must the effect of that action be upon the ordinary food of the fish, and even upon shells and other hard substances, especially, when encased in the stomach of a full-grown trout? To return, however, to the gillarroo, I am inclined to believe that, on strict examination, what is held to characterise a species of trout, found only in certain lakes, will be discovered to exist, in a greater or less degree, in the stomachs of many varieties of the *Fario*.

SALMO CŒCIFER, OR LEVENENSIS.—The far-famed trout of Loch Leven are distinguished, I understand, many of them, from the common fresh-water trout, by the numerical superiority of their cœcal appendages. In the *Salmo fario*, these do not exceed forty-five or forty-six, whereas, in what is appropriately termed the *cœcifer*, they range from seventy to eighty. The largest trout known to have been captured in Loch Leven weighed eighteen pounds; but it was not uncommon, before the loch was partially drained and the feeding grounds, in consequence, reduced in extent, to take fish of the species described eight or nine pounds in weight.

SALMO FEROX.—According to Mr. Yarrell, this species of the *Salmonidæ* is met with in various lakes in the Highlands of Scotland. It is well known to inhabit Loch Awe in Argyleshire, but it is found also in Lochs Laggan, Shin, Layghal, and Assynt. It has also been captured occasionally in Loch Lubnaig, near Callander. I very recently was shown, by Charles Ker, Esq., Edinburgh, the skin of a trout of this species, taken by him while trolling on the above-mentioned sheet of water. This fish, when newly captured, weighed fifteen pounds and a half. The *ferox* is identical with the great trout or Buddagh of Lough Neagh, in Ireland, where the small ones are termed Dolachan. I have been told, upon good authority, that it exists in the chain of lakes, including Lochs Rannoch and Lydoch, which extends upwards, along the moor of Rannoch towards Kingshouse. Its discovery in Loch Awe has been attributed to a Mr. Morrison from Glasgow, upwards of sixty years ago; but the *ferox* must have been known to the inhabitants of the district long before that period. It has now, I understand, as far as regards the loch in question, become scarce; besides which, the individuals occasionally

captured are, in point of size, very inferior to those taken twenty years since, few of them exceeding ten or twelve pounds in weight, and the generality not so heavy by one half. I have seen stuffed specimens of the *Salmo ferox*, which were said to be those of fish which weighed, when newly caught, about twenty pounds; but the late Mr. Maule, a persevering and successful frequenter of Loch Awe, has taken them, I am told, half a stone heavier. In the spawning season, when numbers of these fish push down to the outlet of the loch, they may be tempted to rise at the salmon lures ordinarily used on the river Awe; but, at other times, they are only to be captured by trolling for them from a boat, at a considerable depth and with strong tackle, the bait employed consisting of a trout of five ounces in weight, fortified with hooks in all directions. The *ferox* is a more powerful fish than the *Salmo salar*, but not quite so active; still, it often manages to make its escape when hooked, and will ensconce itself securely among weeds, leaving to the angler no remedy but to break and part company.

THE SWALLOW-SMOLT OF TWEED.—Allied in some respects to the *ferox*, is what, in the lower districts of Tweedside, has been designated a Swallow-smolt. It forms, I am inclined to think, not a mere variety of the common *fario*, but a distinct species of trout. I am not, indeed, aware that the swallow-smolt, or any breed of river-trouts at all resembling it, is to be found, except in Tweed itself. This fish is of highly predatory habits, and will seldom, if ever, rise at the common trouting-fly. It is caught generally by means of the parr-tail tackle, about the latter end of May and beginning of June, when the last of the smolts are on their way seaward. Its appearance resembles, in some respects, that of the bull-trout; the head is large, the teeth particularly strong, the *maculæ* irregularly but profusely distributed, the whole formation that of a powerful and rapacious fish. As regards its edible qualities, it is, at all times, coarse and rank-flavoured. The swallow-smolt, when on the outlook for prey, frequents the hings or breaks, at the head of strong, rough water, and is frequently taken, by rod and cairn net, from the rockiest portions of the river, such as the turbulent eddies and foam-runs of the Trow Crags. Its average weight is from two to four pounds, but individuals have been caught that weighed

nearly half a stone. Were the production of a breed of hybrids betwixt the *fario* and *eriox* a thing of likely occurrence, I might possibly have fixed upon the swallow-smolt as the issue; questioning, however, the existence of such a production, I cannot help regarding it as distinct species of the *Salmonidæ*.

CHAPTER III.

ANGLER'S TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT.

Silk-Worm Gut.—Its Manufacture.—Recipes for Dying.—Tackle that belonged to Sir Walter Scott.—Making up of Casting-Lines.—Anglers' Knots.—Improved Construction of the Reel.—Rods.—General Remarks.—Woods Employed in their Manufacture.—The Ferrule.—Hooks.—Angler's Equipment.—Wading Boots, Pocket-Book, the Box, Gaff, Pannier.

GUT, a material so useful to the angler, it is necessary to state, is a preparation from the entrails of the silk-worm. It is fabricated, principally for our British market, in various parts of Spain, Portugal, and Italy, also in Sicily and the Greek islands. Spanish gut is, unquestionably, in higher repute than any other; its quality either being intrinsically finer, or more attention is paid to its manufacture and getting up. It is not nearly so long as some of the Sicilian article, which evidently is produced from a larger variety of silk-worm. This advantage, however, in the latter, is counterbalanced by the coarseness of its texture, as well as by the want of roundness and equality in the thread or fibre. Good, useful gut is always distinguished by the possession of these two properties. It should also be quite transparent, not lacteous in its appearance, and free withal from flaw, film, and flossy matter. The descriptions of gut most difficult to procure are those used for fine trouting and for salmon-fishing. What intervenes betwixt the above-mentioned sorts is abundant enough, and very excellent hanks of this accommodating description may be picked up, now-a-days, at a small expense, and with little trouble. Still it is desirable that the angler have a larger choice of the qualities above-mentioned; and I think a little trouble on the part of those

importing it would secure an ample supply of both. The following is a recipe I have copied, from a small anonymous treatise on "Angling," relative to the manufacture of silk-worm gut:

"Take the largest and best worms you can procure, just when they begin to spin. This may be known by their refusing to feed, and by their having a fine silk thread hanging from their mouths. The worms must be kept in strong vinegar, and covered close over for twelve hours, if the weather is warm; if not, two or three hours longer will be necessary. When taken out, they must be pulled asunder, and you will see two transparent guts of a yellowish green colour, as thick as a straw, bent double, the rest of the inside resembling boiled spinage; you can make no mistake. If you find the guts soft, or break upon stretching them, you must let the worms lie longer in the vinegar; when fit to draw off, you must dip one in the vinegar, and stretch it gently with both hands to the proper length. The gut thus drawn out must be stretched out on a thin piece of board, by putting each end in a slit therein, and placed in the sun to dry. This is the real gut, and the mode of dressing it is the cause of its ends being cramped."

I am of opinion, from experiments made by me at various times, that it is advantageous for the angler to employ stained or dyed gut, in preference to the material in its natural state. I have ascertained also, that there are two colours, or rather tints, that take the precedence over all others, in producing the desired effect, that is, in concealing or rendering it invisible to the eye of the trout or salmon, as well as the observation of the onlooker. With regard to the experiments in question, they were made, some at the bridge below Coldstream, and others at Teviot Bridge, near Kelso; a party on each occasion being stationed to report, on the keystone of one of the arches, and immediately superintending the cast underneath. The conclusion I have come to is, that the walnut leaf, or brown dye, is best calculated for the purpose required; although, in a bright day, and in clear water, a bluish or neutral tinge is perhaps more desirable. The former of these colours is obtained simply from a decoction of walnut leaves, or bark, using two handfuls to a quart of water. Into this liquid, when in a cool state, the gut should be placed, and allowed to soak for two or three hours; or it may be

immersed, for a few seconds only, in the hot fluid, and then rinsed well in cold water. Let care be taken that the shade or tint be not too deep. It should approach to a light amber colour, and on no account be allowed to lose its transparency.

As to the bluish dye. This is obtained from a decoction of shavings of logwood, a handful to the quart of water. Boil these for about a quarter of an hour, and throw in a small piece of alum about the size of a horse bean. On removing your pan from the fire, dip the gut in while the liquor is still hot, allowing it to remain five or six seconds, and then transferring it, as before, to cold water.

After you have washed it, shake off the superfluous moisture, and allow the hank to dry thoroughly before laying it by. Silk-worm gut, I may here remark, when in the hank or considerable quantities, should be wrapt up lengthwise, in a piece of chamois leather, which keeps it in much better trim than paper does. The following are the recipes for the dyeing of this material:—

1. An azure or neutral tint, 1 drachm logwood, 6 grains copperas.
2. A pinkish azure, . . . 1 drachm logwood, 1 scruple alum.
3. A dingy olive, ... ditto, adding 3 scruples of quercitron bark.
4. Light brown, ... 1 drachm madder, 1 scruple alum.

These being the proportions of the materials, the water can be applied to suit tastes. Immerse the gut fully a minute.

Horse Hair, Lines, &c.—Before the introduction and general use of silk-worm gut, I can readily understand how valuable a really good selection of this article must have been to the angler. Indeed, judging from the specimens that, from time to time, have come under my notice of the fishing-tackle used by our forefathers, I am led to the opinion that there is no horse-hair to be obtained, in our modern days, which, in point of roundness, length, and power, at all approximates to what was employed by them. This is owing partly to the practice, now in vogue, of docking our stallions before the tail has had time to acquire its full strength, and partly also, to the care and attention formerly exercised in the selection of the article. One of the finest specimens of good horse-hair I ever remember to have met with was presented to me, along with a bait hook and some red hackles, by the late Mr. William Laidlaw,

the friend and factor of Sir Walter Scott. This and its accompaniments were part and parcel of the identical fishing-tackle discovered along with the mislaid MSS. of Waverley, and alluded to by Sir Walter, in the General Preface to his Novels. I make no doubt, but with the single hair in question, I could have managed, provided my rod was a pliant one and my reel-line ran easily, a salmon of ten or twelve pounds in weight, not indeed in such water as the Trow Crags, or any of the rocky straiks and clippers that afford facilities for fish to cut or wear through the line; but in an open, unobstructed cast or pool, where the salmon could show no cunning, and, at the same time, exert its full strength and speed. The hair alluded to, I may mention, was white, clear, and long, not of the coarse, black description, which even now-a-days is common enough, and possesses, without question, strength to capture the largest of our river fish.

As to colour, however, the natural chestnut is preferable, especially for casting-lines. With regard to the reel or winch-line, it is of little or no consequence what colour of hair is put into requisition. A mixture of black and white is most commonly employed in its manufacture, and perhaps, next to good chestnut hair, is really best adapted for the purpose. I am not partial to pure white hair, either for casting or running lines; but my objection rests chiefly on the circumstance of the material, as found in the market, being, in nineteen cases out of twenty, bad or unequal. Casting-lines, especially, should always be formed of choice hairs. They should be selected to correspond one with the other, and ought to possess, besides, length, roundness, and perfect equality.

In speaking of hair casting-lines, I may observe, that although the above remark applies equally to the trouting and other sorts, it is intended to hold reference chiefly to what is employed, under that denomination, in salmon fishing; indeed, for my own part, I have long ago abjured the use of hair altogether, in the formation of my casting-line, except for the purpose I am referring to; nay, I would reject it even for this purpose also, were there any expedient or contrivance known to me that could advantageously be substituted in its place.

The upper casting-line, generally used by salmon-fishers, and requisite as an assistance in throwing the fly, is com-

posed of three or four links of hair, and extends, when these are joined, to about six feet. Each link contains from eighteen to twelve hairs, according to the strength and thickness of the winch-line to which it is intended to be attached. The upper casting-line ought also to taper gradually, so as to admit of the lower or gut one forming, when looped on, a continuation with it, in point of thickness. This is managed by diminishing the number of hairs in every successive link; that is to say, supposing the uppermost length is formed of eighteen hairs, the one following should contain fifteen, and so on, down to twelve and nine.

In the making-up of casting-lines, great attention should be paid to the knotting and tying, as well as twisting, which some prefer executing solely with the hand, in preference to the machine. I can affirm, however, from experience, that the machine answers the purpose better, not only in point of expedition, but it produces more equal and trustworthy work. Take care, however, not to overtwist the links, and see that the hair, which ought previously to be washed with soap and water, is quite dry. Silk-worm gut, on the contrary, when spun up into casting-lines, ought to be soaked in lukewarm water, and attached to the machine while wet, and before losing its pliancy. And as to gut casting-lines, they ought always to be constructed of long, choice gut, carefully assorted. Every separate length should consist of three threads, equal in thickness, I mean as regards that individual length; for, to regulate the tapering of the line, lengths of various thicknesses are required to be spun, and a careful selection made from them before joining.

The triple gut casting-line ought to extend fully six or seven feet, and is intended either to succeed the hair casting-line, in salmon-fishing, or to be appended immediately to the winch-line, by the trout-fisher. Linked to it is the single gut casting-line, composed of three or four successive strands of picked material, carefully knotted, and if intended for large fish, tied over at the joinings with silk thread. Of course, by salmon-fishers, this addition is dispensed with, when triple gut is found necessary or more useful. In fine waters, on the contrary, it is often expedient to add to the length of this portion of the casting-line, as well in salmon as in trout-fishing, in order to keep up the deception and not alarm the fish.

But I think it unnecessary further to enlarge upon the subject of lines in the present chapter, as various instructions respecting them lie interspersed throughout the treatise; and as to the knotting together of the threads or strands, I deem it proper merely to mention one or two of the most approved methods of joining.

THE WATER-KNOT, SINGLE AND DOUBLE.—This knot is completed simply by laying the ends of the two threads, links, or strands, required to be joined, alongside of each other; then, doubling the one round the forefinger of the right hand and passing one of the links and its corresponding end through the loop thus formed, draw all tight. Should the material be silk-worm gut, allow the knot to soak a moment in the mouth before drawing. In making the double knot, pass the lengths twice through instead of once: this will give greater security to the line, and prevent all possibility of the ends slipping. The double water-knot should always be adopted in making up fine or single tackle for salmon, but gives a clumsy appearance to the trouting line. After the knot is completed, clip away the useless portions of the lengths, but not too closely; and in the case of casting-lines, tie over what is left with fine silk thread. I seldom tie over the knots of the single gut or foot-line in this manner, unless at such a distance from the hook that they do not generally come into contact with the water, and are thus rendered liable to be mistaken for flies. The water-knot is unquestionably the simplest and most expeditious, if not the safest, knot used by the angler; but there is another mode of joining lengths of single gut, occasionally practised on Tweedside, and which it behoves him to become acquainted with. This is executed by laying the ends of gut, intended to be joined, side by side; form a simple knot over each, with the other, thus:—

Draw the knots tight, and pull them together. They will hold fast, in the right direction, but can be separated, so far, without trouble, by simply drawing them asunder. In affixing bobs or droppers, this mode of joining together

the lengths which compose the foot-line has its advantages; the bob or dropper requiring no loop, but simply a small knot at the head of the gut it is attached to. When inserted betwixt the closing ends above described, this knot, on their being drawn together, will prevent the dropper from slipping off: at the same time it can readily be disengaged, and another, at the option of the angler, substituted in its place.

THE REEL, OR WINCH.—A great improvement has of recent years taken place in the form and construction of the reel, or winch. By reducing the length of the barrel and pillars, and enlarging the diameter of the brass plates between which they are confined, the line can be wound up with much greater speed and regularity than when the plates used were narrow, and the distance betwixt them considerable.

This improvement was originally suggested by the late Mr. W. Brockie, tenant at Laughton, Berwickshire, and the first brass reel, on the narrow principle, constructed under the superintendence of Signor Justinelli, a friend of the late Earl of Hume, by Mr. Sharp, watchmaker at Coldstream.

The catch, also, or rack, is generally abolished, although some anglers naturally enough retain a prejudice on its behalf. This appendage, however, and all machinery intended to assist the winding up, can beneficially be dispensed with. The simpler, in fact, in these respects, the reel is, the better; it not only lets off the line more readily, but is less liable to become deranged in its action. That the line may be and often is thrown off too easily, I make no question, but this is the fault of the angler, who ought with his hand to restrain and regulate its measure, according to the power and caprices of the fish he is playing. As to the reel itself, the more smoothly and swimmingly it parts with the line the better, for whatever advantages the multiplier and rack-wheel may be esteemed to possess, these, without question, are counterbalanced by the liability such adaptations incur to become disturbed in their action and rendered completely at fault, during moments of need and extremity.

Among other improvements recently made upon the reel or winch, are those which relate to the handle. This is now constructed so as to fold over or be readily detached, according to the pleasure of the angler, and thus facilitate

the carrying or packing up of the machine. Checks, also, have of late years been introduced, and the mode of affixing the reel to the rod altered and improved.

THE ROD.—Caprice and custom regulate largely the fancy of individuals in respect to this implement. One holds stiffness as a requisite, another pliancy; one prefers the single-handed, another the double-handed rod; some use a butt-piece of hickory, some of ash, and others of fir-wood; this angler, again, in the matter of the top-piece, esteems lance, that bamboo; and, as to the ferrule, I meet with one who commends the plain joint and socket, another who countenances the Scottish screw, and a third who disclaims the use of brass joinings altogether, and stands up in behalf of tie system. In short, there is no termination to the variety of tastes and prejudices on the subject of fishing-rods. The rings, the colouring, the varnish, the lower fittings, all fall, as matters of dispute, within the contentious circle; nor, indeed, does the observation of many years, and the most ample and unprejudiced testing of rods of every description, stiff and pliant, light and heavy, single and double-handed, enable me so decisively to pronounce an opinion upon one and all of these matters, as even to approach an adjustment of differences in respect to them.

I can only state, from personal experience, that a very few days' practice will frequently suffice to reconcile one to the use of a rod which, at the first handling, he felt somewhat dissatisfied with. I do not say that it discovered any glaring fault in the build or material, for these are matters requiring strict scrutiny and attention; but it wanted a particular virtue, which he imagined the implement he was accustomed to use possessed; it could not, in fact, heave out the line so satisfactorily, or drop the fly with so much nicety, or assist in hooking the fish, on rising; perhaps it exhausted the wrist or arm sooner; there was about it, in fact, some vice, it might be an indescribable one, and yet, on a succession of trials, this vice or defect completely vanished. It had been got the better of by practice; nay, in reality, it was not a fault in the rod, but a pre-existing prejudice on the part of its possessor, which, as it arose through habit, could only become extinguished under the same influential dominion.

I have made these remarks as a prelude to this subject, because I consider that many anglers lay a great deal too

much stress upon, and are fancifully exact as to the length, the pliancy, the weight, the balance,—even the colour of their fishing-rods, not to speak of rings, etc. At the same time, I allow that the purpose for which a rod is made, whether for salmon-fishing, for trolling with minnow, or for trouting with the fly; for streamlet, lake, or broad river, ought to regulate, not merely its proportions, but in certain cases, its material, number of lengths, and description of finish. I shall now treat very shortly of the kinds of wood best adapted for rod-making, their peculiarities and advantages.

The material in general used for the butt-piece, both of the salmon and trouting-rod, is ash. For hollow butts, most rod-makers employ saplings, or young trees, of six or seven years' standing, well-dried and seasoned. These of course possess a core or inner growth of tender wood, the extraction of which, by means of a gimlet bitt, does not greatly impair the main strength of the piece, while there is this additional advantage, that it can be performed more in accordance with the lie, run, or grain of the material than were the operation attempted on a portion of plank or sawn tree, out of which solid butts are constructed. Hollow butts, when formed out of plank wood, which they sometimes are, require to be bored with an instrument termed a *phipple* bitt. The boring may advantageously be enlarged by a tool of the same description, only smaller in size, as that used by the cooper in the formation of bung-holes. It is called in Scotland a *schulop*. It would be an improvement in the manufacture of the hollow butt-piece, were the lower or root end of the ash sapling made to receive the ferrule, instead of the upper extremity, which is less tough and consistent, consequently more apt to break, or split.

I am of opinion that Memel fir, although not generally used in rod-making, is an excellent substitute for ash, in the construction of the solid butt-piece for a small salmon or grilse-rod. It has the advantage over it, in respect of lightness, while, if judiciously selected, there can be no question as to its strength and durability. I have used it for many years, in preference to any other wood, and find that it stands the test thoroughly. Indeed, with regard to two rods manufactured by Mr. Forrest, of Kelso, under my own directions, some years ago, the butt-pieces of which are

made of the wood in question, I can safely affirm that they have stood the test of rough and frequent usage better than any fishing-rods I ever had in my possession; and that still, although I have killed with each of them scores of pike and salmon, as well as creel-loads of river-trout, the lower lengths are sound and trustworthy as ever.

Hickory-wood, on account of its heaviness, is seldom employed in the construction of butt-pieces: but the middle divisions of the generality of fishing-rods are made of it. Of hickory there are several kinds; the most serviceable of which, for the purpose of rod-making, is the red. White hickory, however, is a tougher and more durable material, only it warps when cut up into lengths. Hickory-wood is brought principally from North America, in billets of the thickness of a man's leg and upwards.

Lance-wood is closer grained and somewhat heavier than hickory. It is a native of Cuba and other West Indian islands. For top-pieces, it is reckoned invaluable, possessing a spring and consistency, together with a capability of being highly wrought and polished, not found in any other wood. The great objection to lance-wood is its weight and consequent tendency, when used as a top-piece along with different woods, to injure or discompose the just and desirable balance of the rod. In order to obviate this, rod-makers are now in the habit of constructing the top-lengths, partly of lance-wood and partly of bamboo. The bamboo portion consists of a thin slit or slits detached from one of the jointed divisions of the cane. This is rounded off and otherwise cut and planed, so as to admit of being accurately glued on to the lance-wood section of the intended top-piece, the parts thus annexed being afterwards strengthened by a wrapping of waxed thread and coatings of varnish. Rods constructed almost entirely of bamboo are in use in some parts of England, but they do not suit our Scottish rivers, being possessed of little throwing power, and adapted more for trolling with and the pitching out system, peculiar to some localities where pike are fished for. Of other woods used by rod-makers, I may mention log and purple wood, which are frequently employed in the construction of the angler's weapon by Irish artists. They are not, however, much appreciated in Scotland.

THE FERRULE.—In my younger days, I preferred to any other the Scotch screw-joint, as a mode of affixing the lengths

or part of a fishing-rod. I am now convinced that the English system is a better one; namely, that of simply introducing the lower end of each length into a corresponding sheath or socket in the division it surmounts. This socket is fenced round with a projecting portion of brass tube, which accords in thickness to the end or joint it is intended to receive. A fastening of small twine or thread is then required to make all secure, for which purpose there are affixed hooks or projections of brass wire on each length, immediately above and below the place of conjunction.

I am by no means partial, however, to an innovation lately introduced, namely, the coating with brass of that portion of the inserting joint, which comes into juxtaposition with the tube or ferrule. This is done with the view of counteracting the petty annoyance which is liable to occur during wet weather, or in case of the accidental submersion of the rod; an annoyance arising from the swelling of the confined part of the joint, and that frequently to such a degree, as to render it impossible for the angler, by means of mere manual exertion, to separate the pieces. That the brass coating in question does, to some extent, obviate the evil I allow; but the remedy, and a partial one it is, has its own very objectionable points. These, also, proceed from a similar cause, the alternate action of drought and moisture, which action, while it but temporarily affects the wooden joint, produces a more lasting and injurious result upon the brass one; for, in the latter case, by its operation upon the coated portion of the joint, it subserves, in a short time, to slacken and disturb the overlapping metals, and thus the adaptation of length to length, as well as the general firmness and entirety of the rod, becomes materially impaired; whereas, when the joint is used in its simple or naked state, the slight contraction or expansion of the wood resulting from drought or moisture, occasions no such injurious effect, inasmuch as there is no necessity, when fitting in the lengths, to be overnice or exact about the point of conjunction.

It is proper, however, especially in the prospect of encountering rain, to grease that portion of each length which is intended to be inclosed. By so doing, you prevent in some measure the swelling of the wood below the ferrule, and render comparatively simple the disengaging of the several divisions. In event, however, of this operation

having been neglected, should the angler find it impracticable, by the exercise of a moderate degree of manual strength, to effect the taking down of his rod, he ought by no means, on the instant, to press his object, so as to render possible the racking or injuring of the wood or ferrule, nor should he, if he can possibly avoid doing so, resort to the application of strong heat, in order to reduce the expansion of the wood. I would recommend him to take home the implement in its undetached state, and if convenient, to lay it by for a few months, either in an upright or recumbent position, until the wood has become thoroughly dried, when he may readily, without much effort, unfix the lengths. When necessitated, however, to apply heat, let him employ a pair of common fire-tongs made red-hot at the extremities. In using these, one must be careful to seize hold of the ferrule or brass tube, at or near the centre, so as not to interfere with the waxed wrappings which secure the lower fastening-pin. A very few moments will suffice to communicate the requisite heat equally throughout the joining; the moisture confined in the wood will gradually find vent in steam along the edges of the ferrule, and as it does so, the extrication of the joint from its socket may be accomplished without difficulty.

As a guard against the injury done by rain, etc., many of the Irish rods are constructed with the ferrules inverted, that is, with the tube or socket fixed on the lower end of the length, so as to cap or lie over its corresponding joint. In this case, the rain or moisture trickling towards the butt is prevented from insinuating itself, by the crevices of the joining, into the wood below. This alteration in the position of the ferrule will also, there is no question, give additional stability to the hollow butt-piece, and materially favour its construction. The butt-pieces, however, I may mention, of the Irish rods are generally made solid.

Rings.—Stiff or fixed rings I have always held in disfavour, and decidedly condemn them, as appendages to the fly-fishing rod. They are employed, I am aware, by many anglers, in preference to loose or movable ones, and it is asserted that, in trolling, they possess a marked advantage over these, in regard to the facility of escape they give the line. I cannot say, for my own part, that I perceive it; on the contrary, they are apt, I think, greatly to embarrass its movements, and often occasion its entire stoppage

In point of weight and size, the rings of a rod ought severally to correspond with its power and dimensions. Regard also must be paid to the thickness and material of the winch-line which they are intended to give escape to. In order to maintain this regard, it is not necessary, however, to sacrifice proportion in any great extent. The reel line itself is of faulty thickness, should such sacrifice to its accommodation be found needful. In fact, the two ought so to suit each other that the rings on the taper or light portion of the rod will admit the passing through of the line in a looped state, or even when a single knot occurs.

HOOKS.—I have tested, during a long course of practice, hooks of all sorts, shapes, and sizes, and have come to the conclusion that there are few to be met with, in the market, excelling those of Philips and Adlington—the former being a Dublin maker, and constructing his wire, as to the bend and temper, on the Limerick or Irish system, while the latter chiefly manufactures what is well known under the name of the round-bend hook. I may mention, however, that there are many other makers, throughout the kingdom, who vie with them, to a certain extent, in the fabrication of this article.

I like, however, Philips' hooks and those of Adlington better than any in use; the former as adapted for all sorts of large flies, from those used in spring trouting, up to the biggest salmon ones—the latter, as suited for the smaller kinds of trout-flies, also for bait-hooks and minnow-tackles.

I would recommend the purchaser of hooks, in any quantity, always to test them, more especially if they are badly dressed. This is easily done, by pressing the point into a piece of wood, and exerting a due degree of strength on the bend, and other portions of the wire, the shank of the hook being firmly held betwixt the thumb and forefinger. Nothing can be more annoying to the angler than to find himself on a fishing excursion, equipped with an assortment of worthless wire, and yet, as regards trouting-flies, how frequently this occurs.

VARNISH.—No angler, as part of his equipment, should neglect having a small phial containing spirit varnish. It is serviceable to him in many respects; it strengthens and improves the appearance of all worm and minnow-tackles; it may be applied, with advantage, at the finishing point of fly-hooks, the head or tail; in the construction also of cast-

ing-lines, where the ends require to be tied over with silk thread, its employment is beneficial; but that part of the angler's stock to which its application, from time to time, is most needed, consists of the rod itself. When the upper portion of the top-piece is manufactured of bamboo slits, it should be applied, as far as these are concerned, frequently, and in layers or coats of moderate thickness. Rods in much use ought to varnished over, at least twice or thrice during the season, and always at its close. This rule attended to, they will be found to last much longer and retain their springiness in its early perfection. Of varnish so employed for rods and tackle, the most generally useful consists in a solution of various gums among spirits of wine. Copal varnish is also made use of, but, in comparison with the other, dries slowly. The best mode of laying on the preparation is by means of a small paint-brush or hair pencil.

RECIPE FOR MAKING SPIRIT VARNISH.

Sandarac . . .	4 ozs.	Elemi (true) . . .	1 oz.
Pale seedlac . . .	2 ozs.	Alcohol	1 qrt.

Digest with agitation till dissolved, then add Venice turpentine, 2 ozs.

THE GAFF, OR LANDING-HOOK.—This implement is exceedingly useful to the salmon-fisher. It consists of a large hook, fastened upon or screwed into a shaft or handle, varying in length from three to five or six feet. It is much used in the neighbourhood of Kelso, and facilitates greatly the capture of a tired fish, economising the time of the angler, and lessening the hazards which are frequently incurred by an attempt to land or bank it. In using the gaff-hook, the person employed should take care not to come into contact with the line, and keep well out of sight, until an opportunity occurs of stretching his weapon over the fish. He should then jerk the point into its body, no matter what part of it, and haul in rapidly. Some gaff-hooks are furnished with a small scythe or pruning-blade, which is intended for cutting through any weeds or branches that may happen to interfere with the tackle, in landing. This appendage will be found of more service in pike than salmon-fishing. Instead of the gaff, a small hoop-net is sometimes used to take in exhausted fish. It is especially of advantage in angling for trout from a boat, or even when wading in a broad stream, where, without its assistance,

one has to march to shore with every half-pounder he hooks, or else to incur the increased risk of its escape, should he attempt to haul it up within grasp.

I do not think it necessary to enter into further details regarding tackle, etc., in this chapter. What remains to be said is treated of more appropriately as I proceed.

ANGLER'S EQUIPMENT.—There is no material that I am acquainted with more suitable, as respects colour, warmth, and durability, for the general dress of the angler, than properly manufactured Scotch plaiding. It has this advantage, to boot, that it dries quickly, after immersion in water or exposure to rain, and from the varieties of pattern it embraces, there is always sufficient scope for a display of taste on the part of the selector.

I would recommend that the coat and trousers be usually fabricated of this article. In the spring season, however, a dress of warmer texture is often found essential; and there are fifty stuffs, suitable for cold weather, on the shelves of every clothier, which the most fastidious of our fraternity could not object to wear. But I have no design to interfere with the taste or tailor of any man, and shall, therefore, refrain from entering into details upon this matter, or giving directions as to how a fishing jacket ought to be made and furnished, or what description of head covering the angler should use. With regard, however, to what, strictly speaking, forms the equipment of our craft, apart from rod and tackle, I think it requisite to offer a few observations. First of all, then, as to an article, which, in many localities, it is almost essential for the angler to possess: I mean

WADING-BOOTS.—It is quite true, that, in my younger days, I regarded these a cumbersome and unnecessary part of my equipment, and so they would prove in all pedestrian excursions, undertaken by juvenile anglers, in the hey-day of health and vigour; but as one becomes sobered down, and more chary of his exertions, he not only reconciles himself to their use, but actually feels out of place in their absence. To a salmon-fisher who has no boat at command, and who, to obtain sport, requires to plunge knee-deep in the element, during the months of March and April, as well as October, in seasons, in fact, when the temperature is by no means high, they are absolutely necessary; and even to the trout-fisher, in May and June, who is liable to suffer

from habitual exposure to wet, they constitute a desirable means of protection. I need not, therefore, to recommend them as an article of expediency, the more especially as the various inventions and improvements of the age render them of easy acquisition, and that at a cost more moderate than a rheumatic attack, or even a twinge of toothache, coupled severally with doctors' and dentists' fees.

It would be quite superfluous, were I to enumerate the different descriptions of India-rubber wading-boots, which, from time to time, have been submitted to my inspection. I am not partial to wares fabricated of such slender material as the generality of these happen to be, and prefer instead a sturdy, workman-like pair of leg-defenders, such as are worn by the Berwick fishermen and those of our principal salmon rivers. There is no necessity, however, that wading-boots of this description, to last well and answer all the purposes of the angler, should be nearly so coarse and heavy as those manufactured to resist damage from salt water and incessant usage. They ought not, in fact, to weigh more, when properly ironed, than eight or nine pounds. To maintain leather wading-boots in good order, it is necessary they should be used every now and then, or else filled occasionally with water, and allowed to stand an hour or two in this condition. The leather also requires to be kept soft and pliant, for which purpose I recommend the use of the following mixture,—the materials named to be melted together above a slow fire, and smeared, when cool, over the leather:

1 pint of neat's-foot oil.	2 ozs. of yellow wax.
2 ozs. of turpentine.	1 oz. of Burgundy pitch.

Before pulling on the boots, draw a large-sized worsted stocking over the trousers.

The above recipe is of tried value; but as neat's-foot oil is an expensive ingredient, and not easily obtained, I subjoin a more economical preparation.

1 pint of linseed oil.	2 ozs. of best tar.
4 ozs. of beeswax.	2 ozs. of Burgundy pitch.
2 ozs. of spirits of turpentine.	

Melt all slowly together.

FISHING-BOOK.—It is astonishing what fancies some

anglers entertain, in respect to their tackle. They accumulate hank after hank of gut, gross after gross of flies, a whole bolster charge of feathers, and an anchor weight of hooks, without for one moment considering the damage done by age, moths, and corrosion, and the unlikelihood of their ever existing to employ all this amassed hoard of fishing gear. No doubt, these whimsical enthusiasts draw a world of satisfaction from the review of their varied accumulations, and love to expatiate upon the merits of this or that contrivance; the shade of a tackle, or the shape of a hook, forming with them sufficient subject of discourse for more time than they have spent in testing the advantages of either the one or the other. I confess I have but little sympathy with men of this humour, and have always met with the most efficient and sterling anglers, in those who possess a simple but select stock, intermixed with nothing doubtful or new-fangled in the shape of tackle—the gut hank fresh and clean—the hooks free from rust—the flies recently dressed—the pocket-book ample in size, yet not crowded in its contents—everything having elbow-room and being in its proper place.

The angler's trouting-book, in order to give suitable accommodation to the tackle required, should measure at least eight inches in length, by five and a half in breadth. The number and arrangement of the divisions and cases are pure matters of taste, upon which no remarks need be offered. For salmon flies, I would recommend a pocket-book of still larger dimensions, and instead of vellum, let there be introduced divisions of flannel moderately fine. These, in fact, should be glued on, or otherwise affixed to strong parchment, and the rest, in stitching up, disposed of betwixt them. By the adoption of this plan, the salmon-fisher is enabled to arrange a large stock of fly hooks, one by one, over a comparatively small space; he can distribute them, according to his fancy, equally over the various divisions, so that this portion of the pocket-book when closed shall not press too heavily upon that, and thus tend to injure the wings or general dressing of the flies; moreover, he has access, at a few glances, to the whole collection, and when induced to substitute one hook for another, does not require to consume time in ransacking his cases for the necessary fly, but can detect and extricate it without the slightest delay.

Tin Box.—Although not generally so convenient as a pocket-book, an oblong or circular box of tin is better adapted, in some respects, to hold tackle, especially trouting-flies made up into casts, salmon hooks, the wings of which are otherwise liable to be crushed, and casting-lines of all descriptions.

This box may be constructed to open with a hinge on both sides. If circular, it should measure four and a half inches in diameter; if oblong, as many in breadth, the depth, in either case, being two or two and a half inches. Slips of white paper, fitted to shape, ought to be placed in the interior, for the purpose, as they are required, of dividing the contents.

Of the remainder of the angler's equipment, it is unnecessary to say much. With regard to the creel or pannier, few improvements, that I am aware of, have recently taken place. More attention perhaps, than formerly, is now paid to its shape, which has been considerably elongated, the depth reduced, and the curve behind increased, so as to fit close to the back of the wearer; but in point of material, no changes have occurred. It is essential to the enjoyment of the trout-fisher, that this part of his equipment be kept always clean. During summer, a few handfuls of moist grass, or a wet cloth will aid, both to effect this object, and to preserve, until the expiry of his day's sport, the fine tints and fresh appearance of the fish captured.

The angler, for his own satisfaction, ought to provide himself with a patent spring weighing-machine. This instrument is now made so small, that it can be carried, without giving any inconvenience, in one's waistcoat pocket; at the same time, it will indicate the weight of fish captured with great exactness.

As a general advice, in concluding this chapter with regard to tackle, the angler, before committing lines and flies to his box or pocket-book, should always take care that they are properly dried; for which purpose it is recommended that he dispose of them about his hat or hat-band, on changing his tackle or leaving the river. He ought also, especially if it be a salmon one, and, in consequence of rain, soaked to the centre, to unwind his line from the reel or winch, and lay it up, in loose coils, over the back of a chair or peg, until thoroughly freed from moisture. Mixtures of hair and silk will retain the wet much longer than lines

manufactured of hair alone, and in consequence, they will rot more readily, on the above precaution being neglected or but partially acted upon.

CHAPTER IV.

FLY-DRESSING.

COMPARATIVE Inutility of Written Instructions.—List of Materials Required.—Feathers, Dubbings, and Tinsels.—Trout Flies.—Author's Method of Dressing Them.—General Remarks on the Dressing of Scotch and Irish Salmon Flies.—Looped Heads on Salmon Flies.—Horizontal or Flat Wings.—Projecting or Upright Wings.

I FIND it impossible, by means of a few cursory directions, to make the art of fly-dressing sufficiently intelligible to the reader. In order to become an adept, he requires to be instructed, not by book but by practice; nor should he trust slavishly to the method of this or that artist, but allow room for the exercise of his own taste and ingenuity, especially in the selection of feathers and dubbing for salmon hooks. Before venturing to describe the process generally followed in dressing the artificial fly, I shall jot down, as a matter of course, the materials useful to the general dresser, enlarging upon them here and there, as I think it expedient.

MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES.

1. Hooks, Philips and Adlington, of all sizes.
2. Gut, dyed and of its natural colour, both salmon and trouting descriptions.
3. Nippers, of thick wire, brass or iron.
4. A pair of fine scissors, curved at the points.
5. Silk threads of various degrees of fineness, colour, and shade.
6. Floss silks to correspond, wound up on small bobbins.
7. Phial of fine spirit varnish.
8. Wax, shoemakers', worked up with white resin, to give it consistency.
9. Dubbings, pigs-wool, mohair, wools and worsted of all shades and colours, muscle silk, hare-leg, water-rat skin, combings of cow-hair, &c., &c.
10. Tinsels, gold and silver, flat, corded, and fretted, of various breadths.
11. Wing-divider or point.
12. Feathers, among which may may be principally mentioned—

HACKLES FROM THE BARN-DOOR COCK.—These, upon the whole, are the most essential feathers used by the fly-dresser. They require to be selected with great care and judgment. I know some anglers who are particularly fastidious with regard to them, and would on no account use a hackle, which did not come up, in point of shape and colour, to the exact standard of their taste. One gentleman in particular, of my acquaintance, indulges in the fancy of collecting large quantities of these feathers. This he has done for many years, and as his avocations lead him from time to time to visit various parts of Scotland, he has been enabled to store up a very considerable collection. The hackles thus gathered are placed, according to date, in a portfolio: the history of the cock from which each lot was taken given along with them, and all are neatly prepared and made ready for the dresser. Many of these he holds in such regard, as to look upon them purely as specimen hackles, which he has no intention of ever putting to use, but retains them for the purpose of showing off their matchlessness of build and colour.

Subjoined are lists of various feathers useful to the dresser, those used in the construction of trouting-flies being distinguished from the more gaudy and coarse ones employed in the trimming of salmon hooks.

FEATHERS FOR TROUT FLIES.

Wings of Woodcock.
" Landrail.
" Snipe.
" Thrush.
" Lark.
" Starling.
" Blackbird.
" Dotterel.
Feathers of Grouse.
Feathers of Partridge (hackles and tail).
" Mallard (back and breast).
" Teal.
" Starling (hackles).
" Golden plover.
" Lapwing (crest hackles).
" Wren (used as hackles).
" Ostrich (hackles).

FEATHERS FOR SALMON FLIES.

Turkey, all varieties, including
White and double-white tops from rump.
Duns and dun-white tops.
Mottles, streaks, and pure white.
Silver pheasant, male and female, tail and wing feathers, pencilled and mottled.
White top from mallard wing.
Swan.
Snipe, pencilled feather under wing.
Salmon-tailed gledd.
Capercailzie.
Mallard and teal feathers mottled.
Domestic drake,
Raven.

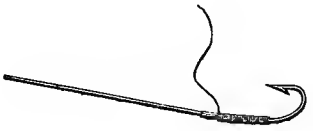
Golden pheasant, crest, tippet, and tail.
Argus of Sumatra.
Jungle cock.
Jay, blue feathers on the wing.
Blue lowrie of Australia.
Blue and buff macaw, tail, etc.
Green ditto.
Parrots, for tail tufts, red and yellow, etc., parroquets.
King-fishers.
Guinea-fowl.
Wood-duck of Canada.
Bustard.
Heron, male bird, pendant breast feathers, etc.
Ostrich.
Java dove.
Cormorant.
Bittern.
Peacock.
Common pheasant, etc., etc.

In dressing small or trouting hooks, I pursue the following method. My intention, for instance, is to complete a dozen fly-hooks. Accordingly, in commencing arrangements, I select, from a hank of fine gut, twelve choice threads. These I prepare, by clipping off, with a pair of fine scissors, the ragged extremities, and by straightening the lengths with my fingers, I then place them together on a table before me, and proceed next to lay out, and at hand, an equal number of hooks of the sizes intended to be dressed, along with nippers, resin, etc., after which, I cut and wax a dozen portions of fine silk thread, varying in length, according to the size and description of the fly-hook in contemplation, say from eight to fourteen inches. The colours I prefer are orange, yellow, straw-tinted, and crimson; but as to this matter I am more indifferent than with regard to the quality of the silk, which cannot, if it possesses sufficient strength to take on the wax without giving way, be used too fine.

I now open my repository of feathers and hackles, placing before me the required number of the latter or a small quantity of prepared dubbing instead. My next step is to make ready and lay out before me, in convenient order, the wings of the intended fly-hooks. In detaching these from the feather, I do not, like many fly-dressers, use knife or scissors, but generally strip them off by means of my thumb and forefinger. Such, I allow, is not the most economical mode of procedure, but it embraces this advantage, that it preserves to the fibres or strips of feather composing each individual wing, their co-adhesive power, so that, on tying on the wings, less derangement or separation of the parts is liable to take place; for although the fibres of some feathers are naturally linked to each other all along, to the very rim or extremity, others, especially

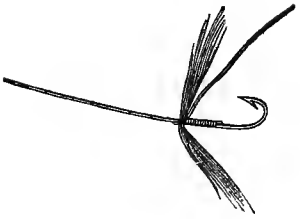
where the turn of the wire commences, or else, for variety's sake, confined immediately under the wing, so as to re- those of the maldrake and birds of soft and oily plumage, have but a small measure of this peculiarity, and depend, as the principle of their connexion, chiefly upon the roots or lower ends of the fibres in question.

Having assorted and paired off the wings, as well as arranged, and made ready the hackles, dubbing, etc., I proceed forthwith to accomplish the dressing. This I commence, by lifting one of the hooks with the thumb and forefinger of my left hand, and applying at the same time to its shank the requisite length of gut. These, by means of one of the waxed silk-threads, above-mentioned, I firmly unite together, commencing about the centre of the shank, and turning the silk over them, at least four or five times, in an upward direction, towards its head or extremity. I then fasten with a single hitch-knot. The hook, etc., will appear thus:



Having cut off the superfluous gut, I now proceed to fasten on the wings. These, which lie paired before me, I lift together, their heads pressed close betwixt the thumb and forefinger of my right hand, and the inner sides of the feather of which each happens to be formed, turned face to face.

I then place them, in their proper position, over the head and shank of the hook, substituting, as I do so, the corresponding fingers of the left hand, in order to keep all fast. This done, I take up the portion of waxed silk hanging below, and give it two, or at most three turns, over the root of the feathers, gut, and wire-shank; then, without fastening, bring it over, betwixt the intended wings (which, if pressed together during one of the above operations, so as in a manner to adhere to each other, I divide with a fine point, such as that of a needle or penknife), and running it below them, fetch it up again, in the form of a cross,



In making large fly-hooks, when it is desirable that the wings stand well apart from each other, I sometimes repeat this part of the process, recrossing the silk thread betwixt them. Having cut off the superfluous ends of feather, I now form the head. This is done, simply by continuing to wrap the silk over the extremity of the hook shank, above the wings, until what remains of the fag portions or roots is concealed and made secure. I now bring down the thread and fasten it, with a simple hitch-knot, underneath.

The wings being finished, I have only to complete the fly, by the affixing and laying on of the hackle or dubbing; these materials sufficing, either in their separate or joint capacity, to represent both the legs and body of the insect. In the case of simply attaching and running on a hackle, I require, first of all, to lift one of the assorted feathers of this description previously placed within reach, and laying the root end towards the bend of the hook, so that the fibred or unstripped portion has its position in immediate conjunction with the wings at the point of fastening, to cast round it the dressing thread already employed, having carefully re-waxed it for the purpose. I then continue the wrapping so far down the shank of the hook as it is my intention to bring the hackle. This done, I take hold with my nippers of the fine end of the feather, and commence, close under the wings of the fly, to wind it on. Four or five turns generally suffice to fetch it down to the desired point, when, having cast the silk thread round it twice, for security, I either twitch off the tip with my nippers, or cut it close with the scissors. A succession of hitch-knots, or what is preferable, the common whip fastening, concludes the process.

Hackles, in the case of the trouting-fly, may either be carried down nearly the whole length of the shank, to

semble only the legs of the insect. When so applied, it is expedient, in some cases, to complete the body by the addition, either of a little floss silk or of dubbing taken from a hare's ear, water-rat skin, etc. In putting on dubbing, take care to twist it well up with the dressing thread, by means of the thumb and forefinger, before commencing to form the body. It should be applied, as well as the hackle, very sparingly. I cannot reconcile myself to the taste for bushy flies exhibited by some anglers. As imitations of the natural insect, they are caricatures at the best, and although not refused on general occasions by hungry and hasty fish, are nevertheless ill adapted, from the circumstance of the barb of the hook being choked and muffled up, to strike and secure them.

No trouting-flies, used purely as such, on most of our rivers, are a whit the better of tinsel. To adopt an intermixture, however, of gold and silver thread in the body of loch flies is generally advisable, on those lochs especially, such as Loch Tummel, Ledgowan, Ness, etc., where the trout are of a large description. Tinsel, I may also state, is a favourite addition to the materials of sea-trout, whitling, or finnock fly-hooks. This is not, be it remarked, a general rule, for the fish alluded to, in clear waters, will often prefer a plain, dark-hackled fly of small dimensions, to one that is gaudy, or seemingly apportioned in size to their weight and feeding powers.

Although the method of dressing a trouting-fly above described is the one I generally adopt, and such as for many years I have found to be at once expeditious and satisfactory, still there are artists of great skill and merit who fashion their lures upon quite a different system; nor, in fact, does there exist any fixed scroll of regulations for the fly-dresser to hold by. No doubt, it is quite allowable for him to experimentalise a certain length, and vary, not merely his materials, but his mode of putting them together; for instance, instead of finishing off at the body or tail of the insect, he may do so, more tastefully, at the head or with the wings; he may also, by way of change, leave the wings undivided or append them so as to turn over, and thus maintain a more upright and life-like position, when drawn along the water's surface.

But while conceding, in this respect, to the fly-dresser, I must maintain that there is no real service done to the

angler, as regards trouting-flies, by a multiplication of their names and varieties, or by useless disquisitions upon certain virtues peculiar to this or that imitation; nay, further, I regard, as unessential and elaborately trifling, the attempts made by many theoretical writers on the subject of angling, to sort out and classify, according to the month, the different ephemeral and water insects which they think it necessary should be included in the stock of the fly-fisher. I am of opinion that, with a hare-lug, a brown and a black hackle—these three—it being a matter of indifference whether the wing adapted to them is formed of the brown mallard, the woodcock, landrail, or grouse feather, or indeed whether the hackles are provided with wings at all,—I express my belief, founded on the experience of more than twenty years, that, with the three simple fabrications above mentioned, accommodating them in point of size to the season and state of water, trout can be captured, and that as readily as by means of the most slavish and subtle imitation of the natural insect, from any river or loch throughout Scotland. In my chapter upon trouting-flies, these observations will be found considerably enlarged upon, explained, and applied.

It now remains for me to say something relative to the dressing of salmon flies. This is a subject involving such a variety of practice, and so much detail, that to attempt the discussion of it in full is much beyond my intention. The task, fortunately, is not required, and I shall therefore confine myself to a very few remarks, which, if they do not bear so immediately upon the matter in question as to expound and illustrate it, may, nevertheless, be admitted to possess some connection therewith.

First of all, as to the dressing of the Scotch salmon fly. It is generally imagined that, because of its sober, if not homely look, the fabrication of this lure is a matter of no difficulty, in comparison with the fabrication of an Irish killer, such as the Doctor, or any other well-known magnet. I admit the materials are not so costly, nor, in many cases, nearly so numerous; still there are points in the dressing of the former, which, in order to make it please the eye, require more nicety of execution, as well as the exercise of more taste and discrimination, than are necessary to be employed in the construction of the latter. Among these is the proper adaptation and tying on of the wings, the selection of the hackles and dubbing, the harmonising of the colours, the

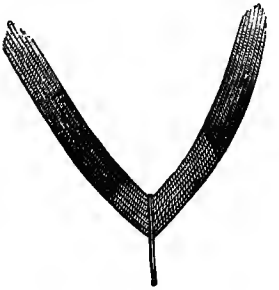
meting out and apportioning to its special purpose the quantity of each material. True, all these matters command considerable attention on the part of the Irish fly-dresser, but he is relieved by the showiness of floss, feather, and tinsel, from the necessity of exercising anything like that degree of taste which the working with dull and sombre colours calls forth; and in the case of the wings, he is not hampered with one tithe of the difficulty which attends the neat adjustment and fixing on of these appendages, severally and without break of fibre, all of which is requisite in regard to most of the Scottish salmon flies.

Still, in either capacity, whether as a dresser of Irish or Tweed flies, it is essential, if aspiring to excellence, that the artist be endowed with a tasteful and correct eye—the eye in some measure of a painter, who can understand the arrangement and mutual relation of colours to each other; he must also possess the ready use of his fingers, so as to be able to execute delicate and minute work, to give, as it were to a spider's thread, the sufficiency of a strong cord, to conceal and varnish over all breaks and finishes, so that the entirety of the performance may, in a manner, challenge or defy question.

As regards the salmon fly, one great improvement, of recent date, consists in the substitution, as a mode of attaching it to the line, of a small loop or eyehole of gut at the head or shank-end of the hook, instead of a full length of the same material. This loop, as in the case of the length in question, may be formed either of triple or of single gut, according to the size of the wire. It is of advantage in two or three respects: first, its adoption gives increased facilities to the dresser to finish off his work in good style; again, it renders an assortment of salmon flies capable of being carried without crushing or disarranging their plumage; and lastly, while hooks tied on the length or strand are apt to become chafed or weakened at the neck, or to crack off altogether, the adoption of the loop prevents this evil; for, should the strand it was originally fitted to appear worn or damaged, one has only to remove it and attach a new one in its stead. The loop in question ought, on every occasion, to be made as small as possible, just sufficient to admit the passing and repassing of a triple or single gut length through the eye-hole.

In the dressing of salmon flies, there are two modes of

laying on the wings, before fastening. They may be set either horizontally, the one with the other, as they are placed in the moth, the bee, common house-fly, and various other insects, or in such a manner that they shall correspond, in point of position, with the wings of the butter-fly and of the generality of water-ephemeræ, that is, with their inner sides turned face to face, at a considerable angle of elevation from the body. The mode first described is, I find, preferred to the other by many salmon-fishers, because, say they, the horizontal position of the wings assists in giving buoyancy to the hook, enabling one to hang it with more effect over the fish, especially in currents of sluggish rate or in dead water under an uncertain breeze. At the same time, to set the wings so as to retain this position, requires greater address and attention on the part of the fly-dresser, and is, in fact, a good test of his skill and proficiency. In tying on the wings of a salmon hook, care should be taken not to break or disarrange the slips of feather of which each wing is separately composed. Some feathers, such as the brown mottled ones taken from the back of the mallard, are less adhesive than others, and consequently more liable to become disarranged. The hold which the slips in question possess seems, in this feather, to exist merely at the root; the portion in demand therefore for the formation of the wing requires to be stripped away from its support with the thumb and forefinger, whereas, in the case of a turkey or silver pheasant tail-feather, the wing may be cut off and



shaped with more neatness and economy by means of a sharp pen-knife. Rump-feathers, those of the turkey

especially, and some tail and breast ones taken from other birds, admit of being readily shaped out into connected pairs, so as to form horizontal wings, corresponding accurately together in point of colour, mark, or mottle, and length of slip or fibre. These in the tying-on give the dresser less trouble than when he has to work with detached slips.

Of mixed wings in Irish fly-hooks, all that is necessary to be said I have incorporated in my chapter on salmon flies, among the general observations appended to a list, there introduced, of Irish favourites. The dubbing, hackle, tinsels, etc., employed in the construction of our standard killers are also treated of in the same chapter, and I shall not at present fatigue the reader by enlarging upon these subjects.

CHAPTER V.

TROUTING FLIES.

FASTIDIOUSNESS of Anglers.—Author's Limitation.—Groundwork of a Killing Stock.—The Hackle.—Spider Fly.—Hooks, Round and Irish Heads.—Their Adaptation in Point of Size to the Season, State of Water, &c.—Fly Fishing Months.—March, April, and May.—Water Insects, &c.—June and July.—Night Lures.—The Stone Fly.—Burn Fishing in Summer.—Loch Flies.—Fly-hooks Employed in August and September.—Condition of Trout during these Months.

THE fastidiousness of many anglers with respect to their trouting-flies has always occasioned me astonishment. I cannot, for my own part, be made very exactly to understand the grounds of it. Certainly, when brought to bear upon our waters, it is altogether out of place; yet how frequently do I meet with those in my fishing excursions who, exulting in the possession of five or six dozen varieties of insect imitations, consume the primest portion of the day in testing their attractive powers—now unlooping one, because it is, they opine, a shade too dark, now another on account of its want of tinsel, attaching in turn the latest urban conceit redoubted as a killer, the fail-me-never of some sporting parson or half-pay hero.

What, I naturally ask, are the notions of such anglers with respect to the tastes or, it may be, the optics of the trout? Do they suppose this fish, in regard to its surface food, so singularly capricious as to refuse all others but the insect of the day, so whimsical as even to resist the claims of hunger itself, unless wrought on by the appearance of some peculiarly streaked water-fly? Do they fancy it discriminative of every shade or hue in the wing, body, and feelers of its prey?—keenly sensible of the smallest deviation in colour, more so than of a defect in shape from the natural insect? If such their conclusions, I cannot help affirming that they give credit to the fish in question for possessing a power of discrimination, not less than a degree of daintiness or epicurism altogether extraordinary. I am not, however, denying that to a certain extent their conclusions are correct. The error lies in their being overdrawn. The trout, confessedly, is a capricious feeder, circumspect in its habits, and possessed of great quickness of eye, as well as an acute sense of smell; but that it holds these properties in such measure as to require not only the utmost skill, but the greatest choice and variety of fly-tackle in order to capture it, is a position, with regard at least to our Scottish rivers, altogether untenable.

The experience of twenty years and upwards has led to the conviction, on my part, that a stock, consisting of three or at most four diversities of trouting-flies, is quite sufficient to insure success at all seasons on any of our lakes and streams. I am talking of diversities, and in doing so allude to the colour, shape, and material of the imitation employed, not at all to its size; *that* I leave to be regulated wholly by circumstances, such, for instance, as the season of the year, the low or flooded state of the water, calms or winds, etc.

The fly-stock of the trout fisher may then, I opine, in point of colour, be restricted without detriment to the following varieties:—

1. The red or brown hackle, with or without wings.
2. The black hackle, ditto, ditto.
3. The hare-lug or water-mouse body, with wings.

These, as noted down, are essentially the groundwork of a killing fly-stock. They are the elements most requisite in the construction of those lures which pendant authors

on angling have chosen to dignify with entomological names, and by the addition as well as substitution of other materials increase and vary to such a degree that all count of what really is a taking and trustworthy fly is overwhelmed in their teeming and bulky store page.

The above simplification, however, of a fly-stock is not introduced by me as one which I propose to be adopted or even to run greatly counter to general ideas on the subject. It is an enumeration merely of certain constituent elements in the construction of the lure which, whenever used, I have found to be inviting. Indeed, I may safely affirm that on every Scottish stream and loch, one or other of the flies above specified may, in the absence of others, be used with a fair measure of success; the sizes, of course, as before observed, being regulated by the condition of the water, the state of the season, weather, and other influences.

And as to the wings which at option, for they are not absolutely necessary, may be used as appendages to the hackle flies, I would recommend them, in the case of the brown or red hackle, to be taken from the snipe, starling, or brown-speckled feather found on the back of the mallard; in the case of the black hackle, to be constructed of grouse, woodcock, landrail, or speckled breast-feather either of the teal or wild drake. When used on lochs in dull, windy weather, a streak of tinsel or gold thread wound over the body of the lure will be found, in regard to the larger descriptions of hackle flies, of some little service, especially where good-sized fish abound, or when there are chances of obtaining sea-trout.

The silk thread employed in the fabric of the fly should, on general occasions, be pretty freely exposed, especially below the hackle, and as it approaches the bend of the hook. It may be used of various colours, but by far the most accordant and captivating when exposed are yellow and orange. Crimson, blue, green, and even white thread can be employed, however, without detriment to the sport on many occasions, while dull, mixed hues are seldom or never rejected.

And now, with regard to the hackle itself. This I consider a matter of some little importance, not as concerns its exact tint or shade of colour (for along with what is unquestionably black or unquestionably brown, regard may be paid justly enough, though in a less degree, to those

more dubious hues denominated by anglers, ginger, chocolate, dun, grizzle, etc.), but with respect to its shape, fibre, and quality. These points I cannot help reckoning worthy of some measure of consideration. Disregarding them, the neatest-handed fly-dresser will produce but a clumsy piece of craft-work, uninviting to the eye of the angler, and thereby, as a matter of consequence, seeing it will be used with distrust, unlikely to do much execution among trout.

The selection of the hackle, then, requires considerable care and knowledge. Not one cock in ten walking the farmyard yields feathers of this description truly available to the angler. They are generally found to be too stiff and long in the fibre, seldom prettily tapered, and when colour is brought into consideration, perpetually at a discount. The annexed is a sample of what may be reckoned, in point of shape, a good trouting hackle.

Birds yielding such feathers, although infrequent, may always, with a little exertion on the part of the fancier, be picked up and purchased. The hackles themselves ought to be selected about or after the middle of winter, before at least any symptoms of moulting take place. Those pulled from an old cock are often too wiry and stiff for use. Herls from the plover's crest, and the neck of the male starling will be found excellent substitutes for the hackles of the barn-fowl in the manufacture of small dark-coloured flies; indeed, feathers of many descriptions, and from a great variety of birds, are useful for this purpose. The ostrich and peacock furnish, in their way, valuable herls; but an admirable resemblance to the legs, feelers, and body of the insect may be constructed, by lovers of variety, from the neck-feather of the partridge.

Having thus treated of those lures in which the hackle forms an important item, I proceed to notice the hare's ear fly, commonly, in Scotland, denominated the hare-lug. The virtues possessed by this imitation have long been known, and are generally appreciated. For my own part, as a

purely trouting-fly, I hold it in higher regard than I do the hackle itself. On waters much thrashed, and where the fish have become shy and cunning, it is infinitely more serviceable; on the Tyne, for instance, in East Lothian, etc., etc.; also, during summer, on lochs and rivers slightly reduced by drought. The wing used with it may, as in the case of the hackle, be varied according to taste. I prefer that formed of the woodcock feather, when dressed on a good-sized hook, but the snipe, landrail, and brown mallard furnish excellent substitutes.

A very killing lure for trout may also be fabricated, by surmounting a twitch of the hare's ear with the hackle of the partridge or grouse, taking care that the fibres of the latter be of moderate length, just exceeding that of the hook itself. This, by some anglers, is termed the spider-fly, and should be used as a stretcher at the extremity of the line. On gleamy days, at the commencement of June, when trout, in our southern rivers, are apt to prove lazy, I have found it very successful, especially on the lower parts of Tweed, near Kelso.

A good hare-lug will provide body material for several dozens of flies, and that of various shades and complexions, from a swarthy black on to a dingy white. The back or furry part of the ear, however, is that which, in point of colour, is most acceptable to the fly-dresser. Excellent moth or night flies are also fabricated from its lighter portions.

Classed with this material, so valuable to the angler, I may mention the furs of the water-rat, the mouse, weazel, squirrel, monkey, opossum, combings of a red cow, etc., all of which are made use of in fly-dressing. As to their attractive qualities, however, there is no necessity for saying much. I certainly hold in some esteem the pile of the first-mentioned animal; but its equivalent may always be discovered in the substance just treated of, which, although differing equally in colour and texture, will be found, in the same state of water, quite as effective.

I shall now treat shortly of the description of hooks most serviceable to the fly-fisher, their sizes and the adaptation of these to the humour of the fish, the forwardness of the season and state of water. And first, as to the description of wire best adapted for hooking and securing trout. I have already, in a former chapter, approached closely to

this subject, while discussing, in a general manner, the merits of the article, as manufactured in various parts of the kingdom. Without giving the absolute superiority to either, I have, in the place alluded to, divided my recommendations pretty equally betwixt what is called the round-bend, and that adopted by Philips, or the Irish form of hook. The former, the round-bend, I prefer using for all sorts of bottom and under-surface fishing; for worm, roe, and minnow tackles of every description; but I do more, I allow it the preference also, and that decidedly, as a ground-work for the smaller kinds of flies; not that it possesses even half the strength of a properly tempered Irish hook, but in shape, it is much better adapted than the other, both to fasten upon the lip of the fish, and what is of as much importance, when fastened, to retain its grasp. All trouting-flies, therefore, from the size 00 up to No. 5, I recommend to be dressed upon hooks of the above description. At this point, however, I find it advisable to substitute the Irish bend; the turn of the wire being now sufficient to allow a ready admission to its entire barbed portion through the cartilaginous parts of the fish's mouth; which accomplished, every thing else, as regards the hook itself, is in favour of the substitution. It possesses, for instance, to a greater extent the virtues of temper and durability, is more retentive of its colour, and less liable to become corroded or rust-worn. These remarks, be it observed, have no reference to the many spurious imitations of the hook in question, which crowd the general market; they are confined entirely to the best descriptions of manufactured wire.

On quitting this subject, namely the form of hooks most serviceable to the fly-fisher, I have only to add that the Kirby sneck-bend, and other numerous innovations upon the two established shapes above recommended may be held as faulty. They possess, at any rate, no certain advantage over them, and in point of temper are generally inferior.

I am now brought to treat of the adaptation of the different sizes of hooks to the season of the year, state of the water, and humour of the fish. Upon this subject, a very great deal might be said: indeed, to handle it with effect, and at the same time bring it within the desirable compass, is altogether impracticable. It would be other-

wise, were I to confine my observations to a single stream or locality, but in extending them to the whole range of lochs and rivers in Scotland, they must necessarily prove defective, frequently misplaced, and if not really inaccurate, liable at least to be thought so. I shall therefore avoid running into this error, by venturing merely a few general remarks on the subject.

Fly-hooks used early in spring ought to be of full size and body on all our main or first-class waters and many of their branches, especially those which contain large trout, and are accessible to marine fish. On rivers like the Tweed or Tay, I recommend the use of a whitling hook, as the trail-fly or stretcher, during March and April. This may be exchanged for one of smaller size and duller colours, during mild weather, and when the waters run low and clear. On a casting-line made up with three flies, use generally the red hackle at the extremity, attaching the others as bobs or droppers. The distance betwixt each ought to vary with the length of the rod and the width and condition of the stream. On an average, there ought to be four lengths of small single gut, carefully knotted, betwixt the trail or stretcher and the hook immediately above it, while three of the same material are sufficient to divide the droppers.

Always, in making up the fly-cast, attend to proportion. As regards the gut, this advice is particularly necessary, but it is not less so when applied to the arrangement of the hooks. The heaviest wire ought, invariably, to form the trail-fly; that which is lighter being disposed of, at due distance, as a bob or dropper. Attention to this rule will greatly facilitate the management of the line and tackle.

Reverting to the matter in hand, namely the adaptation of fly-hooks in point of size, to the seasons, state of water, etc., I have to remark, that the use of large hooks, during the early portion of spring, is, on many rivers, absolutely expedient. Trout seldom rise freely before the middle of April; until, in fact, the appearance of what are termed, not very appropriately, the March-browns. These insects, which, it is well known, have their prior state of existence at the bottom of the streams and pools, and assume the winged condition only when acted on by a certain warmth of temperature, create, on their appearance, the earliest natural cravings in the fish for surface food. Accordingly,

before this event takes place, the trout has no inducement to rise, except what is afforded it by the angler in the shape of an artificial fly; nor is it easily provoked from its retreat by a single imitation or two, and that unseasonably small, of what at the proper period it is accustomed to have offered it in amplest abundance. It is therefore in a manner necessary, by way of bribe, to present a large-sized fly, taking care, however, that no violence is done to nature in this or any other respect. The shape, colour, and proportions of the lure ought respectively to be considered. Sometimes, it is true, in the season referred to, trout, and those of ordinary dimensions, are taken on the huge gaudy flies used for kelts and spring salmon; but to angle with such, exclusively for the purpose and in a purely trouting stream, were absolute folly. On the occasions in question, the fish evidently seize the lure, as they do a minnow or parr-tail, not as an insect or anything resembling one.

While recommending the use of good-sized fly-hooks during March and the early portion of April, I allow that there are several of our Scottish streams where the trout, from natural shyness and other causes, repudiate or disregard them; yet when effective, as on most lochs and rivers they unquestionably are, one great advantage they have over the lesser sizes of wire lies in their superior capacity to retain fish when hooked—a matter which some anglers affect to make light of, but one, in reality, of very considerable consequence when the contents of the creel have, at the close of the day's sport, to pass muster.

Advancing from the middle of April into the months of May and June, considerable changes, regulated chiefly by weather and state of water, will be found to take place with respect to the size of their surface food, in the tastes and inclinations of our river trout, especially in the southern districts of Scotland. The fish, during this period of the year, having left the still, deep places, betake themselves towards the streams and rapids, not yet, however, be it observed, into the true shallows and thinnest portions of the water, which they do about the middle of summer, when minnows, small-fry, and ground-bait of various sorts become abundant. Here, in the resorts first mentioned, at the necks of pools, they watch the passing of the March-browns and other flies, snatching now and then, in the intervals, at a stray insect wafted in advance of the general

shower or body. The ample supply of this sort of food, now afforded them, naturally induces a measure of satiety. They begin, ere long, to play the epicure, picking and choosing only such individuals of the winged horde as suit their fancy, and rejecting with disdain those maimed imitations wherewith the angler attempts to dazzle and ensnare them.

All this has been over and again observed by experienced fly-fishers, and it certainly is in some degree tantalising to be approached, almost to within rod's length, by numbers of feeding-trout, and yet, find oneself unable to secure even half-a-dozen of the smallest. How then, the question occurs, is this to be obviated? Fully and efficiently it cannot, but in a certain measure I have reason to think it may, and that by the adoption of a different size and species of fly from the one astir. Instead, for instance, of an artificial March-brown, let the angler use a dark-coloured hackle or hare-lug dressed upon No. 4 Kendal wire. On Tweed, the brown or red hackle is generally more killing; but one or other of the three flies already recommended I have found, on many occasions, a suitable remedy under the circumstances above detailed. In truth, it is but natural in the trout, half-gorged by a superabundance of one species of insect, to prefer for the moment what it conceives to be a rarer and more delicate variety. Sated with and grown indifferent to the former, it is only in accordance with its instinct to resort to the latter as a novelty, or, it may be, a provocative.

On many of our streams, those especially which flow south of the Grampian range, May, as far as the fly is concerned, is the principal angling month for trout. I make no reference, at present, to loch fishing, which may be pursued with success during the whole of the summer quarter. The beginning of the above-mentioned month is generally, like the latter weeks of April, distinguished by the prevalence of the March-browns and other ephemeral insects of what may be termed gregarious habits. These, floating on the surface in occasional swarms, influence very considerably, as I have already stated, the movements and inclinations of the fish. Among other results omitted to be mentioned, they induce them to frequent certain localities, and by their crowding into these pell-mell, the range or extent of cast becomes, in some rivers, very materially lessened. As the month however proceeds, the birth of the *ephemeræ* is rendered less

dependent on vernal gleams and sunbursts; the days are longer and the weather more steady and genial. Consequently, river insects of various sorts burst into winged existence, not as before, in simultaneous swarms, the effect, to boot, of their long thraldom during winter, but in gradual and almost imperceptible succession. The deeper portions of the stream are also moved by the sun to yield their measure of sustenance. Into these, and throughout the whole course and current, trout accordingly distribute themselves. Now, they select, apart, one from another, places of ambush—the covert of a rock, stone, bank, or tree-root, where concealed and defended, they may watch for their fluttering victims; nor are the exposed and open channels left altogether unfrequented. Thither too, as the day advances, resort the bolder and greedier fish, less eager after fly food than aliment of a more substantial nature, yet not unwilling, during the month we speak of, to gratify their epicurism upon such tiny and delicate morsels as, partaking of this character, are borne towards them by the current.

The sizes of hook adapted for fly-fishing throughout May are, in general, smaller than those used in April. They vary, of course, in different waters. On Tweed and Teviot I have found Nos. 2 and 3 answer well, while on other streams less, or it might be larger sizes, proved more successful.

There is one rule respecting the artificial fly the angler ought always to hold in regard. It is applicable to every season and to all waters, and is simply this. Never use small hooks when larger ones serve the purpose and prove equally enticing. It is plain that a small wire can never have the same hold on a fish that one of greater size has. The latter, being proportionately thicker, is less apt in playing the trout to cut through the fleshy or gristly part of the mouth; its barb also enters deeper and is not easily detached or thrown out by any sudden spring or exertion.

As to the imitations of what is termed the May-fly—a fly, by the bye, which, like the March-brown, makes its appearance on our Scottish waters fully a month later than is indicated by its appellation—I never reckoned them very deadly. They look well enough cased up among other fancies and curiosities in one's pocket-book, but it is seldom that an experienced angler will put them to the test, knowing as he does, that their chief virtue lies more in the name

than in anything else, and that, with all their acknowledged resemblance to the natural fly, in reality, as a river lure, they are comparatively speaking worthless and inefficient, attractive chiefly on Highland lochs, and among waters frequented by sea-trout or whitlings.

June and July are not, in general, on our larger streams, greatly esteemed as fly-months. On warm nights, however, trout, and these frequently of great weight, are taken by the angler using this lure. It is not necessary for night-fishing that the artificial fly should have any definite colour, or that it be made, as many suppose, to resemble a small moth. I have found black, brown, and hare-lug flies equally as effective as white and yellow ones. Trout, at night, roam more freely than during the day, often forsaking the lower potions of the pool for the head and stream, and *vice versâ*. They also frequently indulge in a cruise among the shallows, and although thus exposed, are not so ready to take alarm as one from their general caution might conjecture, when approached by the wader. Indeed, I have captured them, in more instances than one, close to where I stood, in water agitated altogether by my own movements.

In night-fishing, two flies are sufficient to form the cast, a greater number being very apt to perplex the angler without insuring him any accession to his sport. These, in general, should approach in their sizes to the spring hooks, and be dressed upon tried gut. During the months in question, trout, on fine evenings, immediately before and after sunset, are generally observed to rise freely at the natural fly. On such occasions a very small black midge, No. 00, will be found attractive.

The large flesh-maggot, previously toughened in a little oatmeal, and used at night as a fly, is reckoned very deadly. The hook employed should be No. 4, 5, or 6, and have a long shank, at the bend of which is attached a piece of gut or bristle, pointing upwards, so as to prevent the bait, when run over it, from slipping back. A single turn of a fine red hackle at the head of the wire will be found an improvement.

Dipping with the natural insect is also appropriate to the summer season, but is not much pursued in Scotland. On calm water, overhung with wood, I have killed occasionally large trout by this expedient. The stone-fly, or a

couple of them, fixed on a small bait-hook, I also know to be very deadly; but lures of this description have always their substitute in the worm itself, and are, moreover, scantily met with on many of our rivers most suited to their employment.

Although, as I have stated, the months of June and July afford but indifferent sport to the fly-fisher frequenting our larger streams, it is otherwise among hill burns and on Highland lochs. The former, during this portion of the season, and especially after a summer flood, are generally at their prime; and many of the latter also, but not all of them, claim regard from the angler. One inducement to fish at this period is the fine condition and appearance of the trout. It must be admitted, indeed, that even still, when captured in certain localities, they are, at their best, but soft and tasteless fish, yet such occasions are comparatively rare; for in general, throughout Scotland, and more especially in our Highland lochs, they acquire, when in season, a colour, flavour, and curdiness which the salmon itself has no pretensions to.

The fly-hooks best adapted for hill burn fishing, are in general small, varying from No. 1 to No. 5, round-bend. After great rains, larger ones may be used advantageously. On a narrow stream, the banks of which are overgrown with reeds, brushwood, heather, or long grass, anything in fact that is apt to interfere with the management of the line, I would recommend the angler to employ only two flies, and these set at a short distance from each other.

Loch flies for trout, I have as yet only alluded to, nor is a great deal required to be said upon this subject. In common with river flies, they are capable of being reduced to two or three varieties. These, in their simple state, are, as before-mentioned, the black hackle, the red or brown ditto, and hare-lug fly. A division, however, so very primitive and elemental, when applied to loch flies is apt, I am aware, to be ridiculed and sneered at by pedants in the art; nor in fact do I intend it, in practice, to be pushed to the extreme. It is only tasteful and becoming to admit variety into the fly assortment, provided this variety be placed under proper control. When I allude therefore to the hackles in question, as forming along with the hare-lug the only flies required by the angler, I wish it to be understood that the fundamental, I do not say requisite, portion of the

dressing consists of the material after which the hook is named. It cannot be denied that, in the case of the hackle fly, the wing, tinsel, and dubbing, whether of silk or wool, possess on many occasions an attractive influence over trout, nay, even a combination of these without hackle at all may constitute a taking lure; but what is proved by all this but that fish are allured, not on account of the close resemblance which the artificial hook is designed to have to particular insects appropriate to particular months and seasons, but from other causes of a different nature? These are size, motion, form, and colour; the latter qualification being the one upon which, by introducing certain well-tried standards, my classification, as regards the artificial fly, has been conducted.

I shall not however pursue this matter any further, but proceed to mention, irrespective of my own theory regarding them, the sizes and sorts of hooks best adapted for loch-fishing. In the spring months and early portion of summer, large wires, Philips's C., CC., B., BB., or Adlington's 8, 9, 10, are most serviceable. Indeed, in some lochs, they continue so throughout the season. One, on an occasion, may employ even larger sizes than those mentioned, but their effect depends much on the place, the sort of trout frequenting it, and the nature of the weather. Of what are esteemed, among anglers of my acquaintance, killing flies, on our Scottish lakes, I subjoin the following list:—

LOCH FLIES.

1. Wings: light mottled feather, from breast of mallard.—Body and legs: black hackle, silver twist.
2. Wings: mottled teal feather.—Body: black hackle above purple dubbing, silver twist.
3. Wings: woodcock feather.—Body: dark brown hackle over purple dubbing, lapped with gold tinsel.
4. Wings: from pheasant's tail.—Body: ginger hackle over orange mohair. (Loch Awe.)
5. Wings: dark mottled feather from mallard.—Body: brown hackle over yellow floss silk.
6. Hoffland's Fancy. Wings: from Woodcock.—Body: reddish, dark brown silk, red hackle, two or three strands of ditto for tail.
7. Wings: brown mallard feather.—Body: black hackle over orange floss.
8. Wings: white tip from wing of the mallard.—Body: black hackle over dark coloured dubbing, silver tinsel, orange tail.
9. Wings: dun-coloured from wing of the landrail, etc.—Body: dark, with black hackle.

10. Wings : dark grouse feather.—Body : purple mohair, black hackle, silver twist. (Loch Tummel.)

These, the larger or spring sizes of loch flies, may, I observe, one and all of them, be employed with success in angling for sea-trout or whitlings; indeed, when inclined to rise, there is almost no variety of hook, provided it be of fitting dimensions, which the fish spoken of will positively refuse. That they possess in common with the *fario*, humours, and caprices, there is little doubt; but these, I have noticed, extend rarely to a matter which many anglers think highly important, *viz.*, the prevailing colour of the fly. I have caught them, in their seasons, with lures of every hue,—brown, black, white, crimson, blue, green, purple, grey, dun, yellow, and orange; nay, more, with combinations of two or several such colours, and admixtures, to boot, of all varieties of tinsel. Their tastes, in fact, with respect to this matter, resemble more those of the *salar* or proper salmon than those of the trout, although exercised generally in a state or condition of water somewhat different.

During summer, and in weather comparatively calm, loch trout may be taken more readily with a small than with a large fly. On such occasions, the sizes and kinds of hooks already recommended for stream fishing will be found sufficiently available.

To continue the matter necessarily deviated from in these observations, I proceed, having treated of June and July in respect to their qualifications as fly-fishing months, to extend my line of remarks to August and September, or the concluding portion of the trouting season. It has been pretty well ascertained with regard to the river-trout of Scotland, that it is in prime or first-rate condition during the middle of summer, and that, subsequent to the latter end of July, it gradually loses curd, bulk, and firmness: the red-fleshed varieties becoming pale, flabby, and ill-flavoured. Some individuals, it is true, retain their edible qualities for a month or two longer, and the small fish of a season's growth, along with parr or fingerlings, continue as sweet as ever, until late in October.

Trout, during the months of August and September, often rise freely, especially after floods and in dark-coloured waters. To the sportsman who is not a mere pot-hunter, they of course afford amusement, and occasionally, notwithstanding their declining condition, test freely the strength

of his tackle. I have found the red or brown hackle more killing in these months than any other fly, I mean when the waters were in high order; for if clear and reduced, trout will prefer the hare-lug and dark-coloured hooks. Spring sizes also are commendable in autumn, on some of our rivers, those especially that are frequented by whitlings and bull-trout,—fish which, I find, frequently give the preference to a common trouting-fly over the highly-bedizened lures employed against them by many anglers.

To pursue this subject into the months of October and November is quite unnecessary. Angling with the fly loses, on the approach of winter, many of its recommendatory properties. It becomes stripped, as an amusement, of half its interest. One can neither wade nor expose himself to damp feet with any degree of safety. The trout, in general, are poor, lank, and uneatable. They rise badly, and when hooked, afford little or no sport. The streams and gathering spots are strewn over with dead leaves. There are no pure southern breezes, smelling of verdure to delight the senses—to cheer and invigorate the heart. In fact, as nature with regard to all other recreations hath appointed, so also in regard to angling. It owns, in common with them, its fitting and appropriate season, when the heart's readiness is linked with the hand's energy, the humour of the fish with the inviting and cheerful disposition of wind and water, sun and landscape; when bank and meadow lie starred and enamelled with flowers; when the trill of the song-bird issues from every thorn; when all sounds and all prospects are joyous and exhilarating, and the cloud itself sleeping high in the arch of heaven, is as the bannered presence of some benevolent watcher—

> "One of the spirits unwithdrawn,
> That, erst the fall, were charged to minister
> To the earth's gladness, and continually,
> Out of their ample and unfailing horns,
> To pre-endow the advancing tracks of men."

CHAPTER VI.

ON TROUTING WITH THE FLY.

THE Fly-Cast.—Fixing on of the Droppers.—Double and Single-handed Trouting-Rod.—Their Comparative Merits.—Instructions as to Throwing.—Management of the Line.—Angling Anatomised.—The Secret of its Delight Unfolded.

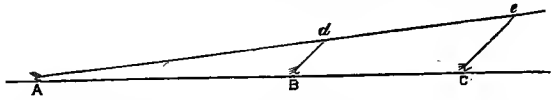
AN inquiry into the origin and progress of the art of angling, especially that department of it now to be considered, would prove, I have no doubt, interestingly curious. The primitive trouting-fly, and its inventor, when and where it was first used, its success as a lure, and numerous other circumstances attendant upon its history, are all subjects of attractions to the angler. To trace, also, the period of its introduction into Scotland and to our Border streams could not fail proving a matter of regard to the antiquarian scholar. The questions and points of research embodied in such an inquiry indubitably stand connected with the customs and manners of the age to which they carry us back, and are linked, moreover, in all probability, with events of wider, if not national interest.

Who first captured a salmon with the artificial fly on Tweedside? Was he a king or a baron bold—a fat abbot or a cowled monk—a reiver rude or a stalwart servitor—a page or a minstrel? Or was he, like worthy old Izaak, in his heart an angler—one that loved and studied nature, that sought for music by shining streams and under leafy boughs, to whom the sport was the more delicious, because it brought him into companionship with pure thoughts and golden fancies, because it led him from scenes of human care, strife, and distemper, into places of solace, silence, and retirement? Here on this simple query rests a field of unsolved wonder; one, too, traversed often by fancy, but in vain. Oblivion—the past conceals from us all record of him, that gifted and joyful man, to whose name, if restored, there is due the homage of our craft, that homage which is ever rendered to the illustrious dead.

So many full and excellent treatises have been written upon the subject of fly-fishing, that it would really be a work of supererogation on my part, were I to enter very minutely into its discussion. I shall, therefore, as much as

possible, avoid running into what may be termed fine-spun detail, while endeavouring to supply the reader with the requisite amount of information on this department of the gentle art. In the preceding chapter, I have sufficiently exposed to view my theory respecting the artificial fly, disclaiming the common notion, that it is quite imperative to construct it after a fixed, natural model—to adapt it to hours and seasons, or, except in the matter of size, to extend the variety beyond a very limited and clearly defined range. I have also described, to a certain extent, the making up of the fly-cast, and referred, while treating of tackle, to the gut strands, and their preparation,—how knotted, etc. It remains for me, however, to complete the subject, and this I shall do very briefly.

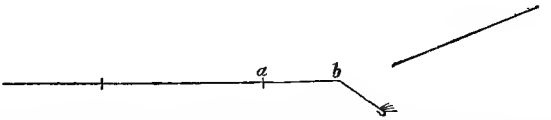
Trouting-flies, when fished with, are used, according to the caprice of the angler, in pairs, threes, or fours, seldom singly. In small waters, two hooks are sometimes thought sufficient. I seldom, under any circumstances, employ fewer than three. How these are appended and put together, the annexed illustration will render evident.



The trail, stretcher, or lowermost fly, is here indicated by the letter A; the bobs, or droppers, by the letters B and C. Betwixt A and *d*, where the shorter bob is fastened, extend three or four threads of fine picked gut, forming, in connection with the one upon which the hook has been dressed, a distance varying from 3½ to 5 feet. The interval between the two droppers, that is from *d* to *e*, is similarly occupied, but it is not necessary to extend it beyond 3 feet, and should another bob-fly be added higher up, the same regulation holds in force.

Many anglers have their droppers dressed upon short gut, and append them to the main casting-line by loops, so as to be removed or exchanged at pleasure. This, the ordinary way of making up the fly-cast, answers well enough with those who are more fastidious about the description of flies employed by them than the fineness of their tackle. But, though convenient in this respect, it gives a clumsy appear-

ance to the fly-cast, and is not adapted, either to improve its lightness or better its proportions. Loops also, unless they draw or sit well, are apt to catch and disturb the water, so as to alarm the fish. I recommend them in the construction of all trouting tackle, to be employed as sparingly as possible. The bob, or dropper, in the making up of the fly-cast, ought, if the length of the gut it is dressed on will admit it, to form, in the first instance, a continuation at the letter *a*, with the main line, and then be made to branch off or depend from it, by the knotting on, at the proper point, *b*, of a new thread.



In the formation of the fly-cast, always commence at the stretcher or trail-hook, allowing the droppers to incline upwards. To connect the casting-line, properly so-called, with the uppermost bob, employ three or four threads of good picked gut, and in fine fishing, if thought necessary, increase the number.

For trouting with the artificial fly, the rod used may either, according to circumstances, be single or double-handed. In casting the line, after drawing off the requisite quantity from your reel or winch, lift the flies well up from the surface of the water, and observe that you do so without any jerk or undue violence; at the same time employing some degree of rapidity in the execution of the movement. When the rod has been sufficiently thrown back to accomplish this object, allow it a single moment of suspense, and then, by a natural turn of the wrist and arm, cause the line to describe a circle above your head, after which, the flies having been brought fully round, urge them immediately from you towards the spot where you wish them to alight. This advice is especially applicable in throwing from the left shoulder. It is not always so as respects right-shoulder casting, which may be managed, when the space behind is quite clear and level, without checking the line, but on the contrary, allowing it its full swing or play directly in rear of the angler.

Such instructions hold good, equally, in regard to throw-

ing with the double and with the single-handed rod. There is, however, in other respects a considerable difference as to the manner of using them, betwixt the two implements, and they both possess different capabilities. In trouting with the double-handed rod, there is this advantage, that it commands a much greater space of water than the other, and, if made of light material, is in consequence more adapted for using over lochs and broad rivers. The single-handed rod, on the other hand, excels not so much as a weapon of power as one of craft and pliancy. Its superiority, where fine throwing and quick striking are required, is unquestionable. Armed with it, the practised angler may impel his fly with the most wonderful precision and nicety of calculation; he may command it, in fact, to drop seemingly over the very snout of a feeding fish, and that as lightly as if it were a snow-flake or the natural insect which had fallen instead. When the trout is hooked, also, and there is danger arising from the smallness of the wire, or any other cause, of its escape, a pliant, single-handed rod possesses this great advantage, namely, that by means of it, the angler can play his fish with singular delicacy; not requiring, in order to control its movements, to lay stress on his tackle. At once, assisted by this yielding quality in the implement, he can humour every caprice and effort to escape, while, at the same time, he outwearies and subjugates his victim, rendering its capture, in cases even where the hook has taken very slight and unsatisfactory hold, a matter of common occurrence.

It is otherwise, however, in trouting with the double-handed rod. Its general stiffness operates greatly to its prejudice while playing and landing a badly hooked fish. The angler, also, in handling, has a very limited notion of when to concede and when to employ pressure. He wants in a great measure the nice, regulating powers which a good, flexible, single-handed rod invests him with.

I am referring, be it remembered, in these remarks, solely to trouting; and that with small flies and fine tackle. They cannot be said to apply to any other department of angling, least of all to salmon-fishing or trolling with the minnow. As a general rule bearing reference to this subject, all streams manageable from bank to bank, and such lochs as are frequented by trout under a pound in weight, and do not require the use of a boat, should be fished

with the single-handed rod. As to the degree of pliancy requisite I say nothing, but leave that to be regulated by the discretion of the angler; indeed, practice will not unfrequently reconcile one to the use of a rod which, at the first handling, he thought much too stiff, or, it might be, much too flexible. The double-handed rod may be used with advantage on broad rivers, and where the sea-trout—a fish which in clear water holds the small trouting-fly in esteem—are abundant; also in lochs where large fish exist, and where long throwing is necessary.

In the preceding chapter, by indicating the resorts of trout during the fly-fishing months, I have sufficiently informed the angler when and where to expect sport. I have also attempted the adaptation of fly-hooks in point of size, to the condition of the water, the progress of the season, etc., etc. It is therefore unnecessary to re-enter upon these subjects.

Fly-fishing, considered as a branch of the angler's art, possesses peculiar advantages. As an exercise, it is healthy, and just to the proper degree exciting. It braces the muscles, enlivens the spirits, gives rise to an agreeable alternation of hopes and fears, calls into activity the judgment as well as the fancy, the good taste and discrimination of the artist, not less than his ideal and creative powers. It affords room, also, as has often been remarked, for the display of elegant motions and graceful attitudes—impersonations of earnestness and intense enthusiasm, of hope, of anxiety, of joy, of disappointment, of admiration, of pity, of content, of love, of holy feeling, and of crowning felicity.

Is it not, for instance, in the attitude of hope that the angler stands, while in the act of heaving out his flies over some favourite cast? Of hope increased, when he beholds feeding within reach of his line, the monarch of the stream? But now, mark him, he has dropped the hook cautiously and skilfully just above the indicated spot; the fish, scarcely breaking the surface, has seized it. A fast, firm hold it has, but the tackle is fine, and the trout strong and active. Look! how the expression of his features is undergoing a change. There is still hope, but mingled with it are traces of anxiety—of fear itself. His attitudes, too, are those of a troubled and distempered man. Ha! all is well. The worst is over. The strong push for liberty has been made, and failed. Desperate as that somerset was, it has proved

unsuccessful. The tackle—knot and barb—is sufficient. Look now at the angler. Hope with him is stronger than anxiety, and joy too beams forth under his eyelids; for lo! the fish is showing symptoms of distress. No longer it threatens to exhaust the winch-line; no longer it combats with the rapids; no more it strives with frantic fling or wily plunge to disengage the hook. It has lost all heart—almost all energy. The fins, paralysed and powerless, are unable for their task. So far from regulating its movements, they cannot even sustain the balance of the fish. Helpless and hopeless it is drawn ashore, upturning, in the act of submission, its starred and gleamy flanks. The countenance of the captor—his movements (they are those which the soul dictates), are all joyous and self-congratulatory. But the emotion, strongly depicted though it be, is short-lived. It gives way successively to the feelings of admiration and pity—of admiration, as excited on contemplating the almost incomparable beauty of the captive, its breadth and depth, the harmony of its proportions, as well as the richness and variety of its colours—of pity, as called forth in accordance with our nature,—an unconscious, uncontrollable emotion, which operates with subduing effect on the triumph of the moment.

And now, in their turn, content and thankfulness reign in the heart and develop themselves on the countenance of the angler; now haply he is impressed with feelings of adoring solemnity, stirred up by some scene of unlooked-for grandeur, or the transit of some sublime phenomenon. I say nothing of the feelings of disappointment, anger, envy, and jealousy, which sometimes find their way into the bosom, and are portrayed on the features even of the worthiest and best-tempered of our craft. Too naturally they spring up and blend themselves with our better nature; yet well it is that they take no hold on the heart, scorching it may be true, but not consuming its day of happiness.

Hence it is, from the very variety of emotions which successively occupy the mind, from their blendings and transitions, that angling derives its pleasures; hence it holds precedence as a sport with men of thoughtful and ideal temperament; hence, poets, sculptors, and philosophers—the sons and worshippers of genius, have entered, heart and hand, into its pursuit. Therefore it was, that Thomson, Burns, Scott, and Hogg, and, in our present day, Wilson and

Wordsworth exchanged eagerly the grey-goose quill and the companionship of books, for the taper wand and the discourse, older than Homer's measures, of streams and cataracts. Therefore it was that Paley left his meditative home, and Davy his tests and crucibles, and Chantrey his moulds, models, and chisel-work,—each and all to rejoice and renovate themselves; to gather new thoughts and energies, a fresh heart and vigorous hand, in the exercise of that pastime which is teeming with philosophy.

CHAPTER VII.

ON FISHING WITH THE WORM FOR TROUT.

WORM-Fishing in Troubled Waters.—Ditto in Clear Water.—Rod and Tackle Suitable.—Adjustment of the Leads.—Earth-Worms.—Methods of Procuring Best Sorts.—Hartshorn Moss.—Preparation of Worms.—Scouring, Toughening, and Redening Processes.—Season, Time of Day, and State of Water.—Where to Angle.—How to Bait, Manage the Tackle, etc.—Advices and Precautions.—Striking, Landing, etc.

To a perfect novice in the art of angling, nothing appears simpler than to capture trout with the worm, provided the water be sufficiently muddled to conceal the person and disguise the tackle of the craftsman. A mere urchin, with a pea-stick for a wand, a string for his line, and a pin for his hook, has often, under such favourable circumstances, effected the landing of a good-sized fish. But to class performances of this description among feats of skill were quite ridiculous, and they are just, to as small an extent, samples of successful worm-fishing. It may perhaps startle some, and these no novices in the art, when I declare and offer moreover to prove, that worm-fishing for trout requires essentially more address and experience, as well as a better knowledge of the habits and instincts of the fish, than fly-fishing. I do not, be it observed, refer to the practice of this branch of the art as it is followed on hill burns and petty rivulets, neither do I allude to it, as pursued after heavy rains in flooded and discoloured waters; my affirmation bears solely upon its practice as carried on during the summer months in the southern districts of Scotland, when

the rivers are clear and low, the skies bright and warm. Then it is, and then only, that it ought to be dignified with the name of sport; and sport it assuredly is, fully as exciting, perhaps more so, than angling with the fly or minnow. In the hands of a skilful practitioner, indeed, there is no mode of capturing well-conditioned fish with the rod more remunerative, I say well-conditioned, for in the spawning months, lean, lank, and unhealthy trout may be massacred in any number by means of salmon-roe or pastes formed from that substance.

In the present chapter, I shall attempt to make plain the principal points to be attended to by the worm-fisher desirous of success. These I class under the following heads:—

1. The rod and tackle to be employed.
2. The kind of worm and how prepared.
3. When and where to fish.
4. How to bait and manage the line.

First, then, with regard to the rod and tackle. The former I have already alluded to in a preceding chapter, and shall only repeat, that it ought to be a two-handed one, and in length approaching to seventeen feet—the butt light, formed of well-seasoned Memel fir—the top-pieces somewhat stiff and fashioned of lance or hickory wood—a rod, in fact, such as would please the minnow-troller, or give general satisfaction on a Highland stream among sea-trout and small grilses.

And now, with respect to the tackle. This merits very strict attention. Of the reel line I need say nothing. A common trouting one will serve the purpose better than any other. That for casting, however, should be fine, long, and well-tapered—the lower portion of it composed of at least seven lengths of single gut, tinged rather than dyed with the ordinary decoction of logwood and alum. These lengths, I need scarcely say, should be knotted together with care and accuracy but not whipped over at the joinings with silk thread, an operation to be confined solely to the upper strands of the line. They ought, moreover, to be of picked material, round, clear, and fine, without a flaw or fretting.

As to the hook itself, I recommend above all others the common-round bend, sizes 10, 11, and 12, according to the dimensions of the stream, its condition, and kind of trout

inhabiting it. Before attaching, nip or file off a part of the shank, which is generally too long, and apt, in striking, to interfere with the mouth of the fish. This I strongly recommend to be done. An application of the file is necessary also, in order to round off a new head and render the remainder of the shank capable of retaining the wrappings. In attaching worm hooks to the gut or foot-strand, use fine silk thread of a crimson colour, and see that it be well waxed, carefully laped round and secured, according to the approved mode of fastening I have elsewhere referred to, commonly called the whip-knot. A touch of spirit varnish adds greatly to the compactness and durability of the dressing.

In preparing worm-tackle, the adjustment of the leads or sinkers is a matter of considerable importance. The accommodation of these to the state or nature of the current requires on the part of the angler both tact and nicety. He must always proceed to work, provided with a sufficiency of split shot, Nos. 2 or 3 in his waistcoat pocket, a dozen at the fewest. Through means of these it is that he has to regulate the pace of his worm through the water, as well as to keep it sufficiently near the bottom, close to which, on the outlook, feeding trout lie. As to the pace or rate of travelling in question, it should, I am of opinion, neither be quick nor yet very slow, approaching to that of the current itself, which from the motion given to the line by the angler (who, as I shall shortly demonstrate, ought to pitch his hook up against the stream), it is apt to exceed. One, two, three, or even four leads of the sizes recommended may be required to effect this. These may he placed either together, at a fixed distance from the hook of not less than fifteen inches, or separately, at considerable intervals along the casting-line. I prefer greatly, however, the former mode of leading, although several able anglers of my acquaintance adopt the latter, under the idea that it assists or improves the travelling of the worms. Leads formed of shot are frequently drilled through, instead of being slit. The process is more tedious, and renders them, when required to be shifted or displaced, less handy, although there is no question but that they give greater satisfaction to the eye, and if intended to be permanent are perhaps preferable. I may here repeat, that, in the making up of tackle for worm-fishing, loops are strongly to be condemned, and at

no time should they be permitted to head the strand or gut on which the hook is dressed. The very nearest ought to be kept at double arm's length from the bait.

I am now brought to treat of the kind of worm best adapted for trout-fishing, and the preparing of it for use. It is not my province, however, while on this subject, to discuss the natural history of the worm under the five classes into which it has been divided by Linnæus. I shall confine my observations solely to the different kinds of earth-worms (*intestina*), frequenting our soils and employed by the angler. Of these there are at the fewest six or seven species with their varieties.

1st. THE LARGE SAND-LOB *or* LUGG-WORM, employed by the fishermen on our coasts in the capture of flounders, haddocks, and other salt-water fish. It is easily discovered. at ebb of tide, on almost all sand-stretches, by the small hill or coil of refuse bearing its own resemblance, and backed, at the distance of ten or twelve inches, by a corresponding hole or sink, of diameter sufficient in some instances to admit the entrance of one's little finger. Betwixt these *indices*, at a foot's depth from the surface, the worm lies and is readily dislodged by means of a common sand-fork. I have heard it asserted that sea-trout at the entrance of rivers will take this bait greedily, and that salmon also have been known to seize it. It is not, however, a worm to be held in much esteem by the angler, being thick, flabby, ill-coloured, and not readily purged or toughened.

2nd. THE EARTH-LOB *or* DEW-WORM; sometimes, but improperly, divided into two separate species. This is found in almost all cultivated soils, where the earth, naturally light, has been enriched by the application of manures. It frequents especially gardens and grounds wrought with the spade, concealing itself in the daytime at a considerable depth, and when the weather is mild rising about sunset to the surface, where after a shower, it may be discovered at listless length stretched in proximity with others of its kind, and lapping, as it were, the new-fallen moisture. On such occasions, large quantities of this innocuous reptile may be captured with little address, requiring only the use of a ready eye and hand. As a trout bait, it is not greatly valued by the angler, on account of its size and the difficulty experienced in toughening it. It forms, however, when properly strung, a favourite morsel with eels, chubs, and other

ravenous fish, and on night-lines may be used to some purpose as an enticement even to trout themselves, and these the largest and most wary. The virtues of the lob-worm as a bait for salmon are well-known to all frequenters of Tweedside.

3rd. The third species of earth-worm I bring under the angler's notice, is the BLACK-HEAD *or* BUTTON-WORM. This latter is no doubt a local term, confined chiefly to the south of Scotland, but descriptive, in some measure, of the habits and appearance of the animal, whose nature it is, during the summer months, to coil and knot itself up in the form of a ball or old-fashioned button. Under this shape it is found nearly dormant, in light gravelly soils, frequently among rich dry garden mould, but most abundantly among the roots and massed fibres of old meadow grass. Of all the earth-worms, it is the kind best suited for the angler, possessing the very qualifications he most desires, in a trouting worm. Its general length and thickness, the one seldom exceeding six or seven inches, the other that of a small goose quill—its colour and natural toughness, and the capability of being improved which these qualities possess, all combine to render it an object of considerable value to the sportsman. One variety of it there is, termed the maiden worm, which possesses the peculiar advantage of being free from what is called the knot—a development well-known to naturalists, as embracing the generative organs of the reptile, and not much relished by anglers on account of its unseemliness and the broken, distorted appearance it gives to the bait. The button-worm is dark-headed, but of a lively red lower down; although frequently, during summer, found in the coiled state, it more generally comes under our notice, as most worms do, possessing its share of life and activity, and may be brought to the surface by any agitating process, such as the rapid stirring of a spade or dibble inserted into the mould it inhabits. This, by the instinct of the animal, is evidently mistaken for the subterraneous movements of the mole, its principal enemy. This is a much better method of obtaining worms, in some localities, than digging, inasmuch as it brings them within hand-reach in a more purged condition, and inflicts, in the case of garden ground, little or no injury to plants or vegetables in the vicinity. A solution of lime or salt in water, moderately strong, and dashed from a pail over the

surface, I have seen used with effect on old grass land, when the blade is parched and short, otherwise the worms raised are apt to escape the eye. Those taken in this manner ought to be washed immediately in fresh water, a precaution rendered necessary by the prejudicial nature of the agents above-named.

4th. THE MARSH WORM.—This species of reptile is found commonly in damp, mossy ground, often under stones, in cow-dung, and among quicken heaps which are partially decayed. It resembles, in some respects, a small dew or lob-worm, but is much more delicate in the texture. Trout, I know, especially in hill burns, are fond of it, but it is many degrees too soft for angling with in sizeable streams where one requires to pitch the bait to a distance, nor is it readily rendered tough by keeping, like most worms. Still, if handled tenderly and dropt with caution, it is not a despicable lure when employed either in narrow rivulets or among feeding trout, in still, deep, closely shaded water. I remember some years ago having recourse to it on the Eden, a well-known trouting stream on the confines of Berwickshire, to which I had set out unprovided with bait, and capturing upwards of three dozen beautiful and well-conditioned trout, the water, at the time, being extremely small, clear, and choked up with weedy matter. The worms in question I procured by digging at Smailholm mill, to which spot I had fished up unsuccessfully with the fly from a short way above Nenthorn, and on my return over the same extent of water, managed, as above detailed, to load my pannier.

5th. THE BRANDLING.—A worm held in great esteem by anglers of the old school. It is, however, no favourite of mine, possessing, as it does, all the faults of the Marsh-worm and none of the virtues. Equally soft and frangible, it wants entirely the fresh sweetness of the other, and is filled instead with a yellowish matter which, oozing on the slightest touch from various parts of the body, is, as regards odour and appearance, particularly offensive. The brandling is found only in certain localities, by the sides of ditches, and in rank ground artificially kept moist. Transferred, however, to old, rich dung or leaf compost, it will thrive admirably, and in warm weather breed with astonishing rapidity. The brandling to look at, before handling, is on the whole a beautiful worm, being ringed over with

alternate circles of crimson and white. Its shape, however, is somewhat flat, and contributes along with the defects already mentioned, to lower it considerably in my opinion as an angling bait.

6th. THE RED-HEAD.—The finest variety of this worm is found associated with the one above mentioned, or in soils of the nature and degree of richness. It inhabits also some farm-yards, and an inferior sort is found plentifully enough in many fields and gardens. When cleansed, it is of one hue throughout, namely, a lively pink or red colour, not possessing the dark head of the button-worm, next to which species, as an angling bait, it deserves without question to be ranked. The principal faults I find with it are, the clearness or pellucid nature of its skin, and the more than ordinary power it has of elongating and contracting its body, thereby, in the one case, occasioning a disclosure of the hook underneath, and in the other, an aptness in the worm to work itself partially off the wire, and thus render inevitable the protrusion of the point or barb. A smaller description of hook, say No. 9, would, I think, suit better the size of the red-head than that used for the button-worm.

7th. THE GILT-TAIL.—A small, sluggish worm, having a green or yellowish appearance in the lower extremity. This is found in places rank with the decay of vegetable matter, where turnips have been fed off, among rubbish heaps, etc. It is capable of being purged so as to part with much of its natural colour, and assume a tendency to redness. The gilt-tail also is easily toughened, and during a scarcity of better, the angler will find it tolerable bait for trout.

Having thus attempted to specify the different kinds of earth-worms bred in our soils, and to describe their qualities as angling baits, I proceed to say, in few words, how they ought to be prepared or made ready for use. In the preparation of worms three ends are desirable, and these are to be attained, only by an equal number of processes, conducted either severally or conjunctly. The requisites in question embody, first, the purging or cleansing; next, the toughening; and lastly, the reddening of the worm.

On being dug or captured, all worms not intended for immediate use, with the exception of those found in the button state, should be placed for the space of three or four

minutes in a vessel containing water; some recommend the addition of a little salt, in order to divest them as thoroughly as possible of any earthy matter attached to their outward coating. The further effect of this immersion is to cleanse partially the entrails of the reptile, occasioning it to throw off what imparts to the skin a dingy and ill-favoured appearance. Thus washed, the worms should be allowed to crawl about for a short time on a clean, dry board, with the view of ridding them of all superfluous moisture. When this is sufficiently accomplished, transfer them into a large earthenware jar, filled, or nearly so, with hartshorn moss.

The hartshorn is a species of moss, well known to the northern angler. It is found chiefly on moorland, and in boggy places surrounded by heath. Externally, on the exposed parts, it possesses a reddish tinge, the stalks and lower foliage are of a pale colour, approaching to yellow. Like many other mosses, it is found in considerable clumps; the texture possesses great softness; and, when handled, is agreeable to the palm. Although, in highly cultivated districts, difficult to procure, the extreme lightness and abundant nature of the plant, in places favourable to its growth, render it easy of acquisition. When dry it keeps for years, and the worm-fisher ought, unquestionably, always to possess a stock of it. He will find the common fog generally used in England much its inferior, although at a pinch not to be rejected. Before using the hartshorn moss, let it be well washed; the hard and whitish stalks ought to be twitched off, and the red soft portions retained.

The worms on their transference to the moss-jar still undergo the process of scouring, but along with it is conjoined that of toughening, and should it be thought necessary, the further one of reddening. This last, I confess, for my own part, I have always deemed fanciful, but as it is my purpose in this present treatise as much to propound the practice of others as to put forward my own notions, I shall not omit describing it. The drier the moss is among which the worms are placed, the quicker they become fit for use; at the same time, be it remembered, their natural juices are the sooner exhausted, and if kept beyond a certain period without moisture, they soon lose all liveliness, pine away, and die. The dryness of the fog ought therefore to be regulated by circumstances, by the state of the weather, the temperature of the apartment or cellar where the jar is

placed, and the time when its contents are required to be used. As to the reddening matter spoken of, which some anglers mix up with the fog when in a moist condition, it is a species of high-coloured earth, reduced to a fine powder and resembling brick-dust. This may be purchased at any druggist's under the name of Bole Armenian. It is supposed the worms consume a portion of it as their food, being deprived of other natural sustenance, in the shape of earth, and that they actually fatten upon it, imbibing, at the same time, its alluring colour. Nor is it always administered to them mixed up slenderly with fog, but sometimes employed in larger quantities, moistened with water and mingled with a little sweet cream. So much for the preparation of earth-worms, as angling baits. The essential matter is to have them red and lively, possessing at the same time some measure of toughness, so as not to break upon the hook, and thereby expose to view a portion of its shank or barb. While undergoing the processes above mentioned, it is requisite to keep them in a cool, shady place, for although naturally retentive of life when maimed or broken, they are not proof against great atmospheric changes, being easily sickened by heat and killed by extreme moisture.

Having treated of the several sorts of earth-worms used in angling, and the mode of preparing them, I am brought now, as was proposed in pursuing the subject of worm-fishing, to make some observations upon the season of the year suitable for this kind of sport, the time of day, and description of weather, and lastly, the places or portions of water best adapted for its practice. On Tweedside, worm-fishing seldom commences until the latter end of May or beginning of June, when the main stream and its tributaries are, in ordinary seasons, considerably reduced. The trout, in a certain measure, require to be sated with fly-food before having recourse to any coarser aliment, at any rate, some change seems to be affected in their tastes and habits, virtually inexplicable, but yet dependent upon the instinct implanted by Nature, an instinct which as regards many animals has, in all ages, baffled, perplexed, and silenced the minutest inquiry. Before trout take the worm freely, it is necessary also that the temperature of the water should be at a state of considerable elevation, at least fifty degrees of Fahrenheit, and, moreover, that it be acted upon at the time by a fair proportion of sunlight; indeed, a bright, hot

day is not at all objectionable, the air being calm, or but slightly agitated. Such a condition both of water and weather often occurs in the month of June, and its occurrence is, indeed, frequently protracted throughout July. These, in fact, June and July, added to the latter half of May, constitute, as regards the southern districts of Scotland, our best worm-fishing months. Be it noted, however, by way of repetition, that I am not at present alluding to the simple and coarse practice of the art pursued among starved and unwary fish in mountain rivulets, nor do I refer to worm-fishing in flooded and discoloured streams, but I treat of it solely as respects clear waters, inhabited by cunning, cautious trout, and in consequence as a method of angling which requires of the craftsman great skill, and no stinted amount of prudence. With regard to hill burn fishing, undoubtedly it is more in season during August and September, when rains are frequent, than in June and July; and in discoloured waters, trout may be captured with worm throughout the whole year, no one month excepted.

Connected with the branch of the art properly under notice, and the time of the year suitable for its practice, I may here mention the fact that in the months above named, trout are invariably in their best condition, strong, active, plump, and firm, a recommendation that weighs much with the honest angler, who is always epicure enough to know and admire the good points of a fish, and who dislikes, very pardonably, to burden his pannier with such as are ill-shaped, villainously complexioned, soft, rank, and useless, affording on the hook no play, to the eye no pleasure, and at the table no nourishment.

As to the time of day when trout take the worm most largely, that depends not a little upon the state of the atmosphere. In warm, tranquil weather, they are sometimes met with in feeding humour shortly after sunrise, and continue to be so until one or two o'clock, p.m. Generally, however, they do not commence to bite freely before eight or nine, a.m., and leave off in the course of five or six hours. During this period, short intervals of relaxation frequently occur, when the fish refuse to feed, and as often there are climaxes when they seize the worm with more than usual alacrity. These, however, happen chiefly on variable and unequal days, when warm glimpses mingle with dull and cloudy weather.

I proceed now to a description of those portions of water where success is generally met with by the worm-fisher; and, be it noted, that such are not the usual haunts of trout when in quest of insect and surface food. They are, on the contrary, the very places which an experienced fly-fisher would look over and avoid. Instead of the central current or foaming eddy, they consist of shallows, off-streams, and nooks of water; thin, formidable, gravelly stretches, and that smooth but not tardy flow, which in large rivers frequently heads a more troubled descent or rapid.

I say not that the main stream is altogether to be neglected, for, under long-continued droughts, it is frequently, from the nature of the channel or *alveus*, the only portion of water where fish can be taken; but, in the general experience of all able worm-fishers, the largest and finest trout are found feeding among the shoals and detached runlets, in places frequently, which, at first glance, one is led to imagine are not of sufficient depth to cover and conceal them. Here they lie in watch for their expected prey, under the shelter sometimes of a large stone or jut of rock, and in its absence, breasting immovable the gliding current.

In swollen waters, I need scarcely inform the angler, that trout, during summer, take the worm eagerly at what is termed the tail of a stream, in places that are neither calm nor turbulent, small eddies, etc. Among hill burns, no one can mistake where to drop his bait; indeed, in many of them, every inch of water ought to be fished, and so it should be, as respects the appropriate feeding-spots in large rivers. No likely haunt or ripple ought the angler to pass over, no indication of shelter for trout should he regard with indifference; his eye, hand, and line, must always be kept active, his heart and his hopes always up and alive.

A few instructions as to baiting the hook and managing the line shall, as proposed, conclude this chapter. I presume the angler to be provided with a quantity of prepared worms. If he intends devoting to the sport the best part of an entire day, let his supply of these be ample. On no such occasion ought he to venture on a river where trout abound, without five or six scores. Nothing is so provoking as to run short of bait, at a time when fish are in the taking humour; and yet how frequently does this happen even with experienced fishers? The worms, I further presume, are confined in a flannel bag ten or twelve inches in depth, and of width

sufficient to admit readily the hand of the sportsman. Along with them has been placed a quantity of hartshorn fog, moistened or otherwise, according to their condition. The bag, for convenience, should be appended to a button or button-hole at the side of the angler. In addition to the bag, some use a tin box affixed to a belt or leather strap, which is buckled on round the waist. To this, the best and liveliest worms are transferred, free of moss, so that they can be taken out at once and without injury.

In baiting, let the operator hold the hook either in his right or left hand, betwixt the thumb and forefinger, and, having extracted with the other from its place of confinement a worm of suitable dimensions, let him, beginning not far from the head of the reptile, thrust into it the point of the wire. He must then continue to run it along, over bend and shank, until the entire hook and nearly half an inch of the gut surmounting it be completely covered, taking great care not to break or further injure the body of the bait, and nowhere to expose the instrument of capture underneath. This latter advice is particularly to be attended to as respects the barb or point; the smallest protrusion of which is sufficient to alarm and warn off fish, and these always the primest and best conditioned.

I have not hitherto said a great deal as to the size of the worm. It is difficult to procure any large number exactly of equal length and thickness, nor is any such correspondence as to their proportions at all necessary. The button-worm, which, as it is generally found, measures about six or seven inches, and is as thick nearly in the upper part as a small quill, may be taken as the standard in point of size. Smaller worms are often as deadly, perhaps in some waters more so; but on Tweed and Teviot, I for my own part prefer a large bait. It is less apt to be assailed by parr and insignificant trout, and without question, attracts more readily the eye of big, watchful fish—of the roving swallow-smolt, and sometimes of the salmon itself.

Reverting to the matter in question, namely, the baiting of the tackle, it often happens, the worms being unequal, that the angler finds it difficult to accommodate some of them to the dimensions of the hook. Should the bait be a little over-sized and lively, and he deem it not worth his while substituting a larger description of hook for the one in use, I would recommend him, after running on the worm

about half its length, to force through it the barb, and omitting a small portion of the body, re-enter the point of the wire and continue the running on, bringing, as he does so, the wounded parts into contact immediately over the bend of the instrument, and thereby furthering its entire concealment. Nearly one-third of the worm should, on all occasions, be left to move about as it wills, beyond the point of the hook. This serves as a lure to attract fish and does not, as some imagine, interfere with the seizure of the tackle; for no trout, however cautious and wary, ever engrosses its prey otherwise than head-foremost. Accordingly, on taking the worm, it always assails the thicker extremity, and at no time wastes its attack on the tail or lower end of the bait. Considering this, and the liability which, in consequence, the upper portion runs of returning to hand broken and disabled, should the striking prove unsuccessful, some anglers instead of inserting the hook below, actually do so through the mouth or orifice of the head itself. Another reason brought forward in support of this mode of baiting is, that, in the ordinary plan, the mere casting of the line serves, not unfrequently, to break or injure what they term the neck of the worm, namely, that part of it where the hook is first inserted. This, I allow, is an objection of some weight, but it acts as a meagre set-off to the bad effect of their practice, which is no less than to curtail at an early stage the life and action of the worm, thereby destroying its efficacy as a lure or provocative, and rendering it, in fact, a mere piece of dead matter.

While on this subject, let me caution the angler to pay close attention to the condition of his worm; indeed, every two or three unsuccessful casts he ought strictly to examine it, in case it has either become partially disengaged from the hook, or is in any degree maimed and ruptured, not to say water-logged and motionless. A maimed bait few trout worth capturing will snatch at. It has attractions only for parr and small fry, and as for a dead worm, they would as soon think of attacking a mutton chop, which, by the way, I understand, is the favourite bait of the river cod in some of the Australian rivers.

I shall now, as undertaken by me, wind up this chapter on worm-fishing, with a few instructions as to the management of the line. Although recommending to the worm-fisher the use of a light double-handed rod, I do not insist

upon it as absolutely essential. It gives him, however, a power or facility over his line, especially if a long one, which no single-handed implement can ever possess. Both in waters that require to be waded and the smallest description of rivulets, it is of equal advantage. Employed on the one, the angler, without any strain, jerk, or extra impulse, which very frequently chafes and injures the worm, is enabled to heave out his bait to the required spot; he possesses moreover, full command in recovering his tackle for a new throw, and, as the occasion happens, can strike his fish with readiness and considerable certainty. Employed on the other, he can drop his worm unsuspected, softly as a snow-flake, behind stone or shelter fence, under banks and below boughs, keeping himself and his shadow concealed and at a distance. Such advantages, as far as concerns worm-fishing, the one-handed rod can have no pretensions to. The leads and weight of the worm are great drawbacks to its power. These, it can neither sufficiently heave out nor recover. In the striking of fish also it is of little avail, except when stiffish and used with a short line.

I introduce, it may be thought by some, the above observations respecting the kind of rod best adapted for worm-fishing a little out of place, but when it is considered that the proper management of the tackle depends not a little upon the implement employed, they will be allowed to be quite preliminary to the subject under treatment. Let me presume that the angler is armed, as I have recommended, with a light double-handed rod, and that he has gained the scene of action, trimmed his tackle, and affixed his bait; his eye also is in command of a likely piece of water, which, as generally happens during summer, in large streams like Tweed or Teviot, can only be fished with much success by the wader. In he steps courageously, but with due caution, below the place specified, lengthening line as he does so in the usual manner, that is, with the assistance of his hand, and by a slight jerking movement of the top-piece of his rod, along the surface. When he has unwound as much as he can conveniently heave out and recover without injury to the worm, let him venture his cast. This he may do, either over the left or right arm, as best suits his position, and the side of the river he angles from. He ought not however, as in fly-fishing, to perform the full sweep round his shoulders, but to substitute for it that mode of throwing

the bait which consists of heaving or pitching it forward—a plan which very little practice will make him proficient in, and one that both saves the worm and causes it, on its fall, to break, without undue disturbance, the surface of the water.

As I have already had occasion to remark, all able worm-fishers invariably cast the line up the stream, taking their stance below where the trout are presumed to lie, and never allowing the bait, as it is carried down by the current, to pass beneath them. This practice of theirs embodies two separate advices, both of which respectively demand attention. In heaving the bait up against the course of the stream, more than one advantage accrues to the angler. He is, first of all, kept better concealed from the wary eye of the trout, which, as is well-known, always, when resting, fronts the current; and although possessed of visual organs sufficiently prominent to detect objects above or on either side of it, can descry but very partially what takes place in its rear. Again, from his position, he can strike with greater effect. In this particular he acquires a very decided advantage over the old-fangled mode of worm-fishing, that, namely, of casting down the stream; adopting which system the angler, when striking, is more apt to pull his hook fairly out of the mouth of the fish without even pricking it than, as when he throws against the current and strikes downwards, to bring it, bend and barb, into direct contact with the open jaws of the biter. A third advantage obtained by the mode of casting I am recommending is, that the water is less disturbed; the unavoidable plunging of the wader affecting only those portions of it that lie below him, and which he has either thought proper to omit as useless, or has already ransacked.

The other advice conveyed by the practice of able worm-fishers is never to allow the bait, which is carried down with the current, to pass below you. Lift it always before it comes into line with the opposite bank of the river. In permitting it to descend further you not only angle without much hope of success, throwing away time and labour, but you frighten off more good trout than you are actually aware of. A fish, for instance, has just caught a glimpse of your bait as it travels home towards you; he follows it, but by the time he can give any indication of his approach it is carried down, either among your feet or to a

short distance on one side of where you stand. Still he pursues it, but is all at once made aware of your presence, becomes alarmed, and bids you, for that forenoon at least, farewell; whereas, had you lifted your worm in sufficient time, you would have left him above you on the outlook, and readier than ever to seize it when again pitched in beyond him.

I shall append a single instruction as to the striking of fish. Upon this matter the question naturally suggests itself—when ought a trout to be struck? Whether directly on its first attack or after repeated assaults, at a crisis when it is presumed to have pouched or swallowed the worm? As in everything else, so in this matter, there exists a medium, and to hit that happy and just degree is all that is desirable. Now, for my own part, I am opposed, out and out, to the dilatory system of giving the fish its own time, neither am I an advocate for immediate striking. In the one case you afford opportunity for the trout to detect the nature of your lure, which, in three cases out of four, it assuredly will do; then, moreover, should you secure it after all, you are put to the disagreeable and time-wasting task of extricating the hook from its stomach, instead of simply disengaging it from the lip, jaw, or tongue. In the other case you act in ignorance of the habits of the fish, whose primary attack is upon the life of the worm—an attempt merely to deaden its movements and render it capable of being engrossed more at leisure and without detriment. Accordingly, as is well-known, trout always assail the head or most vital part, and it is not until this has been rendered inert, which it generally is after one or two vigorous bites, that it attempts to engross the entire bait within its jaws. This is the moment for striking, and it is distinguished more satisfactorily by the running away of your line from the spot where the attack commenced towards the retreat of the fish. In performing the movement, do so steadily and with firmness, not by means of a jerk, which is apt either to snap the gut or tear away the barb of the hook from the part entered. Hold the rod well up, and always incline your pull downwards, or as little as possible at variance with the flow of the river. When a fish is hooked land it without delay; if a small one, it is not in many cases worth the wader's while dragging it to shore; if large, or even moderate-sized, the safe rule is to

do so, unless you happen to be provided with the inconvenient convenience of a landing-net. Always keep the line tight. Should you from distrust of your tackle be afraid of overstressing it, the blame lies originally with yourself, and you deserve to become the sufferer.

I have in this somewhat lengthy chapter embraced, methinks, most of the points connected with the subject it treats of, and endeavoured, to the best of my ability, to set them forth in a plain and practical light.

CHAPTER VIII.

TROUT-FISHING WITH THE MINNOW AND PARR-TAIL.

INTRODUCTORY Observations.—Rod.—Fitting up of Tackles.—Approved Method of Attaching the Lure.—The Parr-Tail.—Shaping of ditto.—Various other Tackles.—Arrangement of Leads and Swivels.—Selection of Minnows.—Method of Taking Them.—When to Fish with the Minnow.—When and Where to use the Parr-Tail.—Playing the Lure.—Edging and Striking.—Live, Diving, and Ground-Minnow Tackles.—Imitations.—Capping.

EVERY branch of the angler's art requires its separate measure of address, observation, and practice. All the departments are not equally fine, and, of course, do not make the same demands upon the skill and experience of the craftsman. Trouting with the worm and salmon roe, for instance, in discoloured water is a coarser and at the same time simpler and less ingenious manner of fishing than trouting by means of the artificial fly; and if we descend to bring into the comparison such branches of the art as are pursued with float and set-line, and those which have for their object the capture of the less cautious sorts of fish, such as pike, perch, eels, etc., the distinction becomes still more evident.

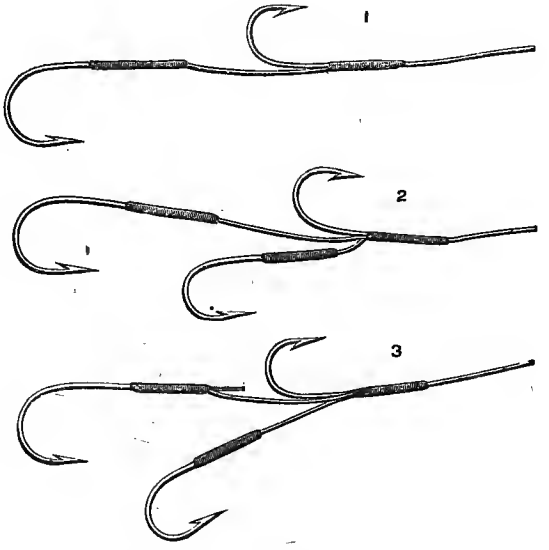
Allowing, then, the above assertion to be correct, what place, in the consequent arrangement, ought I to assign to that division of the art now under treatment? Shall I class it among the subtle, more refined, and difficult departments, or shall I allot it room with those which, comparatively speaking, are coarse and inelegant, requiring little exercise of judgment, small experience, and no great stretch

of attention? Now, although not willing to allow it the very highest position as a branch of our craft, I make no hesitation in saying that, as far as regards the display of skill and science, it stands on a level little inferior to any other. Placing foremost the able fly-fisher, I would rank, hand in hand, in my group of anglers, such as are adepts in the art with worm and minnow; nor must the position, thus assigned to the last-mentioned, be ignorantly held a questionable one; for if injustice, by this arrangement, has been done at all, the worm-fisher is, in truth, the party injured—a matter in evidence of which I refer to the preceding chapter. Independently, however, of its position in point of skill as a branch of angling, fishing with the minnow has its interests and excitements. It is truly sport of a winning and enlivening character. None is there, for my own part, that I love better to practise—none that acts with livelier influence on the hopes and fancies of the angler.

In handling this subject, I shall adopt a similar course of division to that already pursued in my chapter on worm-fishing. First of all, it is my design to treat of the rod and tackle best adapted for the minnow-troller. On burns and waters of no great width, such as the Yarrow, Ettrick, and upper portions of Tweed, he will find, sufficient for his purpose, a single-handed rod, thirteen feet and a half in length, provided with stiffish tops, and indeed, throughout, less limber than the generality of fishing-wands. On a stream, however, that cannot be commanded without deep wading, on lochs frequented by large fish, and in all places where pike are likely to interfere with the bait, I would recommend a double-handed instrument, lighter in material, and in its dimensions a trifle shorter than that employed by salmon-fishers. With this, the reel and its provision ought in all respects to correspond.

Regarding the correct fitting up of the minnow-tackle, and the proper size, number, and arrangement of hooks to be employed in it, great difference of opinion exists. Some contend in favour of many, some of few, hooks; some prefer large ones, some small, while others advise the use of both conjoined. I shall not, however, perplex the reader with arguments for and against one and all of the sorts of minnow-tackles in vogue. My duty is to submit to him the most approved models, and this I do, in the confidence that,

if an angler at all, he will be able to recognise their merits, and allow them the superiority they claim over a whole armoury of crude and fanciful contrivances, palmed off on the public, under the title in question.



The upper hook should be made to slide so as to fit any length of minnow.

The simplest and most killing form of minnow-tackle I am acquainted with, is that delineated in figure No. 1, and consists of two hooks, Nos. 12 and 10, tied on, as represented. This is the tackle in its medium size, but it may either be enlarged or lessened, according to the proportions of the minnow employed, that is to say, should the minnow exceed the usual and favourite length of two inches and a half, a tackle of corresponding dimensions becomes requisite, and the same, when the bait is undersized.

Of the advantages of this description of tackle, I require to say little. They are apparent to all who are in the custom of using it, and arise, in no small degree, from its great simplicity. This, mainly, it is that renders the process of baiting or attaching the minnow, at once speedy and neat. It can, in fact, be performed in a few seconds, and is

generally free from such imperfections as either offend the eye or affect the spinning. With respect, indeed, to its qualification of spinning well, there is, in the size and arrangement of the hooks, those very requisites that enable it to do so.

In attaching the minnow, enter the large or lowermost hook at its mouth, and run the fish, in the same manner you would a worm, along over the bend and shank, taking care not to rupture its skin or belly. When about a quarter of an inch from the tail, bring through the barb, allowing it to protrude freely, until, in fact, the turn of the hook is almost exposed, the minnow, which presents necessarily a curved form, covering the remainder. This done, and presuming that the length of the tackle is justly proportioned to that of the bait, the smaller hook is in a position to admit of being readily thrust through its lips, both under and upper, an operation which, by effectually closing them, greatly assists the spinning. Should the portion of gut intervening betwixt the hooks prove slightly too long, the angler has it always in his power to shorten it, by simply giving it a turn over the upper wire, before closing up the mouth of the minnow. His great care should be properly to adjust the bait and regulate its curve. Without attention to this matter, the spinning, at its best, will only prove lame and unattractive.

Should he, for instance, exceed the mark and double up the body of the minnow, until forming nearly a circle, not only will it turn ill, but present, to boot, an unnatural and deformed appearance, acting as a scare-away rather than a lure or inducement. On the other hand also, when the minnow is made to retain its natural straightness, it loses on the tackle almost all approximation to a living and, consequently, wholesome fish, being rendered incompetent either to spin at all or so wretchedly as to expose the art of the angler, and render abortive all his attempts to induce trout to seize it. And here, upon these points, I may assert that the tackle now recommended by me proves its superiority; for there is nothing more accommodating to the desired curve in the minnow than the bend of the larger or lower hook. It conforms indeed, with the greatest exactness, to that very portion of the bait where the curve or turn is required. This hook also, from its comparative weight and other evident causes, operates most beneficially,

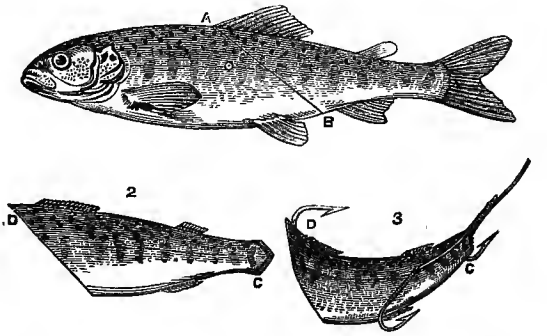
as a help or occasion to the minnow to spin freely. It is not, however, generally so killing as the upper wire, which, entering the lips of the bait, is more liable to come into contact with the jaws of the trout, seeing that, as I have already mentioned, all fish, if possible, seize their prey by the head or most vital part.

The tackle No. 2 is, in all respects, similar to the one above spoken of, only that it is provided, in addition, with a side hook, of the same dimensions as the upper one. It is baited also exactly in a similar manner; the supernumerary hook, not being entered into any part of the minnow, but allowed to hang loose, by its own joining, alongside of the bait. I have classed this among the above illustrations, as a variety of the minnow-tackle, simply, because it is employed as such by some able anglers. Its conformation, however, renders it better adapted for parr-tail fishing, and it is, properly speaking, the parr-tail tackle of Tweedside. Another modification of it will be found exhibited in No. 3, the difference betwixt the two lying merely in the mode of appending the lower hook, which, in the one arrangement, is performed as usual, while in the other, a considerable portion of the shank-end is left exposed, for the purpose, in baiting, of its being inserted, below the skin of the tail.

And here, seeing I have classed minnow and parr-tail-fishing under one head or chapter, although in truth, as branches of the art, they vary in several particulars, it will be proper to introduce some instructions as to the modelling or preparation of the bait in question, and the affixing of it to its appropriate tackle. The parrs or smolts fittest for use are those above four and under six inches in length. If of a smaller size, they may, as occasion offers, be employed entire, like the minnow, on suitable tackle; larger, I cannot well recommend them, unless as a trolling bait on lochs inhabited by pike and the *salmo ferox*. The cutting of the parr-tail for stream fishing is an operation which requires some nicety and attention. It is one also, very imperfectly understood away from Tweedside; indeed, even there, I have encountered anglers (whose experience in the other branches of the art was beyond challenge), bungling it most effectually. The main error of all such lies in the notion, that because it is natural for fish to swim head-foremost, or with their tails in the rear, they only act with discretion,

when they allot the same position to their bait, that is when appending it to the tackle with the tail lowermost, whereas in the proper, economical, and killing method of fishing, it is attached quite the reverse way. Accordingly, in shaping and cutting out the bait, let the following instructions be strictly attended to.

Divide the parr or smolt with a sharp pen-knife, in the direction A. B. Cut off all the fins, closely and carefully, not excepting the caudal or tail ones. These, indeed, should be neatly rounded off,



and caution used not to break the contiguous skin. This process of shaping the parr-tail may be performed, in the course of a few seconds, either at the water-side, or by the wader on the lid of his creel. No. 2 of the above illustrations exhibits the figure of the parr-tail, as ready for use. In No. 3, it is represented, as affixed to the tackle, C forming the head or foremost portion, and D the other extremity of the bait. Now, the advantages of this mode of attaching it are very evident. To satisfy himself with respect to them, let the angler, by way of experiment, adopt what is seemingly the more natural method of baiting, let him retain the finny portions of the tail, and place the end denoted by the letter D, foremost. The first cast taken by him may, not improbably, as regards the spinning of his lure, prove pretty satisfactory, and should the stream run strong, those immediately succeeding it, may still meet his expectations. In a short time, however, he begins to find all going wrong—the bait refusing, in spite of two or more box-swivels, to spin at all, or spinning only by fits and

starts, awkwardly and inefficiently; its appearance, moreover, totally altered, the skin loosened, the fleshy parts flabby and worn away by the action of the water, which they come into violent contact with, and in fact, the possibility of a trout seizing it utterly at an end. Let him, however, by way of change, adopt the mode of baiting above recommended. The advantages derived from it will quickly discover themselves. Not only, indeed, will the parr-tail spin with more freedom and regularity, its heavier portion being lowermost, but it will last, to boot, for a much greater length of time, and frequently subserve to capture two or three fish. All this is owing to the narrow and protected part being attached foremost, consequently the opposing current is confined in its action upon the bait to the lower and expanding extremity—a circumstance greatly favouring the spinning, while, at the same time, in conjunction with the natural toughness of the advanced end, it prevents that other portion of the parr-tail from becoming worn and fretted.

I have been thus particular in my description of this and the first-mentioned tackles, because experience has taught me to consider them as unsurpassed, in their separate adaptations, by any other combination of hooks. It is very true, however, as I have already hinted, that many able and accomplished anglers give the preference to more compound and perplexing devices, some using five, some seven, and others as many as eleven hooks, variously sized and arranged. Of these tackles, however, I shall say little. Without holding them in absolute disregard, I cannot help thinking they are constructed upon an unsound principle, as far, at least, as relates to the spinning of the minnow or parr-tail—(a point, the most essential, connected with this sort of fishing), and although seemingly, from their armed and horrescent appearance, better adapted to take good hold of a trout than the simple forms of tackle above recommended, yet in reality they are not a whit more so.

For my own part, I would limit their use entirely to loch-fishing, and then, *as pure trolling tackle*, larger in make and size of wire than suits either the minnow or parr-tail, and employed by the angler from a boat, under oars. In such a case, the spinning is sufficiently brought out by the action of the leads and swivels. A large bait, moreover, like that needed for the occasion in question, is better

supported and held in shape by several hooks, entered at various parts of the body.

While on the subject of minnow and parr-tail tackle, I find it requisite, having specified, to the best of my ability, the most approved and useful sorts, to say a few words as to the disposition of the leads and swivels. I presume that the hooks, whatever their number or arrangement, are invariably tied on good gut, round, clean, and well-proportioned in strength and thickness to the size and nature of the fish it has to deal with. Of this article, four or five lengths, forming a continued stretch of as many feet, are in general sufficient to use singly or in connection with the casting-line, which, on all occasions, should be formed of the same material, triple-spun or made up. Immediately above the lowermost length, or that to which the hooks are attached, I would fix the leads or split shot, sizes 2, 3, or 4, varying them in number, according to circumstances. In minnow-trolling, for my own part, I prefer the line heavily weighted; others, I know, do not; nay, I am acquainted with one gentleman, an excellent and successful angler, who uses, during the summer months, no leads at all, but fishes with the minnow as with the fly almost on the surface of the stream—a manner of plying the lure which only great practice can render remunerative. The advantages, however, of leading heavily, consist of improved spinning, greater likelihood of attracting the eye of the fish, and a much better chance of hooking them. In this latter respect, the superiority over light or surface fishing is unquestionable. The trout or salmon, when pursuing the minnow, is generally out of sight, and you are first made aware of his presence at seizure, that is, a moment or two previous to the time when you ought to strike; whereas, in the other mode spoken of, you perceive the fish on his approach to the bait, and are liable, three times out of four, either to strike too soon or put him on his guard, by altering the course of the spinning, checking the line, or jerking away the minnow. It is very true, notwithstanding, that with tackle barely weighted, you can always, on throwing, command a greater stretch of water, yet the advantage of doing so in minnow or parr-tail fishing is exceedingly doubtful, and if desired, for the purpose of escaping detection from the trout, perfectly unnecessary; for when rivers are in trim for these sorts of angling, that

is, either large and discoloured, or perfectly clear and small, in both cases, the fish, in their appropriate haunts, are eager and fearless, not readily deterred from their purpose, even within arm's length of the angler himself.

And as to heavy leading, it is, in salmon-fishing, with the minnow or parr-tail, quite indispensable, for the fish in question, when inclined to take the spinning line do not, like trout, change ground on the rove or feed, but lie close to the bottom, in their favourite places of resort, and are only roused to seize it, by the bait, in a particular temperature and state of water, passing near or before them.

For trouting, the ordinary number of leads of the sizes mentioned, which a minnow or parr-tail tackle requires, ranges from two to four. In heavy water, more, if necessary, can readily be added; but I would avoid deep leading, over a weedy or rocky bottom. Some anglers, instead of attaching the shot a short way above the tackle, and all at one spot, distribute it, at different intervals, along the gut-lengths and casting-line itself, a practice I do not think commendable.

The box-swivel is a very necessary part of the minnow tackle. Its material use is not so much to assist the spinning of the lure, which it does to an ample extent, as to prevent perplexity to the line, a mishap always consequent upon its omission. In trouting with the minnow, two, sometimes three swivels are employed by anglers. The lowermost of these should be fixed at the head of the gut-strand third from the hooks, or at a distance of nearly three feet from the bait. Another ought to have its position immediately below the higher casting-line, and in connection with the uppermost length of single gut. A third, if reckoned of use, may find place a yard beyond it, about the centre of the line alluded to. The size of the swivel ought, of course, to be regulated by its position and the description of tackle it is employed to assist. Very small ones, I find, are apt to become rusted and stiff in the axis. They are not so secure or perfect as those of the medium size, which, in addition to their other advantages, subserve, as leads or weights, in default of a sufficiency of these requisites.

Having exhausted all that at present is necessary to be said with regard to the tackle used in angling with the

minnow and parr-tail, I proceed, before giving instructions as to the manner of employing these baits, to acquaint the reader with the kind and size of minnow reckoned enticing, its substitutes, and the simplest methods of procuring this favourite lure. Early in the season, that is to say, during the months of March and April, trout, in swollen or partly discoloured waters, provided these are not greatly impregnated with dissolved snow, are in nowise shy, should it pass across them, of darting even at the largest and least captivating description of minnow; but at the period alluded to, it is both against the habits of true sportsmen to angle for them, seeing that they cannot be expected to have acquired as yet anything like condition, and also, there is but a thin sprinkling that have left their winter resorts, and begun to frequent the shoals and streams, best adapted for the spinning lure. In May, June, and July, the principal trouting months, they become, in most rivers, through feeding, more dainty and capricious. Large and ill-favoured minnows are viewed by them with suspicion, and it is needful for the angler to oppose craft to craft, and fastidiousness, in his choice of a proper bait, to their fastidiousness in the selection of food. Accordingly, it behoves him to pick out the best and fittest of the penk or minnow tribe; those, namely, which, being of a medium size, are well-shaped and silvery. All the spawning and unhealthy ones, unless in an hour of pressure, ought to be rejected; also all stickle backs, and, I may add, loaches, although when no better are to be had, they prove a tolerable enough substitute for the lure in question. Sand-eels also, and small garvies, or herring fry, I have seen employed with effect in some rivers, both near and at a distance from the sea.

And as to the capturing of minnows for bait, this may be accomplished in a variety of ways. It may be done during a rising or fully-flooded water, by means of a small pout or bag net, used among petty eddies, submerged tufts of grass, and various nooks and shelter places which the current may happen to form with the banks. In these it is, that this tiny fish finds natural refuge from the violence of the swollen stream, and the net in question, when worked low and with the current, I have generally found pretty effectual, as a means of obtaining it in considerable quantities. Indeed, during the spring months, when the minnow

is in demand for salmon-fishing, the pout-net forms on Tweedside the readiest contrivance for procuring a supply.

The hoop-net also, when the waters are clear and small, may be employed with great advantage against the minnow tribe. It is used most successfully in bye-waters, where the fish in question are observed in large shoals, and consists simply of a ring or hoop, at least three or four feet in diameter, and formed of thick wire, to which a net has been suspended. This is attached by cords converging from the circumference, to a staff or pole two or three yards in length, by the assistance of which the net is laid cautiously down, in the shallow resort or piece of bye-water alluded to. The fish, by means of small fragments of worms or other bait, are then invited to feed over it, and when drawn in sufficient numbers towards the centre of the bag, the whole is suddenly lifted by the person employed to capture them. I have witnessed nearly a hatful of minnows taken, by this mode of netting, at one draught, but, unless with the view to furnish a store or summer supply of live bait, I am inclined to think the adoption of it, on the part of the angler, reprehensible, seeing it embraces an encouragement to wholesale destruction.

A third method of capturing minnows for bait is with the hook and line. Upon this expedient there is no need of enlarging. Those who have recourse to it should, however, always remember to employ tackle properly proportioned to the size of the fish. Let them use one or two hooks, as they think desirable, of sizes 2 or 3, round-bend. A small fragment of worm will suffice for the bait, the upper half of a trouting rod or a branch cut from some neighbouring willow, for the wand; and I would recommend, moreover, the use of a small float, which not only prevents the hook from coming into contact with the bottom, but notifies to the angler the exact time when to strike.

Minnows, immediately on being captured, should be transferred to a jug or pitcher half-filled with water. This, should the angler happen to be detained for any length of time at the river side, ought to be every now and then emptied of its contents, and again replenished, otherwise the fish, if numerous, are apt to sicken and die. A few changes of water, however, invariably reconcile them to their new situation. When not for immediate use, let him, on reaching home, commit them to some cool and roomy

recipient, such as a stone trough, or large tub or pail. He will require to supply them with fresh water, at least once a week in the spring season, and oftener during summer. I find it is not necessary to use exclusively what is drawn from a stream or lake, but well and even rain water answer the purpose quite as satisfactorily, provided they are administered, at the first, in limited proportions. To such as have the command of a pond or small rivulet, the keeping of minnows during the whole season presents no difficulty. They have only to enclose them in a deal box, perforated throughout with gimlet holes. This, by means of a few heavy stones or weights placed inside, is conveyed to the bottom of the piece of water in question or bye-pool formed from it, and there, kept sunk, until its finny contents are in demand. When minnows are to be used, I know of no better mode of conveying them to the place of action, than by means of a common soda-water bottle. This, when about two-thirds filled with water, will contain conveniently upwards of a score of these fish, and if at intervals, on affixing for instance a fresh bait, the element natural to them be changed by the angler, they may be kept alive during the whole day. The cork accommodated to this vessel ought to be provided with an air-hole, either driven through its centre, or nicked out at the side. Minnows when carried in a dead state, if fresh, should be deposited among moss or grass slightly moistened; if salted, they may be placed for convenience in a tin box similar to what is used in worm-fishing, and suspended in the same manner by a belt round the waist of the angler. I may mention, by the way, that I have no great opinion of the salted minnow. It is a troublesome bait to deal with, readily torn and disfigured in fastening, dull in the eye and colour, and an uncertain spinner.

I have thus, at some length, discussed two or three of the most important matters connected with this branch of the art, and shall now offer some instructions as to the time when, the places where, and the manner how, it ought to be pursued. And first, as to the time and season adapted for minnow and parr-tail fishing. I have already stated that large, hungry trout may be taken as early as March or even February, but in these months, the generality of them have not yet begun to frequent the beats and shallows, although during mild weather, invited into them by the appearance of surface food. Floods also, then as at other

times, compel trout to be active and abandon their places of refuge, and it is on the first subsiding of these that the minnow-troller generally meets with success.

I may mention here, however, that although, in my younger years, eager to capture individuals of the finny tribe whenever I could, be it in the middle of Christmas or on one of the dog-days, I am now content to limit my trouting expeditions, in a great measure, to the season in which these fish are fit for use; indeed, to slaughter them indiscriminately, during all the months of the year, as may be done by the use of the salmon-roe and pastes made from it, I consider wrong, and is now illegal. Holding such views, and recommending the same to every honest and high-minded angler, I exclude, in accordance with them, from my trouting calendar, that portion of the year preceding the 15th April, and also the months following August, during which interval the *fario* or common trout, with a few exceptions, is out of condition, and unfit to be used as human food. Angling with the minnow, then, being thus limited, along with the other branches of trout-fishing, in point of season, it is only proper for the craftsman to take every advantage which weather and the state of the rivers afford, to pursue his amusement. This may be done, either, as I have already remarked, when the water after a heavy flood has begun to subside, and is verging upon a dark porter colour, or when it is clear and small, under a bright sun. Also, during warm, summer nights, the minnow, as well as the fly and lob-worm, is a sure and deadly bait, enticing to large trout which have their haunts throughout the day, in deep, still water. On such occasions, too, the parr-tail will be found effective, but of this bait the true season is what on Tweedside is known as the smolt period, *viz.*, those weeks of the year in which the parr, having assumed its silver coating, makes descent, in numerous shoals, towards the salt-water. Then it is, that all the large trout of our salmon rivers are out on the watch, marking with cunning eye the bands as they pass them, if so be they can detect a wounded, worn-out, or incautious straggler; for on such it is, not on the healthy and alert pilgrims, they generally expend their vigour. The usual period for such emigrations is the latter week of April and first fortnight of May but frequently they commence sooner and terminate, as in an occurrence of droughts, much later. May and

June, however, I esteem to be the best months for parr-tail fishing, although what is termed the swallow-smolt—a coarse, over-grown species of the *salmonidæ*, arriving sometimes in Tweed at the weight of seven pounds, and frequently caught with the bait in question above four, is more on the move, during the first-mentioned month.

The parr-tail, I may remark, is often used as a companion to the worm, and proves most killing in a similar state of water, and the same sort of day, described in a previous chapter, as suitable for the worm-fisher. Indeed, one pursuing that branch of the sport, in rivers frequented by large trout, ought always to have parr-tail tackle along with him, and employ it also, on procuring the requisite bait, in places adapted to its use. These, he will find, seldom interfere with his worm-ground, being rapid and broken water, often the central current, sometimes, indeed, seething eddies and detached strips of the river, whitened over with foam; nor are racing shallows, less than the breaks and necks of streams, to be despised, glassy and exposed though they be, for there large trout love, on suspended fin, to sun themselves, and undetecting avoid all detection. Such localities, too, as I have described, are, in the size and state of river referred to, well adapted for the spinning of the minnow. After a flood, however, in discoloured water, this bait must be fished with among casts of a different character. The trout, then, except in the smaller description of rivers, descend to less turbulent places of resort. They move off more into the silent shallows, sometimes to the very foot of streams, into diversions from the main current, not unfrequently, into what, in the usual state of the river, is smooth and seemingly motionless water. They are found, indeed, should the flood happen to be a large one, scattered about in all places of comparative shelter, close below banks, among side-runs and small whirls, in fact, everywhere, except in central and violently-agitated currents.

I am now brought, having specified when and where this branch of the art ought to be pursued, to add some instructions as to the manner of pursuing it with success. The movements of the minnow on its appropriate tackle and under swivel traces, spinning, as it is made to do, with great rapidity, and often in the teeth of a strong current, are allowedly unnatural, nearly as much so as are the

vagaries forced on the artificial salmon-fly. How, then, the inquiry arises, are trout, the wariest of all the finny tribes deceived by them? This is a question of which it is vain to attempt giving the satisfactory solution. It is evident, however, that if trout regard the bait in question as a minnow at all, they do so under the notion that it is a sickened or injured one—an individual separated from its resort, and unable, through weakness or loss of instinctive consciousness, either to regain it or to take refuge elsewhere. As a proof of this, I may mention that, not unfrequently, when drawing the lure referred to through a host of live minnows, I have been surprised by the appearance of a good trout darting suddenly at my bait, from some shelter stone, in the very centre of the spot, preferring it, seemingly, because (notwithstanding its mangled and spitted condition), an easier prey, to any individual of the shoal among which it dwelt. On the same principle it is, namely, the comparative facility with which they are captured, that vermin,—carrion crows, and beasts of prey—search out and assail wounded and stray animals, while they watch, with apparent indifference, the movements of such as are healthy and banded together. I do not, of course, mean to assert that trout will forbear attacking the minnow in its active state, in the same manner as, when hard pressed, the creatures mentioned attack their game or quarry; on the contrary, they are well known to do so, and often, as the contents of their maws testify, very successfully; but every angler, I think, must coincide with me in opinion, that a spinning bait takes their fancy in a wonderful degree; to account for which, I am perfectly justified in making the assumption, with respect to it, above set forth.

The angler, then, must bear in mind that it is folly and over-refinement to attempt approximating the movements of his bait to those of a healthy minnow. Such an effect, by any known process, he cannot produce. His sole object should, therefore, be to hide and disguise the tackle, and it is solely by rapid spinning he can accomplish this. The quick and equal spinning of the lure is, in fact, the one thing most essential to be studied and understood in fishing with the minnow. This attained, what remains to be known and done is, in many respects, comparatively easy; for instance, the throwing of the line. All that the angler re-

quires to pay attention to, over and above the instructions I have given upon that matter, in my chapter on fly-fishing, is, that he does not injure or tear the bait; a misfortune to be avoided, chiefly by care, and by not attempting to cast the minnow further than is requisite. Except in angling for salmon, indeed, I never experienced the necessity of throwing a long line, when using this lure; and often, instead of casting it like the fly, I adopt the expedient of heaving or pitching it forward, sometimes, under certain circumstances, of merely dropping it from the end of the rod.

As to the proper mode of playing or working the minnow, I require to say little. It should be submitted, in fact, to every test and variety of movement; these, however, being made dependent upon the nature of the current it is cast into. Sometimes, like the salmon-fly, it ought to be urged along, by short measured jerks; sometimes drawn steadily against the stream, in one continued pull; sometimes made to descend for a little way, and then re-operated on by the angler; now on being cast across, it should be brought back in a curve to his feet; and again, allowed merely to dip near some stone or ledge of rock; in short, provided the spinning movement is kept up, and all collateral instructions already given attended to, there is no possible mode of playing this bait, which may not prove successful in attracting trout. I have, a short way back, professed myself in favour of deep fishing, and enumerated one or two of the advantages derived from it. These, I may again state, are connected chiefly with the spinning of the minnow and hooking of the fish; and it is in this latter respect, as an assistance to the striker, that I now once more recommend the adoption of heavy leads. The angler using them is not put to the necessity of constantly watching his lure, but detects the presence of an assailant, by the hand oftener than the eye. This, of course, he cannot do, until the fish has fairly made seizure of the minnow, whereas in surface spinning, the case is different. Accordingly, each method requires from the craftsman its peculiar manner of treatment, as regards the striking.

When the fish, as generally happens in deep spinning, is felt instead of being seen, the angler has only to slacken the line for a second or two, and then, with a slight jerk of the rod upwards, recal it. He will find, in three cases out of

four (unless the trout, being over-fed through a long continuance of flooded water, bite shyly) his fish hooked. Again, in the other case, should he descry the assailant on its approach towards the minnow, he ought, by no means, either to suspend, quicken, or alter the spinning, until its intentions are further completed by the seizure of the bait. And here, as in salmon-fishing, lies the difficulty, at least to a beginner in the art, who is apt, immediately on perceiving the trout, either to strike, and in doing so jerk from it the lure, or else to check too rapidly its motion and thus undeceive and alarm his prey. Against both these errors, it behoves the angler to be on his guard, and at the same time, to use such preventatives (of which, in fishing with the minnow, I know of none better than heavy leading), as will act against their occurrence.

It very frequently happens that a fish, which has followed this bait for some distance below the surface, unawares to the angler, will make no attempt to seize it, until brought close to bank or the margin of the stream. Accordingly, great caution ought to be exercised by the craftsman in the lifting of the minnow. He should always exhaust or complete his cast. On no account ought he to break it off abruptly or in midway. The sudden and uncalled-for abstraction of the bait before edging loses him many a good trout. This, at the time, is not always made evident, but it is not the less an undoubted fact. In the case of bolder fish, like the pike, it is better manifested; these, when trolled for with a spinning lure, withhold their attack, four times out of five, until it is within a foot of the margin; nay, I have been a witness to instances of their actually running aground in pursuit of the bait. Trout also, I have seen so earnest in the chase, as with difficulty to regain their way back from the shallows into deep water; but this is of rarer occurrence with them than with the fish above mentioned. On the contrary, they often exhibit no sign of their presence, and are passed over unawares by the careless and hasty angler, whose bait they had actually pursued and would, in all probability, have taken hold of, had he not abruptly withdrawn it from their vision. I know of an instance which occurred on Tweedside, of two individuals following each other on the same side of the river, at a distance not exceeding sixty or a hundred yards, and the one to whom precedence was given, although at the outset

equipped from the same store of bait and minnow tackle as his friend, failing notwithstanding to capture above half the weight or quantity of fish. I may mention too, that on this occasion, the day was favourable, the water in trim, and trout taking freely. Both anglers, besides, commenced and concluded operations at the same time. How then, it will be asked, was such a result to be accounted for? I allow that greater skill and science were on the part of the more successful sportsman; but the other, a native also of Tweedside, was by no means an indifferent fisher, and the advantage given to him, taking into consideration the nature of the bait, was such, that were he able to throw a line at all, he ought, without question, completely to have marred the sport of any one immediately following him. But then, mark the reason of his failure. He neglected to edge his minnow—omitted to exhaust his cast—abruptly withdrew his tackle, when in midway. On these points it was that the superior skill and science of his competitor displayed themselves—here lay the true secret of his success.

While on fishing with the minnow, I may take notice (having exhausted most of the points connected with it, as a spinning lure for trout) of two or three other methods of using this bait, practised occasionally by the angler. One of these is live-minnow fishing. This branch of the art is little cultivated, and very imperfectly understood in Scotland. For my own part, I do not pretend to any acquaintance with it, and in consequence, refer the reader desirous of gaining information on the matter, to Blaine's Dictionary of Rural Sports, a very useful work in the main, but on the subject of fishing rather too comprehensive and exhausting. It embraces, in fact, upon that science, a medley of theories, adopting, as its own guide or creed, no individual one. It somewhat involves and perplexes the reader with the multiplicity of its divisions, the variety of its information, and complex nature of its arrangement. On the whole, however, it is a book eminently instructive, and one which ought to be in the hands of every lover of sport.

From this digression, I pass on to describe the diving minnow-tackle, the way of baiting, etc. The tackle mentioned consists of a single hook, No. 10 or 11—Adlington, having a long bended shank, looped at the head. This, by the assistance of a needle or small wire having a groove at one end, is passed through its jaws along the body of the

minnow, the barb of the hook being left, as in baiting with the single gorge-tackle for pike, to protrude from one side of the mouth. Thus trimmed out, the lure is intended to descend rapidly towards the bottom of deep, still portions of water, resorted to by large trout, and accessible from the bank to the angler. What may be termed the bend of a pool, especially if shaded over with wood, is likely ground for this kind of sport. It is, in fact, only a variety of dipping, and may be pursued in places somewhat similar. A considerable depth of water is, however, essential. The diving minnow requires to be fished under swivel traces, for, although not intended to spin, but only to dart downwards, yet, on recovery, it is very apt to do so, and in consequence, to perplex the line of the angler. A fish, when seizing this bait, generally does so on its descent, and at the moment it reaches the bottom. It is detected, of course, by the hand, and requires to be struck without much parleying. This mode of fishing is generally most succesful early in spring, before trout have quitted the pools and still places. It is on no occasion, however, even then, very remunerative.

Akin to it is a mode of fishing with the dead minnow, in streams and during the summer season. Here a simple worm-hook, No. 10, is employed, not leaded on the shank like the former, but attached in the usual manner to a thread of fine gut. To bait this tackle, one may either employ, as before detailed, the grooved wire or needle, or, in absence of it, let him insert his hook not far from the lower extremity of the minnow, and, passing it along as through a worm, bring it out at the mouth. He should then, in order to sustain the bait in its proper position, hitch the gut over the tail, and draw all firm. Thus baited, I fish almost in the same manner as when using the worm, and in a condition of water somewhat similar, the streams being low and clear, the skies bright and warm.

Of artificial minnows and imitations of small fish, I require to say little. They are not, as far as I am acquainted, held in much esteem by tried and able anglers. In the whole course of my experience and inquiry, I never heard of a single wonderful feat having been achieved by any of them, although the qualities and virtues of not a few have been expatiated upon, in my presence over and over again. One imitation of the minnow, reckoned very deadly, has, as

the seat of its attractive qualities, a coating formed from the belly-skin of the salmon; others are made of mother-of-pearl, horn, whalebone, etc., and an additional sort of lure introduced to Tweedside two or three years ago, under sanguine hopes of its proving successful, consists of a piece of crystal, shaped like a small fish, and set in metal. This last-mentioned artifice, when brought to the test, possesses, I understand, a certain degree of merit, that, namely, of attracting the notice of the fish, and bringing them towards the tackle. Invariably, however, they refuse to seize it, turning tail when within arm's-length of doing so, and only, instead of rewarding, provoking the patience of the angler. Imitations of small fish, I can readily believe, may prove tolerably successful during a stiffish breeze, when trolled with in some Highland loch, but on rivers, at least on those of the south of Scotland, and I am convinced our northern ones also, they assuredly do not answer. They want a very important essential, and that is, smell or flavour, the sense of which in trout is, as fishing with the salmon roe demonstrates, most exquisite.

In this article on minnow-trouting, I have omitted, in its proper place, to allude to the English system of capping the head of the bait, a plan which, when adopted in connection with certain combinations of hooks, materially, I allow, assists the spinning, but one, the advantages of which are completely done away with by the use of such tackle as I have recommended. There are also two evils resulting from the adoption of it, apparently unregarded; one is, that it intereferes with the protrusion of a hook from the very part of the minnow, namely, the head, whereby trout generally seize it; and the other, that it disguises in some measure the conformation of that section of the lure, more especially the eyes, which I esteem to be of a very attractive nature. To pike, at any rate, they are so, a proof of which I very recently met with.

Happening, one afternoon, to troll from the bank for these fish, in a favourite resort of theirs, on Teviot, I employed for my bait the lower half of a parr or small trout, using gimp tackle and swivels. The cast itself is not above twenty or thirty yards in length, and to fish it carefully over did not occupy me ten minutes. This I did on the occasion alluded to, without, to my knowledge, stirring a single fin. Not content, however, with one trial,

although a searching one, I continued to ply on in the same spot for nearly half-an-hour, with no better success. At length, as a farewell resource, I resolved to re-fish the cast with the upper half of the parr. Accordingly, appending it to my tackle, I recommenced throwing, and although in playing it below the surface of the water, it spun but indifferently, to my surprise, in a very short time, I captured with it no fewer than five pike, two of which weighed about six pounds each. These were scattered along with others, which managed, owing to the nature of the landing-place, to make their escape, over the whole cast in question, and in my opinion had preferred the bait latterly employed, solely on account of the eyes and head. This incident, however, I mention, not as any argument against the use of the parr-tail, whether for pike or trout. It only proves the occasional caprice of the fish, and the influence which a very minute circumstance, namely, the want of the organs of vision or some such deficiency in the bait, may have over their inclinations. I think, therefore, the system of capping the minnow not at all a judicious one, and indeed, if adopted in connection with the most approved form of tackle, scarcely practicable.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SALMON.

Its Position Among Fishes.—Distinguishing Points.—Marine and Fresh-water Existence.—Internal Colour.—Effects of Rich Feeding on Trout and Charr.—Marine Food of the Salmon.—Its Voracious Habits.—Sea-Trout in the Moray Firth.—Yarrell and others on the Food of the Salmon.—Capture of Sea-Trout with the Worm in Salt Water.—Norwegian Fiords.

Its Stages.—Parr ; Smolt or Black Fin ; Grilse ; Salmon.

Fin-rays.—Dorsal, 13 ; Pectoral, 12 ; Ventral, 9 ; Anal, 9 ; Caudal, 19.—*Vertebræ*, 60.

Generic Characters.—Head smooth ; body covered with scales ; two dorsal fins, the first supported by rays, the second fleshy, without rays ; teeth on the vomer, both palatine bones, and all the maxillary bones ; branchiostegous rays varying in number, generally from ten to twelve, but sometimes unequal on the two sides of the head of the same fish.—*Yarrell*, vol. ii. p. 1.

AMONG objects closely associated with the sublime and beautiful, I cannot help classing the noble fish of which it is my purpose to treat in the following pages. The elegance of its form, the justness of its proportions, its glittering and gorgeous apparel, all entitle it to rank loftily in the scale of beauty, while its size and noble bearing, its strength and velocity, the rocks, torrents, and whirlpools among which it glides familiar, unite, in some degree, to elevate its pretensions and give it place withal amid creations of sublimity. That it stands unrivalled among the variety of fishes, extending to many hundreds in number, which inhabit the flood, there can be little question. The dolphin, famed in poetry, whose glowing surface may be termed the pallet of nature, the mullet, the opah or king-fish, the carp, dorie, and sturgeon, all yield before it the submissive palm. Nor is it undistinguished, independent of its shape and beauty, by certain instincts and properties, which elevate it still higher above the rest of the finny tribes.

One of these, the foremost in rank, is the freedom it possesses of transporting itself from the saline abysses of ocean into rivers and lakes—the capability, in fact, of existing and enjoying its existence within two distinct *media*, differing from each other in taste, in gravity, in motion, and in produce. Certain fish, it is true, such as sturgeon and mullet, eels and flounders, forsake, like the salmon, their sea-haunts and betake themselves into fresh water; yet never do we hear of these or any others penetrating far inland and overcoming the strong currents and rapids with which many rivers abound in the upper districts. To the salmon alone this capacity belongs, and is exercised by its several species, in degrees apportioned to their strength and inclinations. For instance, the *eriox* or bull-trout, one of these species which, although seldom attaining the size of the full-grown *salar*, is on the whole a more powerful and venturesome fish, becomes led by its instincts to the very heads and sources of the rivers it frequents, and is sometimes found shedding its spawn in feeders where it is scarcely able to turn itself.

Among those peculiarities which distinguish the salmon tribe *(salmonidæ)* from other fishes, I shall also take notice of the pink or reddish colour of its flesh—a distinction which, to the best of my knowledge, it holds in common with none of the finny creation. Several naturalists ascribe

this colour or complexion to the description of food upon which it subsists in the salt water. Dr. Knox holds, that it is derived from the ova of various kinds of *echinodermata* and some of the *crustacea*, endowed, for so his theory leads one to presume, with the virtues of cochineal. Others again affirm that it is induced by a species of sea-weed, although they prudently forbear condescending any further upon the matter. Without altogether rejecting such opinions as incorrect, I cannot help asking how it happens that, in absence of all marine sustenance whatsoever, trout and charr (themselves, it is true, belonging to the same family, but inhabiting fresh-water lakes and streams) acquire, in many instances, the hue referred to? That it proceeds in their case, as well as that of the marine salmon, from some virtue or peculiarity in the food supplied by them, is very possible. To all who have studied the habits and nature of the *fario* or common fresh-water trout, it is well known that its internal colour is largely affected by the quality of its subsistence, and that this fish, when taken from a river or streamlet (where, if suffered to remain season after season, it would assume no tinge of redness whatsoever), and transferred to a lake or pond containing marl or other rich food, speedily acquires the high complexion in question, independent of other changes elsewhere dilated on.

This is true, but there is nothing connected with the transformation spoken of to be traced to the fish itself—no inherent tendency, analogous to that which flowers possess, to disclose, under certain circumstances, a particular hue or tinge of colour? They, too (flowers), depend, to some extent, for their tints and richness of bloom to the sustenance they are supplied with, or, what is the same thing, to the soils and climates, the manures and moistures which nourish and refresh them. Still this sustenance is in no case the direct occasion of any particular hue disclosed by the blossom, otherwise in plants that live on the same chemical substances, and are reared together on the same soil, the tints and colours unfolded would always be the same, without the possibility of their varying; whereas, it is well known this is not the case, every plant possessing a virtue of its own, which is the secret or origin of its colour, although acted upon in many instances, as florists inform us, by change of circumstances. What I

have stated in respect to flowers holds good also as regards trout and salmon. The kind and quality of their food contribute, no doubt, to bring out or exclude the colour spoken of, but this colour is one that really appertains to the fish, and is by no means derived from the sustenance taken by it. Were this the case, perch and other fresh-water fishes, subsisting on the same kinds of food that trout do, would frequently, like them, acquire the pink or red colour spoken of.

Of whatever force these observations are as respects the question at issue, one thing is clear, that the salmon proper, whether they derive their high colour from marine sustenance or not, are possessed of it in common with fresh-water trout and charr, fishes that have no access to the aliment mentioned by Dr. Knox and other naturalists. I may also state a fact well known on Tweedside, and bearing upon the matter in hand, namely, that although salmon, after their entrance into fresh water, do undoubtedly, after a time, lose a portion of their high colour, in the same manner as trout and charr do, on becoming what is technically called foul; yet, as is well known, this property is, to some extent, recovered by them after parting with their spawn or milt, before returning to the sea as kelts.

In reality, however, this question is one of no great esteem or consequence; nor do I believe it to be so regarded, even by those whose assertions have given rise to it; their sole motive being, by such random and haphazard affirmations, to throw light upon the still unsettled question with respect to the food of salmon.

Having thus briefly treated of the leading peculiarities which distinguish this fish, namely, its adaptation equally to fresh and salt water, and the high colour that characterises its fleshy particles, I may now venture to unfold my own views on so speculative a subject as the food of salmon. That it has, like many other fishes, including even the vast and unwieldly whale, the power of sustaining existence upon very minute particles of food, I have no intention of questioning; nay, that it is very possible for it to acquire its bulk and delicate richness from aliment, to our ideas so scant and precarious as marine animalculæ cannot be denied; still, before positively deciding the matter, and leaping to a conclusion, the sole basis of which is vague and fictitious, there can be no harm in demanding

one moment's investigation of those parts in the structure of the fish, which are adapted by Providence for the seizure and engulfment of its prey.

The salmon, as is well known, is furnished with strong jaws or mandibles—a mouth somewhat capacious, and armed, as well as the tongue, with sharp teeth. It possesses moreover a broad gullet, capable of passing at one gulp no inconsiderable quantity of food. Provided with these powers and functions, it is at least reasonable to suppose that the inclination to use them is not withheld from their possessor. Were it otherwise, there is evidently a flaw in the works of Nature—a breaking up of the harmony hitherto found so consistent and universal throughout her multifarious arrangements. To affirm that the powerful jaws, the firm-set teeth, and the expansive throat of the salmon, are, one and all, allotted it without the will to exercise them, or what is the same thing, without a purpose, is not less than to assert that Providence allows the existence of anomalies among His works; that, in fact, there is a defect, as palpable as our senses can make it, in the system of creation. Such is the ultimate conclusion we lead their own arguments to bring them to, who give out that the chief sustenance of the salmon consists of marine insects and ova, too minute for the naked eye to discover. That it jars equally against truth, reason, and experience will be acknowledged by all; nor need I, in order further to expose its absurdity, do more than call attention to the fact, that Nature, in no other instance that I can bring to mind, hath been accused of the like inconsistency or mal-organisation in her structure, but rather, in all ages and among all nations, though most powerfully among the most civilised, hath excited wonder, too deep for utterance, by the singular adaptation of portion to portion, which is manifest throughout her works, as well as by their endless variety, their striking utility, and the harmonious spirit which reigns among them;—so harmonious and yet so needful, that were an atom of this globe to become defective or extinct, nay, drawn out merely by an angel's hand, from the attractive sphere of what remains, who dares question, but that the fine balance of earth would be thereby destroyed—its pillars misplaced—its cornice broken—its whole fabric shattered and dissolved?

I shall now proceed to relate what has fallen, from time

to time, under my personal observation, in regard to the marine food of the salmon; following up what I have to state with a few quotations from various ichthyologists, corroborative, in some measure, of my own opinion on this subject. One instance, impressed on my recollection, is of date 10th June, 1836, and occurred not far from the mouth of Nairn water, which discharges itself at the town of Nairn into the Moray Frith. The northern coasts of Scotland, both on the west and east sides, are, at the period of the year I refer to, frequented by immense shoals of young herring, smaller even than those known by the denomination of garvies; many of them not measuring above an inch and a half in length. It is worthy too of remark, that at this season, the friths and bays abound, seemingly more than usual, with different varieties of the salmon tribe, such especially as are recognised under the somewhat general title of sea-trout. Whether or no, these fish are in reality more plentiful in such localities, during the summer months, crowding shorewards from the deep and distant haunts, to which some suppose they betake themselves on descending from their parent streams in spring, I shall not stop at present to enquire. One thing, however, is certain, that be their transit like that of the woodcock or cuckoo, from some clime remote, or be it only the passage of a minute from the channel to the surface—from such retreats as rocks and tangles afford them, to the upper layer, if I may so express it, of waters; in whatever way this point of controversy remains to be settled, there is no doubt that we have the most frequent opportunities, during the warm months, of acquainting ourselves with several of their marine habits, and among others, though perhaps in a somewhat limited degree, their manner of feeding.

It is at the season alluded to, that our friths and estuaries, nay, our whole range of coast waters, display, plunging and disporting themselves on the surface, immense numbers of the smaller species of *salmonidæ*, such as the sea-trout, whitling, etc., enlivening the spectacle occasionally by the appearance of some large *salar*, whose noble form glancing for a single instant above the blue abyss, attracts and rivets the eye of the beholder. Most curious and engaging is a scene of this description, on a calm, cloudless eve, when the sea-tide is flowing and almost at its full, murmuring plaintively at one's feet, and presenting in front, a billowless

extent of waters, tinged in some places, by the retiring sunlight, in others, and in the distance, grey and indistinct, scarcely to be recognised among the hanging mists of the horizon itself. Such an eve was that of the 10th day of June, 1836; such was the appearance presented on it, along the coasts of the Moray Frith, as I sauntered down to the beach, rod in hand, under the expectation of alluring one or more of the numerous sea-trout which, as I had anticipated, were crowding in with the tide and animating the surface in every possible direction.

Having often before heard of the capture of these fish in salt water, by means of the artificial fly, under circumstances precisely similar to those described, I felt naturally anxious to accomplish the like feat with my own hands. On this occasion, however, I was not destined to be successful, and although managing now and then to heave my lure with sufficient lightness and dexterity immediately over the belling snouts of several prime fish which, more adventurous than the main shoal, had edged themselves shoreward, to within twelve yards of the margin, I found myself, nevertheless, wholly unable to divert the attention of any one of them from the object that seemed to have pre-engaged it. My success, in fact, was limited to the seizure of a few smolts or orange-fins, which, as I drew in my flies, close to the beach, invariably favoured me with attempts to get hold of them.

While engaged with fruitless endeavours to accomplish my object, the peculiar surface-kissing mode in which the sea-trout continued rising within cast, inciting me to persevere, I was approached by the tacksman's overseer and his assistants, who with a small boat carrying their nets, had sallied out, for the purpose of taking a haul or two before the tide commenced ebbing, when, as might be expected, the fish would retire back to a greater distance from the water's edge and beyond reach of danger. Although I generally take considerable interest in seeing a net shot, when the haul is likely to prove successful, on the present occasion, this interest was not a little heightened by a certain degree of curiosity, with respect to the cause of those belling and busy motions I had observed on the surface, and which, from their dissimilarity to the natural risings of sea-trout, when in salt water, I mentally attributed to the circumstance of their being on the feed;

although, as to the kind and character of the food itself, I abstained, at the moment, from forming any conjectures.

Upon this point, however, the first draught of the net afforded me ample satisfaction. It consisted of about thirty sea-trout of the white and grey kinds, averaging from a pound and a half to three pounds each. These, or a great number of them, immediately on being hauled to shore, disgorged from their maws individuals of the herring tribe, measuring about an inch and a half in length. In one or two cases, the trout seemed literally crammed with this sort of food. I took five or six specimens out of the mouth of a single fish. So far, for the first haul of the net or seine. The next, which was more judiciously effected, discovered no less than seventy or eighty sea-trout, among which lay enthralled a prime and beautiful salmon, sixteen pounds in weight. An examination of the mouth of this monster, for so it seemed, in comparison with those beside it, convinced me that it too had partaken of the feast. It was in the act of swallowing, or what was as likely, that of disgorging three entire fry or *soil*, the latter being a name commonly given to the young of the herring, in many parts of Scotland. Here there was no deception—no possibility of mistake: the fish in question had evidently mingled with the others of smaller species, for the purpose of feeding upon these infant coasters, and in order, moreover, to gratify this predatory instinct, had approached within a stone's throw of the beach, where, as I have just related, it was taken, to use a worn-out phrase, red-handed, or in the act.

With regard to what has subsequently fallen under my observation, confirming the notion here contended for, that salmon, during their marine state of existence, subsist largely upon small fishes and such sorts of food as are more adapted to the structure of their mouths and their powers of aggression than minute insects or ova, I think it unnecessary to enter into close detail, and shall only state, that, while residing at Nairn, I had several opportunities of witnessing proofs of the habits of these fish, while in salt water, similar to the one above enlarged upon. Most of these, however, I am forward to confess, related to the lesser species of the genus *salmo*, such as sea-trout and finnocks. The latter, for instance, I remember on more occasions than one, to have caught while angling near the

entrance of the river with their mouths and stomachs filled with small herrings, sprats, or sand-eels. They had come up on the tide, as was evident from the numbers and tenacity of the sea-lice that adhered to them, and in all likelihood, would have returned on it, to the salt water, had I not thus intercepted them, for as is well known with respect to the finnock of our northern rivers, it is not a fish which at any time roams far inland, neither is it one which ascends solely for the purpose of spawning, seeing that it frequently exhibits on its appearance in fresh water a remarkable backwardness, if not deficiency, in its generative dispositions. But of this I shall take notice at more length, when I come to treat of it separately, as one of the salmon species.

Meanwhile, in reference to the marine food of salmon, I may further, in confirmation of what I have myself observed, quote the opinions of well-known ichthyologists on the subject. Mr. Yarrell, in his "History of British Fishes," vol. ii., p. 17, observes—"That the salmon is a voracious feeder may be safely inferred from the degree of perfection in the arrangement of the teeth, and from its own habits, of which proof will be adduced, as well as from the well-known habits of the species more closely allied to it; yet of the many observers who have examined the stomach of the salmon, to ascertain the exact nature of that food which must constitute its principal support, few have been able to satisfy themselves."

He then goes on to quote the opinion of Dr. Knox, and observes in allusion to it—"That they occasionally take other food, is well known." Faber, in his "Natural History of the fishes of Ireland," remarks, "The common salmon feeds on small fishes and various small marine animals." Dr. Fleming says, "Their favourite food is the sand-eel," and I have myself taken the remains of sand-launce from the stomach. Sir. William Jardine says, "In the north of Sutherland, a mode of fishing for salmon is sometimes successfully practised, in the firths, where sand-eels are used as bait; a line is attached to a buoy or bladder and allowed to float with the tide up the narrow estuaries. The salmon are also said to be occasionally taken at the lines set for haddocks, baited with sand-eels."

I recollect seeing a fish 10 pounds in weight, of the *salar* species, which was taken in this way off the coast of

Cromarty, during the winter of 1836, the bait used being part of a garvie or small herring. At the mouths of rivers they rise freely at the artificial fly within fifty yards of the sea, and the common earth-worm is a deadly bait for the clear salmon. All other marine salmon are known to be very voracious, and there is nothing in the structure of the mouth or strong teeth of the common salmon to warrant us to suppose that there is any material difference in their food. In reference also to the sea-trout, Sir. W. Jardine, as quoted by Mr. Yarrell, adduces the following remarkable circumstance:—"When angled for in the estuaries with the ordinary flies which are used in the rivers of the south for grilse, these fish rose and took so eagerly that thirty-four were the produce of one rod engaged for about an hour and a half." Although personally I have never had the good hap to kill above one or two sea-trout with fly in salt water; of course, I do not include salmon fry or small finnocks, yet from the appearance which these fish present at certain seasons, on our coasts, I can readily give credence to the feat above related, whether performed by Sir. W. himself, or under his superintendence as an eye-witness. With regard to the common earth-worm as a bait for sea-trout, I have ample authority for stating that it is employed as such, with success, by the inhabitants of some of the Shetland islands, who in using it resort at full tide to the cliffs and rocks, remote, in many instances, from a discharge or breeding stream, and angle with line and float as one would do for perch and other fresh-water fish.

I have been told also by an excellent angler who has fished a good deal in Norway, that, on one of its numerous fiords, when the tide was ebbing at a prodigious rate, he on several occasions caught, with a salmon fly having its wings tied down over the bend of the hook, both sea-trout and grilses, the depth of water where they rose being upwards of a hundred fathoms. These fish were evidently near the surface, on the outlook for fry of some description.

CHAPTER X.

SEA-TROUT.

THE *Eriox* or Bull-Trout—Its Size and Strength—Abounds in the Tweed—Its Instincts and Voracity—Distinguished from the *Salar*—The Whitling—Error with Regard to it—The Finnock—Its Habits—Silver-white of Tweed—Herlings and Bills—Bull-Trout of Tarras—Norway Salmon—Increase of the *Eriox* in Tweed.

UNDER the general term sea-trout, are included the *salmo eriox*, or bull-trout; the *salmo trutta*, or salmon trout; and the *salmo albus*, a designation given by Dr. Fleming to the Finnock or Herling. The *salmo eriox*, or bull-trout, is a fish well known to Tweed anglers. It attains occasionally a large size. I once saw an individual, taken out of the river Carron, in Ross-shire, which weighed upwards of twenty-four pounds. They have been caught in Tweed a stone weight, and I have frequently, when rod-fishing, killed them weighing eight pounds. They ascend in scanty numbers during the spring and summer seasons, but are then in excellent condition. On the whole, however, they are a coarse fish, when compared with the *salar*, or salmon proper. They want the same richness of taste; and the internal colour of the flesh is much fainter and less inviting. Still there is no fish that I know of which affords, on being hooked, such sport to the angler. In proportion to their size, they are much stronger and more wayward in their movements than the salmon, and test to a greater extent the sufficiency of the tackle. Although, as I have mentioned, comparatively scanty during the spring and summer seasons, they ascend the river, on the occurrence of a flood, in enormous quantities, at a later period of the year. Betwixt the middle of October, when the net-fishings close, and end of November, I have no doubt that, in ordinary seasons, fully a million of these fish enter Tweed, and push upward to the very sources of its tributaries and their feeders. I have seen them, weighing five or six pounds, taken by means of the leister, out of insignificant burns close to Mosspaul; I have known them to be captured, by the score, in the upper portions of the main river, of Lyne,

Manor, Gala, Yarrow, Ettrick, and Leader, sometimes in mere threads of water connected with these streams. They frequent the Ale, Kale, and Oxnam running into Teviot. They ascend the Till and Whitadder, wending their way around the bases of Cheviot and into the heart of the Lammermuirs.

During these journeys, which are undertaken for the purpose of spawning, the bull-trout, unlike the salmon, is not content to fast, as it proceeds. It is evidently a fish of great voracity, but endowed with strong instincts and perceptions. In the very heat of its progress, it may be enticed readily to the hook, by means of salmon roe employed as a bait, especially on a cold day and when the water is large and discoloured. Its sense of smell, in common with that of the river-trout and whitling, is so delicate as to occasion the detection of the above-mentioned bait, at the distance of many yards, and in a favourable state of water, it will seldom refuse it. I have known of as many as twenty fish of this description, weighing on the average three pounds a-piece, having been taken, by means of a single rod, and in the course of a few hours, from Tweed, all of which were on the run upwards, as, on occasions of this sort, is indicated by their coming to the surface every now and then. At the period referred to, although frequently they exhibit an attractive appearance externally, the bull-trout, with few exceptions, are very inferior as food, and contain large quantities of roe. The kipper fish, however, being in a more backward state of maturity, are sometimes presentable enough.

The bull-trout is distinguished from the salmon by the number of maculæ on its gill cover; the salmon or grilse seldom exhibiting above one or two spots on that part of the head. It is also more plentifully strewn with spots on the back, shoulders, and upper portion of the flank; the teeth are long and strongly formed, the tail square and expansive, and the scales, which are much smaller in proportion than those of the salar, adhere tenaciously to the skin.

Mr. Yarrell says, that during its second year, it is termed a whitling in the Tweed. By many fishermen it certainly is so, but quite erroneously. What I have always regarded as a whitling, and what others in common with myself hold as such, differs in many respects from the bull-trout. It

agrees, in fact, more with Mr. Yarrell's description of the *salmo trutta*. Its tail is forked, its mouth tender and armed with small teeth; the spots on the gill cover are silvered over, or but faintly marked in comparison with those of the *eriox;* the ones on the back, shoulders, and upper portion of the flank are few, and occupy a lighter ground, while the scales, in proportion, are much larger, and less tenacious. Besides, a great number of these fish, which weigh, generally speaking, from a pound to three pounds, ascend Tweed in June and July,—the run of bull-trouts during the above months being comparatively scant. Quantities also make their appearance after the removal of the nets, and I have frequently captured, by means of the salmon roe, whitlings and bull-trout, on the same occasion, the former equalling the latter in point of size. There is another distinguishing peculiarity in the whitling, namely, that its flesh is much redder and better flavoured than that of the *eriox*. It occasionally also, like the latter fish, attains large dimensions, without losing any of its characteristic features, except, as in the case of the grilse on becoming a salmon, the tail acquires more squareness, its central rays lengthening as the fish advances in age.

The finnock or herling is included by Dr. Fleming among the different species of sea-trout, under the designation of the *salmo albus*. I have been fortunate enough to have had an opportunity of capturing this fish, or one answering in some degree to its description in various rivers in different parts of Scotland. I have taken it in Ross-shire, in the Conan and the Carron; the one discharging its waters into the Cromarty Firth, near Dingwall, on the east coast; the other into Loch Carron above Jean-town, on the west coast. I have caught it over and over again, in the Nairn, the Ness, as well as in the Findhorn. I have also angled for it successfully in the Lochie, and other streams in the Western Highlands, and I have taken it under another denomination, from Tweed, and the Esk above Langholm; in which two last-mentioned rivers, it is severally designated the silver-white, and the herling, whiten, or bill, a bill being the term applied to it when in breeding condition.

That the finnock of the north of Scotland is the same fish, at an earlier stage of existence, as the whitling or *salmo trutta*, there can be little question. Every feature in its

external appearance assists to prove this, and I am quite satisfied, from what I observed some years ago while residing on the Moray Firth, that such is the case. The habits of the finnock on the Nairn water, near which I lived, disclosed to me, however, one peculiarity which distinguishes it in some measure from the herling or bill of the Dumfries-shire rivers, not certainly from the silver-white of Tweed, which, in the point I allude to, greatly resembles it. It was this, that a large proportion of these fish entered the river and remained there for weeks without spawning, or even discovering any tendency or fitness to do so. I have caught several of them in good edible condition, as early as the first of February, at a period when the river swarmed with kelts of all descriptions, and continued to take them throughout that month, as well as March and April. They had entered the fresh water, many of them, I have reason to conclude, the previous autumn, and seeing they had done so not as breeding fish, had retained, in a large measure, their condition and edible properties. I may mention, however, that I seldom caught them in this state above three miles from the river's mouth, so that it is possible enough, during the months I refer to, they had ascended direct from the salt water, or kept moving to and fro, betwixt it and the river, as tides and floods assisted them. This however, is mere conjecture, for I am rather inclined to think they had located themselves in the Nairn, during the previous season, preferring it as a harbour of shelter in winter, to the furious billows of the German Ocean.

The silver-white of Tweed also, which is closely assimilated in external appearance to the finnock, I have captured in good condition during the spring season and when the river abounded in kelts. The silver-white is by no means an abundant fish in Tweed, in comparison at least to the finnock in our northern waters. They are more numerous, however, some seasons than others. In 1846 this was particularly the case. They exceeded in numbers that year what I ever recollect them to have been, and I frequently, in the month of October, captured four or five in a forenoon. These were all in good condition, lively on the hook, red-fleshed and well-flavoured at table.

Early in November, in the same year, I had occasion to pay a visit to a friend in Dumfries-shire, who resided on the Esk, some miles above Langholm, and within a stone's

cast of the river. Wishing to test the attractive power of salmon roe in that stream, I sallied out one forenoon, rod in hand, to a spot called the Maiden Pool, and had the gratification, in the course of two or three hours, to capture several skellies or chub, one of great size, above two dozen fresh-water trout, and seven or eight bills or foul herlings. Next day, with the salmon-fly, I caught three more of these last-mentioned fish. Of all the bills taken by me not one weighed half-a-pound, and without a single exception, they were kelted females. Externally, a few of them were black and of loathsome appearance, but the generality, although lank, large-headed, and loose in the scale, retained their silvery coating. The question naturally occurring to me, on the capture of those fish was, are the bills or herlings of common species with the finnock or silver-white? Here they were, at the same period of the year, in very different condition from the latter. (What the finnock is, in this respect, at the season referred to, I never had a fair opportunity of ascertaining, the close-time on our northern rivers commencing on the 14th September, but judging from what I have related, as occurring early in spring, on the Nairn water, I draw the inference that many of this tribe retain their condition during winter). On examining them minutely, I descried two distinct varieties, one plentifully spotted on the back, shoulders, and flanks, like the bull-trout; the other, the true herling, having the maculæ thinly distributed, the scales silvery and easily separated from the skin, the head small and delicately formed.

The Esk, above Langholm, by no means excels as an angling stream. It contains few yellow trout, there termed *eldrins*, and these of small size, seldom weighing half-a-pound,—some scattered troops of skellies or chub, and is visited, moreover, by a scant and straggling supply of salmon, few of which, after wending their way upwards, are allowed time to affect a deposit of their spawn, but become slaughtered, without mercy, by the ruthless leisterer. In summer, before they commence their ascent, a few sea-trout answering the description of whitlings, and weighing from one to three pounds, push their way up and generally meet with the same fate as the autumnal fish. After them, in July and August, succeed the herlings, and lastly, the bills or bulls. These latter, as well as the herlings, were wont to be destroyed in great numbers

below Langholm, by means of the pout-nets. This destruction, however through the medium of the Earl of Minto's Act, was in 1846, put a stop to, and in consequence, the bills were more abundant than usual in the upper part of the river.

Although the bills, on a small scale, may be held to resemble them, the Esk contains no fish answering the description of the Tweed bull-trout, and I make no question, judging from this circumstance, that the far-famed bull-trout of Tarras, a tributary of the Esk, were merely bills, and when "ta'en in season," herlings or whitens, the latter being another local name for the same description of fish. This is certain, that Tarras, in the present day, is not resorted to by sea-trout of any magnitude, while its fresh-water breed lays claim to no manner of superiority. The *eriox* or bull-trout proper is not, however, a stranger in the Solway Firth. It ascends Annan, where it is called a round-tail by the fishermen. Mr. Yarrell mentions that it is to this species, "that the names of Norway trout and Norway salmon are believed to refer, as used occasionally in Tweed and some of the northern parts of Scotland." I recollect recognising the bull-trout, a few years ago, in Edinburgh, as forming the bulky part of an importation of what were termed kippered Norwegian salmon.

As some have conjectured the bull-trout to be a hybrid or breed betwixt the salmon and common river-trout (a supposition which the fact of its possessing the generative power in all its completeness sufficiently disposes of), I may mention that it is, comparatively speaking, a recent invader of our border river. The old fishermen affirm that, thirty years ago it was looked upon as a rare fish; this being the case, at a period when both salmon and river-trout were fully as abundant as at present, it requires no further proof in order to set aside the conjecture as far-fetched and irrational.

CHAPTER XI.

SALMON FLIES.

POWER of a Salmon to Distinguish the Colours of a Fly-Hook.—Its Caprice and Fanciful Tastes.—Irish Fly-Hooks.—Modern Refinement in Regard to Salmon Flies.—Lists of Approved Salmon Flies.—Adapting Them to Different Rivers.

I RECOLLECT, several years ago, meeting with a well-known landed proprietor in the north of Scotland, and the possessor on both sides of a noted salmon-river, who, being an angler in his own time and way, took it into his head to use no flies in salmon-fishing but such as were made up with materials of a white colour. This he did upon the advice, or in approval of the theory of a celebrated optician, who affirms that the position of the fish underneath, with regard to a fly traversing the surface, prevents it altogether from distinguishing the colour of the insect, its visual organs in this respect being acted upon by the superincumbent light of day, and so contracted in power as to be able merely to recognise the shape of its prey. That this theory is correct, I am very much inclined to doubt, and so I think would most anglers be, whether on Tweedside or elsewhere. Still, the individual alluded to, notwithstanding his whimsical assortment of flies, one and all, though varying in respect of magnitude, being composed of snow-white dubbing and hackles, silver twist, and portions of the pencilled wing feather taken from the silver pheasant, was no unsuccessful angler; and although occasionally competed with by one of the ablest craftsmen in the district, whose notions regarding the visual perceptions of fish were perfectly different, and who actually took pleasure in using flies of the opposite colour, managed generally to bear off the palm.

Now, independent altogether of the views taken by the gentleman in question, and of the reasons assigned by him for his capricious usage, I hold this fact to be worthy of some attention; the more especially, as certain deductions from it, which I shall immediately set forth, are fortified by other occurrences in the history of fly-fishing as singular,

and in some respects more inexplicable. These additional facts may be all clumped together in one statement; and as, individually, they are well known, I shall be at no pains to separate or particularise them. They consist of the proofs daily recurring in the experience of salmon-fishers, with respect to a fanciful taste as regards flies, naturally possessed by the fish or inherent in it. A general instance of this develops itself in the well-known circumstance that salmon, in the lower parts of Tweed, are not now to be allured with any degree of readiness by means of the same colours and descriptions of flies as those successfully employed against them twenty or thirty years ago. At that not very distant period, they were wont to be taken only by a limited variety of hooks; on few occasions did the angler venture to experimentalise with any others; he repudiated, above all, those gaudy lures which are now found to be so killing, and looked with strange distrust upon any Irish innovation—concoctions of foreign feathers and highly-stained hackles. Nor, as some of this passing school continue to assert, were the fish themselves a whit less capricious, but shared to a tittle the prejudices and suspicions of the angler, refusing the rich yellow of the golden pheasant, the orange of the toucan, the cærulean of the blue lowrie, the green of the trogon, the crimson of the parroquet, and even those magical fibres which gleam on the much-prized tail-feather of the blue and buff macaw.

Salmon were then, like our sage and grey-haired forefathers, of sober tastes and simple habits—content with fare of the homeliest description, and scornful of new-fangled delicacies, gilded tit-bits, and savoury provocatives. They esteemed the speckled feather or white tip of some strutting turkey, the dun plume of the gledd or buzzard, select filchings from the maldrake, teal, or widgeon, along with twitches of home-dyed wool, rough barn-fowl hackles, and the threads of an old service-worn epaulette, better than the combined luxuries of Mexico, the Indies, and New Holland.

Thou silver-headed angler! canst tell of these better and less degenerate days? Thy feats are all registered within thee, and that lack-lustre eye regains its olden fire when, with hand outstretched, thou recountest the capture of some goodly fish, the sojourner once of yonder pool whose

runs and careerings are to-day as deeply traced on thy memory as if the sward that bears thee were still red and moistened with its blood. Answer me,—where in thy day was the doctor? where the parson? where the butcher? where the Childers? where, in short, all those prismatic rarities that stock so amply the tin and vellum of a modern salmon-fisher? You possessed them not. It was neither your wish nor your interest to employ them. They were harmful to the salmon in so far only as they alarmed and annoyed it; and if now and then, in the hands of a stranger, they should chance to draw blood, a dolt of a kelt was at best the only victim.

I am only, reader, stating a well-known fact, when I affirm that in the time I allude to, the salmon-fishers on Tweedside not only held what is called the Irish fly in absolute ridicule, but actually forbade the use of it on those portions of the river they individually rented; and this they did, not because they deemed it too deadly for everyday use, but solely because they conceived it acted as a kind of bug-bear to the fish, scaring them from their accustomed haunts and resting spots. And, indeed, it is only gradually that in the lower part of the district I allude to, a complete change has been effected in the matter of flies. Not absolutely discarding the old standard and local lures, modern anglers have introduced into their stock at least a thousand and one other varieties, all dignified with the name of killers, yet no single fly-hook resembling any known insect, bird, or other animal. For every season and month, for all hours of the day, for all changes of weather, for waters low, flooded, or in mid state, sunned or clouded, deep or shallow, streamy, wind-ruffled or still, icy-cold or at blood-heat, black or clear, leaf-strewn or otherwise, they have a peculiar and favourite lure; nay, were it possible, by some adaptation of phosphorus, to cause hooks to reveal their trimming in the dark, no doubt a nocturnal assortment would become added, possessed as became it, of all the powers of diablerie and witchcraft.

I go back to ask, what are the deductions to be drawn from all I have instanced? Was the bygone school of salmon-fishers a humbug? Is the modern one less so? Can the disciples of either unfold anything which was not as well known in the days of Agricola, as it is now? Seriously speaking, are the tastes and habits of the salmon,

as some assert, of a revolving nature? Is the fish too, so capricious, that a single fibre wanting in the lure, a misplaced wing, a wrongly assorted hue, will discompose and annoy it? Such questions I leave to be answered by wiser anglers than myself. They search too deeply into the philosophy of the art to obtain their reply from one so imperfectly versed in it, nor does it render the task less arduous were I to comprehend them all under the single query—can the principle upon which salmon in certain waters accommodate themselves to certain colours in the fly be regulated or explained?

From this dark, insoluble, and thoroughly speculative subject, it is high time to retire. My apology for introducing it at all rests on the desire I have to discover to those who make of it a matter of argument, the absurdities they are liable to run into. There is, I cannot help thinking, a great deal of prejudice, self-conceit, and humbng exhibited by salmon-fishers generally with respect to their flies—a monstrous mass of nonsense hoarded up by the best of them, and opinions held quite at variance with reason and common-sense. I will not go so far as to assert, in relation to salmon-flies, that it would be expedient greatly to reduce their number or establish, as I have recommended to be done in regard to trouting-hooks, any limit to their variety. An innovation of this sort, if proposed, would, I well know, be treated with ridicule. Still, I have reason to believe that the salmon is not quite so finical a fish as many anglers represent it to be—that the fastidiousness is more on their part, and that, through carrying it on occasions to an extreme length, they frequently accomplish the very thing they are desirous of avoiding, that is, they alarm instead of alluring the fish. This is exemplified very often on the raising of a grilse or salmon with a particular fly. A great many anglers with whom I am acquainted make it a practice never immediately to cast over the same fish, with the same hook, but having started and missed their game, at once to substitute another size and description of fly. Now this I hold is all well enough, when a second offer of the lure, due time being granted, has been made and refused; but to present to the eye of the fish, after a few moments occupied in making the change, a hook of different, perhaps opposite colours, must now and then inevitably excite suspicion. As far as my own experience has led me

to judge, I generally find that a grilse or salmon, if inclined to rise a second time, is as ready to do so at the fly first offered it, as at any other; nay, I have even, on more occasions than one, raised the same fish, before hooking, four or five times in rapid succession with the same identical lure. Of course, my doing so was more a matter of chance than good guidance, and I should not, on general occasions, were I fishing carefully, have encountered the risk my perseverance was likely to incur of disheartening, if not disgusting the salmon.

I am of this opinion, however, talking more generally on the subject, that if one only knows how to adapt the size of his hook to the state of the water and season, and is acquainted with two, or at most three approved-of local flies, he will find it not only quite unnecessary but positively disadvantageous to experiment upon the tastes and fancies of the fish with others of a doubtful and untried nature. The only occasions on which he has an excuse for doing this are when the pools have been well thrashed over before him by resident anglers; nay, even then, he will find it expedient in selecting a hook, not to deviate very largely from the discovered likings or prejudices of the salmon frequenting this or that locality. He never, acting otherwise, can fish with any proper measure of confidence, and that very fact only renders his experiment the more precarious.

I shall now proceed, without further remark, to draw out lists of the most approved Scottish salmon flies, adapting them severally to their appropriate rivers. I shall also introduce into the proposed classification a limited number of Irish fly-hooks, such as gradually, of late years, have been adopted by our fishermen, and become of common use throughout Scotland.

TWEED FLIES.—SPRING SIZES.

	Wings.	Bodies.	Shoulders.	Tail-tufts.	Sizes of Hooks.		General Remarks.
					Adlington.—From No. 15 to 20.	Philips.—From 4 to 6.	
1.	White wing; pure white feather taken from swan or white turkey, six or seven slips are sufficient for each wing.	Dark-blue or black pigs wool in the upper part, succeeded by claret-coloured ditto; hackle dark, edged with brown, in the upper part, crimson hackle further down, silver tinsel.	Light-blue hackle intermixed with mohair of the same colour.	Light yellow.			In the spring sizes of salmon hooks, lace and tinsel are preferable to gold and silver twist or thread.
2.	Snipe-wing; small ribbed feather taken from under the wing of the snipe. Another variety from the pencilled feather of the silver cock pheasant.	Same as No. I.	The same, or scarlet hackle and wool.	Ditto, or crimson.			
3.	White-top; formed from the rump or tail feather of turkey.	Dark-mohair, claret-coloured, and blue or red near the tail-tuft, black hackle, silver tinsel.	Light-blue or crimson to correspond with the lower extremity of the body.	Yellow or orange.			The name given to this fly and the following one will discover the required feather used for the wing.
4.	Double-white top; a variety of the same from the rump of the turkey.	Black-mohair in the upper part, relieved below by light blue and yellow ditto; black and fine yellow hackles in succession, silver and gold tinsel.	Fine orange hackle.	Crimson and yellow tuft in juxtaposition, not mixed.			A favourite wing in cold weather.
5.	Dun-wing; taken from the salmon-tailed gledd or huzzard; also from turkey, Egyptain goose, and mountain pheasant, etc.	Dark-mohair, relieved below by red or deep orange ditto. Black hackle with orange one succeeding it, silver or gold tinsel.	Light-blue hackle or crimson ditto.	Deep yellow, or orange, or crimson to correspond with shoulder.			The dun white-top esteemed preferable as a wing to the thorough dun. This can be obtained in perfection from the turkey only.
6.	Mottled turkey or silver pheasant hen tail. I prefer the white mottle to that having a brownish tinge.	Black or dark-blue mohair in the upper part, wound over with dark fibred hackle, yellow below with orange hackle, silver tinsel.	Orange mohair or hackle.	Deep yellow.			
7.	Drake-wing; white mottled feather taken from the breast of the mallard or of the tame drake.	Black wool or mohair body, orange dubbing above tuft, or hackle of the same colour. Black hackle, silver tinsel.	Black hackle, or orange ditto.	Orange or yellow.			
8.	Brown-mallard; brown-mottled ditto taken from the back of the bird. This is more finely marked in the tame drake.	Orange-coloured mohair or pigs wool, fine brown hackle, gold tinsel.	Dark-blue hackle.	Yellow.			A favourite fly when the river is clear.

TWEED FLIES.—SMALLER SIZES.

	Wings.	Bodies.	Shoulders.	Tail-Tufts.	Observations.
1.	Drake-wing: mottled feather from breast of mallard or teal.	Dark-coloured mohair, blue, purple, or black in the upper part, twitch of orange ditto below; black hackle, silver tinsel or twist.	Twitch of orange or crimson, occasionally introduced under the wing.	Yellow or orange, formed of small feather from breast of parroquet, also, floss silk or worsted form a desirable tail-tuft.	In the smaller sizes, the large fibres of the hackle sufficiently in most cases shoulder the fly. A head formed of ostrich herl gives the hook a finished appearance. Two or three wrappings are sufficient.
2.	White-top: from wing feather of mallard, or rump of turkey.	Black mohair touched off near the extremity with a twitch of blue ditto. Black hackle, silver twist or tinsel.	Blue or crimson do.	Fine crimson or orange feather of the above description.	
3.	Double white-top: from rump feather of turkey.	Same as above; both may be varied by substituting yellow or orange for the light blue near the extremity.	Ditto.	Ditto.	
4.	Dun-wing: from dun turkey feather. Dun white-top preferred.	Dark-coloured mohair, touched off with blue and orange ditto, or olive-coloured throughout; fine brown hackle, with dark interior, gold tinsel.	Ditto.	A few fibres of golden pheasant tippet feather or small crest feather from ditto.	
5.	Mallard-wing: taken from the brown mottled feather on the back of the mallard.	Dark-blue, green, or orange mohair; black or brown hackle, gold tinsel or silver.	Light-blue hackle sometimes wound in.	Yellow.	The mottled wing used on Tweed and its tributaries is most effective when the river is small and clear, whereas in the north of Scotland, where it is at all times a favourite, a dark-coloured state of water is no hindrance to its success.
6.	Mottled-wing: from the tail of the silver pheasant, hen bird, also from mottled turkey feather.	Dark-blue mohair touched off with orange, fine dark-brown hackle.		Same as No. 4. The crest feather used as a tail-tuft is unquestionably enticing.	
7.	Guinea-fowl wing: taken from finely marked feather of guinea-fowl.	Light-blue mohair, touched off with orange ditto below; silver tinsel, dark hackle.		Yellow.	I may observe that the summer-sizes are most of them adaptations of the spring-sizes of salmon-hooks employed on Tweed. They differ chiefly in point of finish, and require more choice material.
8.	Pencilled feather of silver pheasant.	Black or dark blue: black hackle, silver tinsel.		Yellow or golden pheasant crest feather.	

SALMON FLIES FOR THE AWE AND URCHAY RIVERS.—MR. LASCELLES' FLIES.

		Wings.	Bodies.	Shouldering.	Tip.	Observations.
Flies for River Awe.	1.	Mottled black and white tail feather from turkey.	Olive-coloured mohair, ribbed with gold twist, black hackle.	Black hackle wrapt close under wing.	Orange wool and small projection of turkey feather.	
	2.	Speckled brown feather from mallard.	Blue mohair, ribbed with silver twist. Blue hackle.	Blue hackle.	Golden pheasant crest feather.	
The Black Dragon.	3.	Taken from feather of raven.	Black mohair, black hackle.		Ditto.	In clear, bright waters this fly is reckoned very deadly. It was first used by Colonel Robertson, a successful salmon-fisher on the Awe and west-coast rivers.
Flies for the Urchay.		Mottled black and white tail feather from turkey.	Dark-blue mohair, touched off with twitch of orange ditto, two turns of light-blue floss and ostrich herl. Black hackle, gold tinsel.	Claret-coloured hackle above twitch of mohair of the the same colour.	Golden pheasant crest feather, ostrich herl.	
The Tartan	1.	Dark-speckled brown of turkey tail mixed with 12 herls of peacock tail.	A mixture of every imaginable colour, forked with dark fibres of mallard feather, blood-red hackle, gold twist.	Copper-coloured mohair.	Forks of dark fibre of Mallard feather.	The body of this fly is made with each colour separate, beginning with bright yellow and ending with black.
The Black Dog.	2.	Wings of blue heron feather mixed with red turkey.	Lead-coloured mohair, ribbed with gold lace, large black hackle.	Dark-green mohair.		Divide the wings with gold-twist and make it appear about the head.
	3.	Reddish-brown speckled feather from turkey tail.	Bright-brown hair or fur of bear, mixed with gold coloured mohair, black hackle, gold ribs.	Deep-red hackle over red mohair.		
	4.	Mottled grey of turkey's tail.	Copper-coloured peacock herl, green plover's topping, ribbed with silver, dark grizzled hackle. Dress with dark red silk.		Two long fibres of pheasant's tail feather.	

SALMON FLIES FOR VARIOUS RIVERS.

		Body.	Wing.	Shoulders.	Tail-Tuft.	Observations.
Spey Flies.	1.	Black and brown, mohair, or pig's wool mixed; hackle taken from pendant breast feathers of male heron, broad gold or silver lace, lapped on widely.	Brown mottled feather taken from the back of the mallard.		Yellow or orange.	A soft, long fibred hackle or side feather from barn-fowl cock or hen is sometimes employed instead of heron hackle. A thread of blue silk also, is frequently introduced, wound on next the lace. I may mention that until recently, this, or one similar to it, was held as the only true Spey hook. But the fishers in that quarter have, of late years, greatly augmented their stock, discovering that others of a very different fabric are quite as killing. Indeed, many of those I have introduced into these lists, as favourite lures on Tweed, will be found equally so on most of our Northern rivers.
Ditto.	2.	Black mohair; black hackle, silver tinsel.	A pair of crest feathers taken from golden pheasant.		Yellow.	
Nith fly.		Light brown wool; peacock herl; red hackle, with dark root and edge; tarnished gold twist.	Red turkey with yellow or white tip; under wings of grey turkey, teal, or pea-hen.	Dark brown or black wool.	Yellow.	
Tay fly.		Dark mohair, heron hackle, silver tinsel.	Mottled turkey feather, either brown or white.	A twitch of yellow or orange mohair.	Ditto.	
Dee fly.		The same as the above.	Ditto.	Ditto.	Ditto.	Wingless hooks, like Palmer's on a large scale, are, I understand, sometimes used on the Dee and Don, by salmon-fishers.
Fail-me-never.		Black mohair, black hackle, silver twist.	Mottled feather from tail of Argus phessant.	A twitch of orange mohair.	Yellow.	
Forth and Teith fly.		Ditto, ditto.	Yellow feather tipped with white.		Yellow.	
Ness and Beauley.		Dark, with silver tinsel.	Turkey, peacock, gledd, or mallard feather.			Wings made of peacock herls, considered taking in Beauley in snow water.

SALMON FLIES. IRISH STYLE AND PATTERN.

	Wing.	Body.	Shoulders.	Tail.	Observations.
The Parson.	A bright yellow hook, wings formed of golden pheasant crests, with slips from the blue and bluff macaw.	Yellow floss silk, gold twist.		Golden pheasant crest feather below ostrich herl.	Most of these flies are favourites on the rivers Ness, Beauley, and Shin.
The Doctor	Mixed wing. Mixtures are generally composed of gold pheasant tippet, ditto tail feather, bustard, brown mallard, capercailzie, etc., etc., along with macaw slips, which latter are reckoned indispensable.	Blue floss silk, silver twist.	Blue feather from wing of jay used as a hackle; the cœrulean of the blue lowrie is still more esteemed.	Ditto.	
The Childers.	Mixtures. A pair of golden pheasant crests are also introduced into the wing and the macaw slips as usual.	Yellow body, resolving into orange in the upper part, made roughish, gold thread.	Ptarmigan feather used as hackle under the wing.	Ditto.	So called after Colonel Childers, a celebrated sportsman and frequenter of Tweedside.
The Butcher.	Mixtures—golden pheasant the most prevalent; macaw slips.	Blue and red floss, silver twist.	Black hackle.	Ditto.	
Dundas fly.	Mixed wing, slips.	Greenish yellow body	Golden plover feather used as backle.	Ditto.	Designated after John Dundas, Esq., of Edinburgh, a well-known and successful angler.
The General.	Composed of golden pheasant crests as in the parson.	Blue floss silk.		Ditto.	
Lascelle's Golden fly.	Mixtures. Golden pheasant, common ditto, parrot, peacock's herl, mottled turkey, along with two blue jay feathers placed on each side.	Green silk, ribbed with gold, red hackle or saddle feather.	Green mohair.		Silver fly for the same, only ribbed with silver and a dun hackle used for legs.

CHAPTER XII.

ON SALMON-FISHING WITH THE FLY.

INTRODUCTORY Sketch.—Salmon-Fishing Considered as a Manly Sport.—Its Practice.—Salmon Rivers.—Casts and Resorts of the Fish.—Attractive Nature of Certain Rocks and Places of Shelter.—On the Practice of Leistering Salmon.—Advice to the Angler.—Throwing the Line.—Working the Line.—Depth and Distance to which Salmon will come to the Lure.—Rule to be Observed on Raising a Fish.—Change of Fly.—Management of a Hook and Fish.—Landing, Gaffing, etc.

"EVERY man to his taste." For my own part, I would sooner hook, play, and capture a clean run April fish of sixteen pounds weight than follow the best fox ever tally-hoed out of cover, under guidance of old Williamson—aye! or stalk the noblest pair of antlers reared in Glen Tilt or Tor Achility. And yet, I can understand, and in some degree appreciate the enthusiasm of the fox-hunter; I can share the delight afforded by a good meet in mild, open weather—the assemblage of well-appointed red coats and stalwart yeomen in front of some old baronial residence—hounds and horses, the huntsman and the whippers-in, all mixed up with the landscape—life and joy depicted on every countenance—greetings and introductions passing—jests and sporting phrases on the wing: I can enjoy, in fancy, the ride to covert—the speedy finding of the fox—the view halloo—the gallant burst—the baying of the dogs—the run, spirited and brilliant, with its checks and hazards, its hundred incidents; and the death too of wicked old Reynard, remote in some sheltered nook, I can enjoy even it. The height of mawkish affectation it would be to do otherwise. What although he has thrown out the whole pack of his pursuers, save a half-dozen or so of staunch old dogs, and thinned the field to a trio of red coats, including the huntsman, he is but "varmint" after all, a sly, sneaking thief, the despoiler of hen-houses, and devastator of pheasantries. Who pities him? who grudges these panting hounds their mouthful of spite, or would rob the gallant rider of his well-earned tooth and brush?

Deer-stalking too has its delights and inducements. A manly and noble sport it is—nobler far and more kindred to noble minds than fox-hunting. Well can I appreciate

the enthusiasm of the keen-eyed hunter, when on a September morn before sunburst, he sallies forth, rifle in hand, attended by a single gillie similarly armed, and holding in leash a powerful staghound. They have threaded the valley far up to its remotest extremity, and are now ascending the mountain side. Above them, in long wreaths, the mist is still hanging. It fills the ravines and torrent courses, creeping sluggishly through them, like a thing of life and feeling. For an interval, we lose sight of the deer-stalkers. They are deep in the heart of the cloud, but lo! like the curtain in a theatre, up it furls, and again are they descried on the highest shoulder of the mountain. The sun is now out, bright and cloudless. Onward they move—still onward. It is an expanse of heath that stretches before them knolled here and there, and at length terminated by a tarn or mountain loch, from the far margin of which rises abruptly a scaur or precipitous ascent, formed partly of crags and partly of loose stones. But the moor is yet to be traversed—three weary miles at least. Twice, unsuccessfully, has the prospect-glass been applied to the eye of the attendant—but now the halt is long, the survey steady and minute. Something is discerned. The glass exchanges hands. Heads are shaken, fingers pointed, the eye brightens up. Far off, in the extreme of the landscape, is a speck—little more than a speck. It bears to the naked vision the colour of the moss; seen through the artificial medium, it resembles an animal—a jackass. But no! the antlers (they are just discernible) proclaim it to be what it really is—a hart magnificent. And see, not far from it, lie couched a couple of hinds. High beat the hearts of the deer-stalkers and quickly is their council of war concluded. Off they move, not forward in direct line towards the object of their anxiety, but describing, as it were, part of a circle, so as to meet or face the wind, and at the same time keep under cover of one of the knolls or small hillocks already alluded to.

At length, after much strategy, by crouching and creeping on all fours, they gain the desired point of concealment. A natural excavation or hollow it is in the moor ground, half-filled with black mossy water, and lying about two hundred yards in front of the deer. But see, their quarry is browsing towards them. In a short time, it will approach the mark. Unconscious of danger, it moves along, invited

by every successive tuft of herbage to its fate. Three-fourths nearly of the intervening distance have been passed over, and now suddenly the animal halts, and lifting its stately head snuffs the perilous air. Too late! The murderous barrel is on the discharge. The bullet is winging its way onwards with lightning speed and unerring accuracy. It has reached the heart of the antlered monarch. A death-bound—a stagger, and all is over. The warm blood gushes from the fatal orifice. The blade of the hunter is at the throat of his victim.

I have not introduced into this cursory sketch the unleashing of the staghound, its angry impatience, its fleet, unconquerable pace; nor have I thrown in the figure of its cruelly-wounded chase, unable longer to hold ahead, yet in despair and fury showing front to its savage assailant. I have not described the crouching and spring of the dauntless hound, the defiant, menacing posture of the deer at bay, with its fruitless attempts to ward off the fatal grasp; all this—the piteous wind-up of a more prolonged tragedy—can scarcely with truth be included among the delights of deer-stalking, or if ever esteemed so, it is only by the steeled and semi-barbarous mind—by one of matador breed, not by the sterling, generous-hearted sportsman.

Allowing to these recreations—fox-hunting and deer-stalking—all they lay claim to as interesting, manly, and exciting pastimes, I cannot help preferring to either of them—indeed, to any of our national amusements whatsoever—the noble sport of salmon-fishing. The others, it is true, have their moments and intervals of extreme, it may be thrilling, pleasure: even their blanks and disasters scarcely, on some occasions, deserve the name of disappointments or calamities. But there is wanting that indescribable something which gives its zest to the other, rendering its pursuit throughout more equably pleasurable, and yet offering no hindrance to higher and intenser occasions of enjoyment, created, for instance, by the play and capture of some vigorous and magnificent fish.

When I speak, however, of salmon-fishing, I renounce all allusion to it as practised under that name by the aristocratic frequenters of certain portions of Tweed. To those who live at a distance from this river, the feats recorded and vaunted of, from time to time, by these noble piscatores, may appear, as displays of skill and craft, highly

creditable to the parties engaged. To the spectators of them, they are, in many instances, next thing to farcical—quite undeserving the name and character of feats of sport, and, in reality, no more the achievements of those professing to execute them, than Punch and Judy is the veritable, unassisted performance of a set of wooden puppets.

Let me describe the mode of rod-fishing for salmon in the parts of Tweed I allude to. A stretch of water, a mile or two in length, and comprehending in some instances both, but in more only one side of the river, is rented by a fisherman. For this he pays yearly a sum of money, varying from fifteen to seventy pounds. He has the liberty of using and constructing cairns, or artificial projections, formed generally of stones, stakes, and turf, to which, during small spates or floods, when salmon are on the run, nets of a particular size and shape can be attached. He may also, in some localities adapted for its use, employ the long or seine-net; but besides these advantages, he is empowered, generally speaking, to hire out boats for the purpose of rod-angling. It is from the hire of these, chiefly, that he derives his livelihood; and really, to those who have a good tack, and are of frugal habits, it is no unprofitable business. The angling mania of late years has arrived at such a height, that salmon-fishing may truly be considered a princely amusement, to be obtained only by gold and interest, and ranked on the same footing with deer-stalking itself. It is very true that the rate of charge for a day's amusement is not what some would consider absolutely exorbitant, being fixed by the fisherman at ten shillings, for which sum the boat is provided and managed—it being understood, however, that all fish caught are delivered up to the tacksman, or taken off his hands at market price; but then, in order to obtain, even on these terms, the boon in question, is a matter of some difficulty, requiring, in many instances, the permission of the proprietor as well as that of the lessee of the salmon-fishing; and, at all times, made a subject of rivalry and disappointment. In fact, to prevent, or rather alleviate the latter feeling, it is necessary, owing to the press of applicants, often to engage the water many weeks before one designs fishing it; and, for this purpose, the fisherman keeps a book of entry, which is frequently, as respects certain months, filled up before the season itself has actually commenced. Of course, in this registry the name of the same individual,

if a resident at hand, or a regular frequenter of Tweedside, may occur statedly, as contracting for a number of days throughout the season; for instance, it is a common thing, on application to the tacksman, to find that his Monday's boat on the upper water is engaged by General So-and-so; on the lower streams by the Duke of ——. On Tuesday, Colonel —— and Lord —— fish; on Wednesday, Major —— and the Honourable Mr. ——; the latter days of the week being generally less run upon and monopolised.

But I come to the description of the sport itself, so termed, although in my opinion but partially entitled to that designation, as far, at least, as regards the possession of skill and judgment on the part of the angler, and also, in respect to the kind of salmon forming the majority of those killed, and which, in the spring season, consist, with comparatively few exceptions, of kelts and baggits. These, although they sometimes run long and sullenly, are very far from having the activity of clean-run salmon; moreover, they are totally unfit, after being captured, for human use, retaining neither the internal curdiness nor rich taste of properly conditioned fish. As exercising, moreover, the ingenuity of the sportsman, they are quite at fault, possessing a voracity that, on occasions of great success, induces disgust and satiety rather than satisfaction or triumph.

For my own part, I would rather capture in spring a single newly-run salmon than a whole boat-load of kelts, Yet these, and no others are the fish frequently boasted of, as affording under the name of salmon, amusement to some brainless scion of nobility—some adept by purchase, not skill, in the art of angling. For, let me ask, what all the science displayed by this sort of salmon-slayer consists of? Is he versed in the mysteries of rod and tackle, taught by experience what fly to select, when, where, or how to fish? Is this amount of knowledge at all necessary? Nothing of the kind. The performer has no will or say in the matter. In every act, in the choice of his fly and casting-line, in the position and management of the boat, he is under control of the tacksman. By *him* he is directed where to heave his hook, and, if a novice, how. Nothing is left to his own fancy or discretion. He has forfeited all freedom of action. Nay, more, he is fettered with the presence of his griping taskmaster. Enough it is that he pays, and that handsomely, for the sport, so termed, of hauling within reach of

the gaff-hook a miserable kelt or two, which, when secured, he sees no more of, and is unable, unless by purchasing it, to exhibit to his friends as a trophy of his prowess—enough methinks, this measure of endurance, without adding to it the annoyance in question.

Angling and butchering fish I consider as two totally different occupations. The true angler I would describe to be one who follows the art as a science, who cultivates it, not by usurping the experience of others, not by becoming the mere slave to precept, but by fond and zealous assiduity in the practice of its various departments, by carefully studying the habits of the fish he wishes to capture—their food and feeding hour—their customary and occasional haunts—the effects of different states of weather or sizes and colours of waters upon their tastes—together with a hundred other matters essential to be known, before he can venture to claim for himself the reputation of an adept in the craft. I do not say he is to refuse the instructions of others; far from it. These he should receive and treasure up with due gratitude; but let him do so only after they have been weighed and examined,—when the occasion and benefit of them are ascertained and understood.

That salmon-fishing, as practised from the boat on Tweed, is upon the whole a very agreeable recreation, affording exercise and some measure of joyous excitement to the person engaged in it, I do not mean to deny; but it is not, to my mind, nearly so pleasurable or satisfactory a sport as when pursued on foot. Give me a stream which I can readily command, either from the bank or by means of wading—a dark, hill-fed water, like the Lochie or the Findhorn, full of breaks, runs, pools, and gorges—give me the waving birch-wood, the cliff and ivied scaur, tenanted by keen-eyed kestril or wary falcon—more than this, give me solitude, or the companionship, not less relishable, of some ardent and kindred spirit, the sharer of my thoughts and felicity—give me, in such a place, and along with such an onlooker, the real sport of salmon-fishing—the rush of some veteran water-monarch, or the gambol and caracol of a plump new-run grilse, and talk no more of that monotonous and spiritless semblance of the pastime, which is followed by the affluent, among the dubs and dams of our Border river. The two modes of angling, with their attendant circumstances of place and companionship, are not for a moment

to be compared. They, in fact, no more resemble each other than does the stroll of the sportsmen through a preserved park, under guidance of the keeper or his assistant, to whom every brood, covey, and form is as well known as are the denizens of the dog-kennel themselves. They differ as widely as does the straight-jacketed method of cramming a game-bag differ from the free march along moorland and hill-side, through heather and fern, over a domain well plenished but not wedged with birds, where you are at liberty to follow or keep in check your highly-trained setter, and, without taunt or ridicule, can miss with either or both barrels some prodigy of a blackcock, or a hare which in size and length of ear resembles some veritable donkey.

Having ventured these preliminary remarks, I shall now proceed to give shape and arrangement to such instructions and matters of knowledge, in relation to the subject of this chapter, as I think will prove of advantage to some of my readers. And first of all, as to the places or portions of a salmon-water frequented by the fish, and where, in the common phrase, they are most likely to take the hook. This is a question I have already, to some extent, treated of in my observations upon rivers, but it is one that lays claim, in the present chapter, to more ample notice.

In all rivers there are certain pools, and portions of pool or stream, to which salmon naturally resort, and, under ordinary circumstances, are inclined to favour the angler. Nor are these always to be discovered by the eye, even of the most experienced and able fisher on a water to which he is a perfect stranger. It is only through actually testing or having them pointed out to him by some resident angler that he can acquire an intimate knowledge with respect to the different casts; whereas, in the case of a purely trouting stream, his own practised eye is sufficient to direct him where to throw, and will detect at once, without fail, the likeliest feeding-grounds and places of resort.

As a general rule applicable to salmon-streams, the fish, on the subsiding of the flood or swell, which forces them either from the sea itself, or higher up the river, take refuge, in their healthy state, among rocks or large stones, both of which are to be found in marked abundance in all well-reputed salmon-rivers. It is not, however, every rock or large stone that the salmon will choose to frequent; nor

does the seeming convenience of this or that place of shelter always prove attractive to it. As in respect to its food, so in respect to its accommodation, the fish is royally fastidious, passing over, on occasions, what seems, in point of structure, to be adapted for its concealment and habits, and selecting instead what, to our fancy, is less in unison with them. Thus, for instance, in a long stretch of water, to all appearance the most inviting, being full of breaks and gorges, walled with rocks and teeming with places of retreat and security, have I failed, times without number, to stir a single fin; while at its neck, where the river widens up, and at which the only appearance of shelter is a dimly-discernible slab of stone, half-embedded among gravel, I scarcely ever heave a fly without doing execution. Nor do I state this circumstance as a solitary one, seeing I could point out in various rivers many such positions, taken up and held in retention by salmon, apparently out of sheer caprice, but no doubt from some reason which their natural instinct leads them to have respect to. What this reason is I shall not stay to inquire. It may stand connected with the accommodation or shelter, the feeding, the facility of removal in case of a sudden flood, the sensation of the fish, its state of pregnancy, or all or several of these matters combined; but be this as it may, to trace out the exact motives which direct salmon to particular spots in preference to others, apparently as advantageous, is a task not to be ventured upon with materials purely speculative. As I have said, I could point out many such spots, even in large, broad waters like the Tweed, near Kelso; as the Red Stane below Makerston; the Prison Rock, at Sprouston Dub, etc. etc., each of which is, as it were, a magnet for the attraction of salmon; so much so, that it has been proved in regard to them, that should one of the occupant fish happen to be abstracted by the angler, its place will, even when the river is at its average height, become, in the course of two or three hours, supplied by another.

I recollect some years ago being along with a party who were sun-leistering or spearing from a boat, in the month of August or September, during a season of great drought, and when the fish in Tweed had become scarce. We had ransacked nearly a mile of water to little purpose, having, in the course of our descent, slaughtered only a single grilse. Nor, although the clearness of the day and low

state of the river afforded every facility for detecting the presence of other fish, were any such observed—none, most certainly, lurking within a hundred yards of the stone or rock, alongside of which the individual above mentioned was taken; and yet, on our return thither with the boat, not an hour afterwards, a dun salmon, of ten or twelve pounds in weight, presented itself to view, in occupancy of the identical spot where the grilse had been discovered. This fish, also, it may be mentioned, we secured; I shall not say legitimately, for, in truth, leistering salmon is at the best a barbarous and questionable amusement, entitled, under rare circumstances, to the name of sport, and in most cases no more deserving that dignified appellation than if it were the slaughter of a flock of diseased sheep, pent up within fence or inclosure. I find a number of anglers at one with me in opinion upon this subject; and all who have witnessed night-leistering on Tweed, during the autumnal or winter months, will acknowledge that even the romantic character which torchlight and scenery invest it with, fails as an apology for the ignoble, wasteful, and injurious nature of the occupation. In nine cases out of ten, it is pursued, either during the spawning season itself, or when the fish are heavy with roe—when they are red or foul, having lain a considerable time in the river, and moreover, when they have lost all power of escape or are cut off from exercising it, both by the lowness of water and by the circumstance of their being hemmed in, at the head and foot of the pool or place of action, by nets and other contrivances stretched from bank to bank.

It can scarcely be credited, but I relate a fact known to many on Tweedside, that about four or five years ago, upwards of three hundred breeding fish, salmon and grilses, were slaughtered in the course of a single night, from one boat, out of a stretch of water not far from Melrose, two leisters only being employed; and of this number—I allude to the fish—scarcely one was actually fit to be used as food, while by far the greater part of them were female salmon, on the eve of depositing their ova. In the neighbourhood of Kelso upwards of ninety have frequently been butchered with this implement during a single night, from one boat, all of them fish in the same rank and unhealthy condition above described. In September, 1846, according to the most moderate calculation, no fewer than four thousand

spawning fish, consisting chiefly of full-grown salmon, and comprehending the principal breeding stock of the season —those fish, which, from their forward state, promised the earliest and most vigorous supply of fry, were slaughtered in Tweed, with the consent and under the auspices of the upper holders of fishings, in the manner I speak of. Need it be said that the injury done to the salmon-fishings in general by this malpractice on the part of two or three lesser proprietors is incalculable, and when linked with the doings of poachers during close-time, to which it unquestionably gives encouragement, and the system pursued on Tweed of capturing and destroying the kelts and baggits, it must operate most prejudicially against every plan devised to further the breeding of this highly-prized article of food.

Having thus briefly described the likeliest resorts of the fish in a salmon river, and alluded to their caprice in selecting this or the other point of shelter, in preference to one seemingly as accommodating, I am brought to treat of what is more pertinent to the matter in hand, namely, the question, how ought salmon to be angled for?

I shall, first of all, set forth a few instructions as to the best method of capturing this fish with the fly, and then proceed to explain how it may be taken, most readily, by means of the worm, minnow, or parr-tail. As I have already, in former chapters, described the tackle generally used by the salmon-fisher, it is quite unnecessary for me to make any further mention of it at present. Let me urge, however, upon the angler a single advice in regard to it. On no occasion, while fitting it to his rod, should he neglect examining into its sufficiency. Every knot, strand, and length of the entire casting-line ought to be separately scrutinised, and, to a due extent, tested. The fly-hooks also, which are intended to be made use of, require close investigation. It may happen, for instance, that the barb is deranged or broken, the hackle loose, the eye or neck of gut fretted and weakened. There may, in fact, be half a score of matters connected with the fly-hook that need to be looked into, nor is the requisite investigation accompanied with much trouble or loss of time; at any rate, what trouble it costs or time it involves is made up for by the measure of risk avoided or got rid of.

THE CASTING OF THE LINE.—In fly-fishing for salmon,

the casting of the line is generally managed, first of all, by raising the rod back over the left shoulder. This part of the operation requires to be done slowly and deliberately, with a slight increase of speed or force on the part of the performer as he proceeds. He will thus, if managing properly, raise the dipping or employed portion of the line above and behind him, so that, by further elevating the rod and bringing it round over his head, both hands being employed in the exertion, he shall cause the tackle in question to describe, as it were, a sort of semi-circle in the air. He must then, at the moment when the sweep in question is completed and the rod has attained its highest elevation, direct his fly forward, by a rapid impulse, towards the spot where he wishes it to alight; and this should be done without any accompanying jerk or violent movement, but solely by a firm continued exertion of strength, as in the "putting" or launching of a large stone or cannon ball.

This is the left-shoulder method of throwing the salmon-line, and is commendable, not so much on account of its being more easily managed than the other, but chiefly because of the advantage it gives the angler when under a bank or in advance of shrubby ground, where his hook, were it suffered to fly back instead of being kept aloof over his head, would frequently find its anchorage behind, and thus endanger the safety of rod and tackle, as well as try the patience of the thrower. But there is no reason why, under favourable circumstances, right-shoulder casting should not be resorted to. I think, for my own part, that the fly hove from the right shoulder generally alights on the stream surface with greater lightness, and can be directed with more accuracy towards the desired spot. The sweep or circle is, in this case, described over the arm or shoulder and not over the head, as in the other mode of throwing. The fly, consequently, during its performance, is held more aback and occupies a less elevated range. On this account it is extremely apt, should the angler prove too liberal of his line, to come into contact, as already mentioned, with the bank behind him.

I have frequently heard salmon-fishers argue upon the matter of distance to which a fly may be hove, one boasting that he can discharge so many yards of line, another that he can master a still greater surface of water, and a third, who ridicules the exploits of both, asseverating that

he can lay his fly with dexterous precision across the broadest stream in Scotland. Now, in its adequate place among vaunters and freshmen, it is quite fitting to talk of such wonderful feats as fill philosophers with amaze and doubting, but these marvels fall on our sober ears without the desired effect; and we feel assured that every practised angler will only give his contempt in exchange for their relation. Does it never, I ask, occur to those who make the casting of some fifteen or twenty fathoms a matter of moonshine, to inquire what of actual power the lever they employ possesses, which enables them, as they fancy, to lift or recover such an extraordinary outlay of line? Giving even the advantage of a rod twenty feet in length, and allowing moreover that its wielder is fully six feet in height, with a proportionate extent of arm, and that he stands elevated above the surface of the stream not less than a foot, I maintain it to be impossible for him to lift in or recover, so as to effect a second discharge, more line than will measure three times the length of his salmon-rod; I do not of course include what is confined within the rings of that implement.

In fact, without adopting the heaving or pitching system practised on Thames and other English rivers—a mode of throwing not adapted to fly-fishing, it is impossible for the angler to command a range of cast exceeding twenty-seven yards from the spot whence he plies his hook. It is, I admit, quite practicable for him, in the act of throwing, to let out a yard or even two of line more than he is able to lift or recover; but, by doing so, he only imposes upon himself the necessity of using the reel or winch before repeating his cast, in order to shorten or again accommodate the line to the power of his lever.

I might readily, were I so inclined, dilate upon this subject with more order and ceremony, but I have no wish to treat of it in a plenary or philosophical manner, by disquisition or diagram, as if it merited the special attention of the angler. All I desire to be observed is—and the fact bears its own explanation among the axioms of mechanical law—that the length of the lever or lifting power comprised in the rod and its wielder regulates to all intents and purposes the distance to which the fly can be hove. The action of the arm and muscles, the weight of the line, the make and pliancy of the rod, and the propelling or repelling

virtue of the air when in motion, its resistance, and many other causes, act, there is no doubt, to the advantage or prejudice of the cast taken; but the lever power, when used as a power of recovery, is affected by them to an extent easily calculated on, and, on the whole, they can only act as very subservient aids or drawbacks to the exercise of that power.

THE WORKING OF THE LINE AND FLY.—In what are properly called pools, that is, the terminations of streams or sluggish water that can only be fished over with effect when rippled by wind, it is generally expedient to direct the fly across, almost at right angles with the bank, and allow it to sweep or sail round, so as to catch the current and bring the line to its full natural tension. To do this invitingly, the angler must ply his rod, gradually lowering it as the fly beats round, until the point has declined to within two or three feet of the water's surface. The plying motion consists of a measured and gentle working of the line, so as to impart a life-like appearance to the lure, causing it, as it were, to amble and sport leisurely in the stream, opening and shutting its wings, and giving opportunity to the fish to pursue and seize it. This motion also assists to keep the line in sufficient stretch, and to disguise all the unattractive, exposed, and suspicious points of the fly and tackle.

In fishing streams (I use the word as one differing in signification from pools, and referring to those portions of a river which are of rapid movement), the line, instead of being directed across at right angles with the bank, ought to be thrown more in accommodation with the run of the current, say at an angle of 45 degrees, so that the fly, in describing its sweep or curve, may not come round too rapidly and escape the notice of the fish. In rapid water, such as the necks of streams, straiks, and eddies, the plying and working of the hook is not always requisite; at any rate, one should have resort to it as a secondary measure, allowing every chance to be given to the fish rising, at the juncture which takes place on the completion of the curve, or what is termed the moment of hing. This failing, the salmon-fisher advisedly may finish off his cast with the process in question, which, if it do not prove irresistibly attractive to a pursuing fish, may be the means of stirring up to the scratch one hitherto dormant.

Those parts of a stream or pool, which are known to afford favourite shelter to salmon, cannot be angled over with too much care. A single cast or two will, in most instances, be sufficient to determine the presence or humour of a fish, in places where the shelter is limited, or, it may be, doubtful, such as a single stone or projection of crag; but with a range of water underwrought with rocks and retreats, the angler should deal prudently and circumspectly. A cover of this sort it will not answer to beat in quick, slovenly style, forwarding oneself within ken and survey of the game, as some do who, from from their eagerness to be in *medias res*, plunge waist-deep into the primest portions of the stream, scaring right and left the liers in wait, whose plunges in the distance are mistaken for sober, matter-of-course movements, indicative not of alarm and excitement, but of readiness to favour the adventurous and impatient rodsman.

It is here, on such a range of water, that the salmon-fisher should exercise caution and employ method. He ought to work progressively and with deliberation, commencing above the extreme head or foot of the range in question, and compassing the whole, I do not say inch by inch, but in such a manner that no opportunity shall be given for any one fish to avoid seeing the fly. He should also beware, if possible, of disturbing the water already experimented on, as by doing so, he not only destroys the charm of a yet untried hook, but, in frequent instances, so alarms the fish as to cause them immediately to shift their quarters. Sometimes also, when thus disturbed by the approach of one's person too near their haunts, they will grow sullen and suspicious, and this effect is not always readily worn off, but will continue influencing them for days to come.

How far off a salmon can discern the transit of a fly from its retreat, it is not easy to ascertain; and it would require a good deal of particularising to take away from the general nature of the question. This, however, is well known, that fish lying in a depth of water exceeding ten or twelve feet seldom, if ever, rise at the artificial fly. It is true there are many gullies, both in Tweed and other rivers, of nearly twice the depth above specified, where salmon are known to rise freely, but such fish are not at the bottom. They rest merely on the craggy sides and ledges which wall

in the water. In some localities, they hold their out-look from a sunken fortalice of rock—the fissures of which afford them ample and secure accommodation.

That a fly-hook, say of the largest spring size, may catch the observation of salmon at a still greater depth than twelve feet is possible enough; but it is quite true that, if so, it loses all attractive effect, and a fish would as soon think of leaping at the moon as bestir itself for a mouthful so remote. So much as to sheer depth of water, when considered as distance betwixt the salmon and the fly; but let me take the case of a fish lying in a shallow break. How far off, in this instance, would the hook operate as a lure? For my own part, I think it would require to pass within four or five feet of the spot where the salmon holds watch, and I am led to think so, in some measure, from experiments made at Coldstream bridge, where, during the grilse season, in a fine water, there is every opportunity for one stationed above to observe the natural powers and instincts of the fish, both as regards the matter in question and in respect to their likings and aversions manifested towards the colours and sizes of artificial flies.

Salmon, be it noted, are a duller fish, by many degrees, than common river-trout, and by no means so sharp-eyed as bull-trout and whitlings. These frequently take the hook well in waters considerably discoloured, and refuse it when the streams have resumed their ordinary size and transparency. It is otherwise with salmon, whose visual organs are generally, under such circumstances, unable to detect the transit of the fly over currents comparatively shallow; nor will they attempt to seize it or look out for prey, until the flood or fresh has very much subsided, and the floating particles of opake matter, consequent on such swell, are entirely at rest. But, although I have every reason to believe that the salmon is not quite such a quick or sharp-sighted fish as some give it the credit of being, and that, even in the clearest water, it is unable to detect the passing of the fly at a depth and distance from its retreat exceeding twelve feet, yet, should the lure employed hit its fancy, it will, if inconvenient to attempt seizing it, owing to the rapidity of the current or other cause, follow the hook round over a space of many yards, until a position and rate of speed have been acquired by the latter, which either encourage the endeavour to take hold of it, or lead

to the detection of its nature as a guile or artifice. This, however, is a mode of procedure on the part of the fish by no means invariable; for salmon will often make for the fly the moment it is perceived, nay, in some instances, the instant it alights on the surface; besides, there are many casts or salmon-throws which do not admit of travelling the hook at all, such as the narrow heads and hings which frequently preface deep, ragged water, also confined places, formed by breakwaters and cairns, etc., etc. Into water of this description the fly should be heaved with care and lightness so as not to alarm the fish. As to its primary movements allow the current in some measure to control them, but do not give it the full sway. Always recover the hook upwards or towards yourself after allowing it to drop, and do this by gentle impulses, not urging it into a gallop or hasty pace, but guiding it at an amble, so as to appear more life-like and natural, whether taken as an insect or as a small fish.

In salmon-fishing, never allow the hook itself to plough or ruffle the surface of the water. By the trout-fisher, whose lures are in point of size comparatively insignificant, this may be done occasionally without any bad result; but a salmon-fly thus worked will generally occasion distrust or terror, and seldom prove inviting. On the other hand, however expedient it is to keep the fly well-sunk while travelling it, one must avoid falling into the error of allowing it to sink too far. It is into this extreme that many of our best salmon-fishers are apt to run. They employ frequently, when there is no occasion for it, too much throwing line, and, at the same time, while working it, lower the point of the rod beyond all due proportion. Consequently, they are often obliged to gallop in order to sustain the fly, and should a fish incline to take it, in two cases out of three they are left without any indication of its attempt; nay, more, in the event even of a marked and well-directed rise, where the presence of the fish could not fail of being detected, a very long line is incapable, from its want of sufficient pressure, to insure the planting or fixing of the barb in the mouth of the salmon. It acts as too distant and too loose a method of communication betwixt the angler and his spoil. It makes it necessary for him to attempt hooking the fish—by striking—a mode of operation in respect to salmon which is certainly reprehensive.

In the case, however, of a stong current, or when the angler is highly elevated above the water, as on a bridge or rock, the employment of a long travelling line is quite expedient, and in no respect falls within compass of the objections above stated.

RECOMMENDATIONS HOW TO ACT ON RAISING A FISH.—When fly-fishing for salmon, the angler requires to have a general notion of where his hook is, and how it traverses the stream or pool, but this is all. To watch it minutely is not necessary. By doing so, the eye is frequently brought into inopportune contact with the fish itself when rising. It detects its presence before the salmon has seized the fly; and, as a natural consequence, the rodsman in the surprise or flutter of the moment, is very apt, either to draw away his hook by a sudden or violent jerk, or else to check its progress for the moment, and allow opportunity for the fish to discover the deception. In trout-fishing with the fly, we can scarcely, in the event of a break on the surface, strike too rapidly. It is different in the salmon-fishing. Here, one should not alter the motion of the hook until he is actually made sensible of the presence of the fish by feeling his weight on the line; nor even then is there any act of exertion required on the part of the angler, further than the simple raising of his rod, in order to fix the hook. When force is applied, or any motion approaching to a jerk made use of, the chances are, that either the line itself or jaw of the fish gives way: whereas, a line of mere ordinary strength and the tenderer parts of the mouth will always sufficiently resist the slight impulse which is required in order to hook salmon. But I need not say more on this matter, for it will become natural to one practising on a salmon-river and travelling the fly properly, to strike, as it were, with effect, and also to make the most of such rises or attempts on the part of the fish to seize the hook, as indicate something faulty in its humour or vision.

All occasional salmon-fishers have, in their experience, met with blank and adverse days; and of these, the most tantalising happen when the fish are plentiful; when they are inclined, moreover, to look at the hook, to follow it, and even break the surface above or near it, without making any real attempt to take hold. What, it will be asked, is to be done by way of remedy on an occasion of this sort?

The practice of experienced anglers has been to change the fly over the fish; and, indisputably, it is the correct one. It must not, however, be presumed, that there is, to meet all circumstances, a great deal of efficacy in this resort, and that one, after experimenting to a certain extent, may hit upon what he chooses to term the killing fly of the day. It generally happens, when fish are in the capricious humour I speak of (affected possibly by atmospheric causes, often by the state of the water, and as often by the action of solar light), that they remain so for a considerable time—for the space, at least, of three or four hours, sometimes nearly a whole day. The operation of a change of fly, made under such circumstances, is almost always limited to an individual fish; were it otherwise, there could be no reason to complain; but I doubt much, unless in the event of a change of weather or state of water, that salmon, having shown a degree of partiality to the three or four flies first used by rising at them, would, on the exhibition of a fifth or sixth, all at once discover towards these a peculiar fondness which induces them, without reserve, not merely to show face, but greedily to take hold. In the case of an individual fish, this is, I allow, possible enough to happen; but I cannot bring myself to believe in the influence of any particular hook, used under such circumstances, over the tastes and caprices of the general body.

For my own part, I am commonly content to find out a killing fly in the one which induces fish to rise; and the reason I have for substituting another, should a salmon merely break the surface without taking hold, is not that I expect the substitute to prove a whit more enticing, but I would do all in my power to prevent the distrust and alarm possibly consequent upon a repeated transit of the identical lure. This distrust, however, be it noted, is only a possible event, as regards the fly-hook in question; and the substitution of another, so far from acting as a counter-charm, may, on the contrary, operate strongly to my prejudice, occasioning or confirming the very alarm I am endeavouring to suppress.

The expediency, therefore, of changing the fly immediately, over a grilse or salmon, on the failure of its attempt to take hold, is very questionable; nor although occasionally acting on it, am I a slave to the practice. If led to believe that the fish has missed his aim, less from shyness than over-

keenness—or, it may be, owing to the inconvenience of place and position, the rapid nature of the current, improper management of the line, or other such cause, most assuredly I would not change the fly over him, until convinced that he had no inclination to rise a second time; even then, I should be chary of bestowing a new hook without allowing him an interval of rest not shorter than a quarter of an hour. In passing, however, the first fly over him a second time, I would use little or no delay. The humour he is in for rising at it has already been tested, and there is some possibility of its subsiding, should the opportunity be given. Was I convinced, however, that the fish started came towards the hook in a dubious, distrustful mood, I would then most assuredly allow him a reasonable respite of some minutes, and, at the same time, substitute a fly-hook of smaller dimensions—I do not say less gaudy in appearance, but rather the contrary; for it is well known, in respect to Scottish rivers, that the Irish fly, with all its glitter, is most killing under a clear sky and on low limpid water; while the Scotch one, sober in hue, develops its attractive powers in dull, windy weather, and not unfrequently when the streams are of a deep porter colour, the delight of the trout-fisher's eye. This refused, I would experiment, according to the state of the river, with a larger one; and finally, as a last resort, recur to the hook first employed.

Perhaps all this extreme fuss and trouble about a single fish may be looked upon as unnecessary, if not ridiculous. It is so, I allow, in certain rare positions; and there are those who, being placed in such, laugh at the idea of bestowing more than mere brachial exertion in the capture of salmon with the rod. Such, having their will and wont of a well-reputed stream, are less dependent for sport upon the caprice of the fish, and take less care to exhibit craft and science in the securing of them than others, whose range is limited and unprotected. These latter, however, be it understood, form the better salmon-slayers. They may be unable to boast of many captures in proportion; but it is not because they are deficient in skill or practice. What honour is due as a sportsman to the ranger of a well-stocked preserve? Is he necessarily a better shot—keener-eyed—steadier handed—more active—more enduring—abler in the management of his kennel, than one who has to toil over hill and dale, through marsh and stubble, in search of a broken covey

or solitary hare? With the former, to miss his bird is a matter of small consequence. He can afford to do so, while the other cannot. He can afford to pass it over altogether —to forgive his dogs a careless point or a run in. He requires to take no pains and encounter no fatigue. The game rises at his feet; the bag can be filled at all events. It is different with the latter. He cannot afford the throwing away of a single chance. One act of misconduct on the part of his setter—a too hasty or too dilatory pull of the trigger —an error in the fielding—a miss from over-excitement or any other cause—the escape of a wounded bird, each of these circumstances by itself tells hard against him, and is frequently an occasion of lament and grievance. Such occurrences, however, produce their advantageous effect, by encouraging the endeavour to avoid them for the future. Being felt as matters of importance and treated as such, they all act towards making the sportsman. They inculcate prudence, decision, vigilance, the study also of natural history, as far as relates to the habits of his game. They make him careful, frugal, active, and earnest—superior, as respects his occupation, to the slayer of hand-fed pheasants, as is the wild-deer in strength and fleetness to the bloated venison of some palace park.

And thus it is with the true angler. He is not made out of thick and manifold, but out of few and scattered resources. The science of his art is acquired in a rigid and exacting school. He has to reconcile himself to disappointments, to practise self-denial, to encounter hardships. He requires to study devotedly, perseveringly; to neglect or omit nothing. With subdued expectations he ought never to despond. His motto should be of bright letter—the banner-word of a conqueror.

How to Manage a Salmon when Hooked.—On hooking a fish there remains often much to be done before he is secured. About one-third of hooked salmon escape; some through sheer carelessness or want of experience on the part of the angler, others by reason of the fish being slightly or insufficiently fastened, and a few owing to uncontrollable circumstances which occasion, without choice or remedy, the snapping or wearing through of the line. Thus, for instance, a strong fish, on being hooked, may betake itself in a direction down or across the river, while the angler, his stock of line being run out, is, from the nature of the banks

or the breadth of the pool, unable to pursue; or it may, having its lair among sharp-edged rocks, exert itself with success to wear through the gut which holds it—a manifestation of cunning, on the part of an old fish, by no means uncommon, although it is seldom met with, when the salmon is fresh-run and relies for escape upon the exertion of its strength and fleetness.

On hooking a fish, the first thing to be done by the angler is to raise his rod to a proper height—to throw the point of it well back over his shoulders, or, in technical language, show the butt to his prisoner. To do this properly, one does not require to use force, or, in the smallest degree, strain his rod; nor should he, in all cases, act with extreme gentleness, but accommodate his firmness of hold to the strength of his tackle and size of hook employed. At the same time, he should be prepared to allow line, and that freely, in case the fish choose to exert its speed.

It is not always, on hooking a salmon, that the angler can immediately form a just opinion as to its size. Fish, under the control of the rod, often acquire dimensions very different from those which, at first start, were attributed to them, and as frequently they fall short of what is conjectured. It sometimes happens, for instance, that a powerful salmon makes reserve of its strength, and by its movements, passionless and confined, appears for the space of several minutes little better than an unresisting, inanimate mass; nor, until irritated by the continued pressure, I say, not pain, resulting from the rod and tackle, does it give vent to its fury in grand impetuous bursts, which, as they shake and agitate his rod and line, stir also and agitate the heart of their wielder.

On the other hand, a comparatively small fish will sometimes, on being hooked, exert, on the instant, an unexpected degree of strength and velocity. It will dart upwards or across the stream with railway speed, and conclude each heat with a succession of somersets which, although they exhaust rapidly the power of the performer, are severally, as they occur, fraught with danger. In this case, the salmon quickly betrays its size and can be dealt with accordingly; still there is always a necessity for the exercise of extreme caution, for the more volatile in disposition the fish appears, the greater are the chances of its escape. When deeply-hooked, it is generally unable or un-

willing to indulge the eye of the angler with antics of the above description, but will confine its manœuvres to its natural element, merely breaking the surface on emergencies (on the lapse, for instance, of some powerful sally), and frequently betaking itself to a different mode of action, suited as readily to snap the line or detach the barb from its mouth. The following instructions, as to playing or managing a salmon with the rod, will be found useful.

Always in running a fish, keep well up to, or if possible, at right angles with its head. In the event of its taking across the current instead of stemming or descending it, give the butt without reserve. In the case of a plunge or somerset, slacken line as quickly as possible, but use no delay in recovering it when the danger is over. When fish are plentiful and in humour to take the fly, it is better to risk the loss of an indifferent-sized individual which you happen to have hooked than to allow a long range of unfinished water to become disturbed, through its capricious movements. In this case, stint the line and hold on obdurately, but not beyond the presumed strength of your tackle. During the grilse season, there are many portions of water, on Tweed especially, where it would be absolute folly in the angler, were he to humour the fish to its heart's content. A lively new-run grilse may occasion more alarm among its kind than one is aware of, especially if the water be of the transparent hue it generally bears during the summer or autumnal months. In event, however, of the salmon being few or rising shyly, I would advise that some degree of care and ceremony be taken with what fortune brings to the hook, and that, on such occasions, more regard be paid to the management of the fish under control than to the non-disturbance of a few yards of stream, where the chances of adding to one's success are, at least, extremely doubtful.

In these circumstances, avoid using undue violence. Should the fish escape, the consciousness of your having done so will only add to the disappointment. There is one precaution particularly to be attended to in respect to a newly-run fish, and that is, immediately on hooking it, use a moderate degree of pressure. The salmon will then brave or stem the current and direct its course upwards, whereas on tightening the reins it will frequently do the reverse, and thus not only may a portion of the water in prospect

become disturbed, but there is considerable chance, and in some places an absolute certainty, of the fish, if a large one, making its escape.

Baggits and kelts have often a strong inclination to descend, instead of pushing upwards; but little danger, on their doing so, accrues to the line, owing to the nature of the places they frequent, their style of running, and other causes; moreover, the loss in their case is less felt or regretted than when good, wholesome fish make off with the tackle.

THE LANDING OF THE FISH.—On Tweedside, a gaff-hook or *cleik* is generally made use of by salmon-fishers, in order to expedite the landing of the fish. I have remarked, that in some parts of Scotland a small hoop-net is also employed for this purpose. In respect that it is not liable to abuse or injure the appearance of the salmon, the latter implement may be considered the preferable one. The cleik, however, is more convenient, and may be resorted to in places and at distances where the hoop-net cannot be made available. The employment of a landing appliance at all—certainly not its advantage—may be considered, in a sporting view, as questionable. I have heard it insisted on, that the angler ought always to play his fish to bank and secure him entirely by his own management, and with his own hand. To this I do not entirely assent, but I certainly think that there are occasions when the gaff-hook is brought into play quite inopportunely, when, in fact, it acts, along with its wielder, a part in the capture of the fish that can scarcely be esteemed secondary to that engaged in by the rodsman himself. The credit of taking the salmon is thus divided betwixt two parties; and really, on many of the Tweed rod-fishings, this is the case: nay, I have already, at the outset of the present chapter, had occasion to state, besides his assistance with the landing-hook, the attendant fisherman contributes largely, in other respects, towards the sport of the angler, and is as fully entitled as the latter to claim the palm after success.

In expert hands, the gaff-hook is unquestionably of great advantage as an implement for securing partially-exhausted fish. At the same time, it curtails what many consider a portion of the sport: and I have seen it put into requisition at a stage altogether premature: the fish, on being hooked, and before its strength was nearly worn out, having way-

wardly edged in, so as to give the opportunity referred to. I am well aware that there are some salmon-fishers who hold the playing and landing of the fish as very inferior considerations, and who reckon the whole art and amusement to consist in the raising and hooking. With one gentleman I am acquainted, an able and eager sportsman, who, after the first burst, was accustomed to resign the rod into the hands of his attendant, in order to rid himself of what he considered a slavish or supplementary task. To such individuals, the employment of the gaff-hook is a matter of perfect indifference: but I cannot reconcile myself to their cramped and petted notions on the subject of what forms a most essential constituent of the amusement. The playing and landing of the fish are unquestionably act and part with the raising and hooking, and when separated, all interest on the part of either performer is diminished; the capture of the fish becomes a disputed matter, achieved betwixt both parties, and claimed accordingly. For directions how to employ the gaff-hook, see chapter on tackle, etc.

In absence of an assistant, the salmon-fisher should always be careful to select the best landing-place within view—one to which he can readily lead his fish when exhausted, and where he has no occasion to exert further strength than he has all along been using, in order to draw it ashore. Gravel banks partly covered with shoal-water, flat rocks similarly circumstanced, or any level spot where the salmon may naturally turn over at once, without power of recovery, on his broad side, are well adapted for the purpose in question. In case of no such convenient landing-place being at hand, I would, rather than risk the loss of a good fish, guide him to some distance down the river, until, in fact, I fall in with a desirable port. Do not, however, be induced to haul a salmon up against the stream, with the view of landing it on some jut of sward, sand, or rock, that engages your fancy at the moment. Should the fish press or incline to be guided towards it, good and well; but on no occasion resort to force, when force may be avoided. The fish being grounded, shorten line to the extreme, and, holding back your rod with one hand, step forward, and with the other grasp the salmon tightly above the tail. You may then toss or carry it to the bank above, and, by a blow or two on the head, immediately despatch it. In case of your line being too long

to permit you to seize the fish without quitting hold of the rod, then do so, only act with rapidity when you approach to make your seizure.

I would recommend all anglers who are in the habit of fishing salmon unattended to carry along with them a short gaff or landing-hook, not exceeding in length of handle two or three feet, such, in fact, as may be slung conveniently from, or placed inside of, the pannier. This will be found, on many occasions, greatly to facilitate the securing of a tired fish, and is not intended, as is the ordinary gaff-hook, for striking with, but merely for inserting below the gill-cover of the salmon and dragging it to the bank.

In the course of the above instructions, I have touched upon most of the points worthy of notice, in connection with the subject of salmon-fishing. To extend further my line of observations, I feel to be more simple than satisfactory. The matter is far from being exhausted, but I doubt much that I could add anything of avail or interest to what I have already stated or set forth. I shall not, therefore hamper my code of instructions, however faulty or deficient with any additional advice, or obtrude into a region of facts what is purely theoretical in connection with salmon-fishing. A great deal that might not unappropriately have been placed under this head will be found in the chapter upon Salmon-flies, and in other parts of the volume. By no arrangement of subject that might have been entered upon could I have avoided distributing through several portions of the work what professed to belong entirely to one ; nor, indeed, apart from this restraint, could I wish, for the mere sake of isolating or giving separate distinctness to the different parts, to break in upon the connection that naturally exists betwixt them.

Considering, therefore, the entirety of the work as more essential than the entirety of each of its parts, I make no apology for what may be reckoned a loose and scattered treatment of this or that subject; the more especially as I am shut up, without remedy, to the course before me. A reference then, as at present, from this to that chapter, being an interference with the subject matter of either, must be held as showing the connection or intimacy already spoken of, and without which the entirety of the volume could not exist. I now proceed, in a separate chapter, to treat of salmon-fishing as practised with the parr-tail, minnow, and worm,

CHAPTER XIII.

SALMON-FISHING WITH THE PARR-TAIL, MINNOW, AND WORM.

TACKLES, Leads, etc.—When and Where to Fish.—Directions to Extricate Tackle when Foul Run.—Worm-Fishing for Salmon.—When Available.—Approved Tackle.—Leading.—Baiting of Hook.—Lob-Worms.—Younger's Directions.—Rule to be Observed as Respects the Winch Line.—Method of Fishing.—Power of the Salmon to Expel Food.—Seizure of the Worm by the Fish.—General Remarks.

IN a former chapter I have described, at some length, the parr-tail tackle, the way in which the bait or lure ought to be cut, how attached to the hooks, etc., etc. My observations upon these matters, although made in reference to trout-fishing, comprise, when applied to salmon, nearly all that can be said upon the subject. Almost the only additional instructions I can give the angler refer to the weighting of the tackle. In this respect, he requires to be liberal of his leads or plummets, and in spinning the lure careful that he keeps it well sunk; in fact, close to the bottom of the pool or stream. Salmon, when at all inclined to take the parr-tail, will do so in water comparatively still, as well as at the head of streams and rapid places. They seldom pay any regard to it when the river is discoloured or beyond its ordinary spring size, although bull-trouts, especially kelted fish of this description, will seize it greedily. It is esteemed by some surest as a bait at the latter end of May, but a clean fish will take it, as it does the minnow, throughout the spring months.

In very cold weather, during March, and when the water is most uninviting to the eye, having that greenish tinge which indicates the presence of snow at its sources, I have known the parr-tail, in common with the minnow, to be a killing bait. Nay, amid thick slabs of ice, and when the air is so frosty, as in the course of a few minutes to stiffen the wetted line, and render it unfit for work, this bait will be found for the moment, if cast where salmon are, of almost certain avail. Under circumstances, of course, such as I have last mentioned, there would be much difficulty, after hooking the fish, in securing it, as, unless forcibly dealt with, it would certainly make for shelter under the

ice, and in all likelihood cut or wear through the line against its sharp edges.

In fishing with the minnow for salmon, observe the same directions as when fishing with the parr-tail. Play the lure near the bottom, and more leisurely than you would do were river-trout the object in view. Use a minnow of large size, and tackle to correspond. The parr-tail tackle of three hooks may be substituted advantageously for the common minnow tackle of two. Bright frosty days in March and April are much preferable to dull, windy ones, when the minnow is used; and should the streams be clear or in a dwindled state, most salmon-fishers would look forward with certainty to obtaining sport.

In the spinning of the parr-tail and minnow, as it is practised for salmon, that is with heavy leads and close to the bottom of the cast or lair, there is great danger of the tackle running foul below of rocks and other impediments. Sometimes in playing, it will become locked in betwixt two stones; sometimes one of the hooks catches against a sunken tree or mass of turf, and in either case the angler finds himself what is termed fast. On such occasions, and they frequently happen to those even who have an accurate knowledge of the ground they fish over, the angler having, without success, made every attempt at extrication which ordinarily suggests itself, ought, as a final expedient, to give out line liberally with his hand—say three, four or five yards beyond what was made use of; he should then cast out from him, as if with fly tackle, in the direction taken immediately before running foul, and finally, this done, recover line quickly. I know of no surer method than this of liberating fast tackle. The experiment, as detailed, may and ought to be repeated at least a dozen times, without despair of success. Indeed, unless the locking of the tackle happened to be an involved or desperate one, I never saw it fail.

I proceed now—having thus briefly disposed of these methods of salmon-slaying, not, however, because they merit small regard, but chiefly, as I have already in a former chapter, engrossed all that appertains to either subject—I proceed to describe the manner of fishing for salmon with the worm, as practised on Tweedside. I am not aware that in any one of our large northern rivers, the Tay, Dee, Spey, Findhorn, Ness, or Shin, the mode of angling I am about to

treat of has been more than very occasionally tried, and I can easily comprehend why such occasional experiments, although made by those instructed in the art at the feet of old Father Tweed himself, have generally proved failures.

On these rivers, to give the experiment full justice, the experimentalist would require not only an accurate knowledge of how he is to conduct the whole process, but he must have besides a most intimate acquaintance with the stream he is angling in, and be able at a glance to ascertain from its size, colour, and temperature in what humour the fish are; for in worm-fishing for salmon there is this peculiarity, that it cannot be indulged in as a common or every day sport, but is dependent more closely upon circumstances than any other branch of the gentle art I am acquainted with. Thus, to insure success, one must have the water at a certain reduced state to act upon; he requires to be favoured in general with a clear sky, none the worse of there being a disposition in the air towards frost. The streams, also, to which he has access must possess that degree of depth and rapidity which are necessary both to conceal the fish and assist the play of the bait; moreover, it is essential that, notwithstanding one and all of them may have been angled over repeatedly with the salmon-fly, they shall not previously, during the decrease of the river, have been disturbed with the worm itself; if so, should the angler impatiently have resorted to it before they were in order, every fish then descrying it would, at its reappearance on a favourable occasion, hold it in distrust.

The most approved of tackle for this description of angling consists of a large hook of the round-bend shape, Nos. from 14 to 16 of Adlington's. It requires to be tied upon picked salmon-gut, fresh and round; the shank-end of the wire in tying ought to be left bare to the extent of nearly a quarter of an inch.

The single gut or foot line, from the hook upwards, should extend at least six feet, and terminate with a loop, so as to allow of its being readily annexed to the higher casting-line. It should also be furnished with a box-swivel fixed below the uppermost length.

With regard to the leads or plummets, these ought to be placed at a distance of eighteen inches from the hook, and should consist of at least five or six pellets of large shot, Nos. 2 and 3. In all cases, the tackle in question requires to be heavily shotted, but in regulating the quantity of

weight, it is quite necessary that attention be paid to the power, depth, and swerve of the cast or stream fished in.

As to the worms best adapted for salmon-fishing, I require to say little. The lob or large dew-worm is esteemed the favourite. This is easily obtained in the desired quantity from almost any piece of garden ground. It is met with, stretched on the earth during mild nights, and especially after a shower when the surface of the soil is damp. Besides the lob-worm, the large button-worm is sometimes used, and possesses this advantage, that it is easily scoured and becomes tougher and redder than the other. It is not, however, found in such great abundance or in all localities, and with respect to size is decidedly inferior to the lob-worm.

In baiting the hook, two, sometimes three worms are made use of. These are attached in the following way: Holding one of them betwixt the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, insert the point of your hook a short way below the head of the worm, which, I shall suppose, measures in length eight or nine inches; run the bend of the wire carefully along through the bait, to the full extent of an inch, in the direction of the tail; bring the point out again, and passing over an equal portion of the worm, re-enter it further on, drawing up, as you do so, what has already been transfixed, along the shank of the hook, then, as before, bring out the point an inch lower down. Repeat this proceeding a third time, and at its completion pull the worm up quite free from the hook to the gut above. Select a second worm, and insert, as formerly, the barbed wire below the head; run it along underneath, until the shank, bend, and point are completely concealed. Then, with your finger and thumb, press down the first bait close against the shank, so as to hang over in small loops or folds.

In the event of a third worm being thought necessary, string on the one preceding it in the manner I have already described, and use the worm in question to cover the hook.

I find on referring to Younger of St. Boswells well-known treatise on river-angling, as practised on Tweedside, that the tackle recommended by him, and consequently the mode of affixing the bait, differ very materially from what I have described to be in use in the neighbourhood of Kelso. I shall quote what he says on the subject at full length; at the same time I have, on my side, the authority

of the most able worm-fishers, and among others, Rob Kerss of Trows, Forest of Kelso, etc., etc., for asserting that his practice is in many respects faulty.

"Anglers," says he, "differ in their choice regarding size of the two hooks proper to be used for this sort of bait; but those most generally preferred on the Tweed are large sizes Nos. 18, 19, or 20 of Adlington's, the others 15 or 16. As they require to be shorter in the shank for this purpose than for the fly, it is requisite to break a piece from the shank of each, when the longer one is tied to the end of the gut, the other as much further up on the gut as to allow its point to be turned round to the shank of the first hook, and a little of the shank of each to be left untied, for the purpose of catching into the worms and preventing them from slipping down from their proper positions. The first worm is then put on, by inserting the hook at its head and running it up over that hook altogether; then turning the uppermost hook round and inserting it also at the same incision; then run the worm up over this hook also till the tail of it is fairly above the bend of the hook, and the upper part on the line above. A second worm is taken, and the hook entered about its middle, running it up also to the second hook, which is entered at the same incision, and run round in the loose end of the worm, which covers it over the bend and point. The remainder of that worm is pressed up till it appear contracted and thickened on the short piece of gut intermediate between the two hooks: then a third worm is taken and run on the first hook head foremost, leaving its tail to cover and project over the point. This is called a full and proper salmon bait. Some use only two large worms in the manner of the first and third, with half a worm, or a small one put on the second hook to cover its head and point."

Upon what I have quoted I need only to remark, that the simpler tackle and simpler mode of baiting adopted on the lower salmon casts have always been found sufficiently effective, and the feats from time to time performed by the single hook, attests that it works well, while its very simplicity is itself commendable, and affords ample guarantee for the ease with which one—the veriest novice, may employ it.

I shall now describe the most approved way of angling with the worm for salmon. The performer requires to use

a long, stiffish rod, eighteen feet and upwards, such as is employed for pike trolling. The rings should be large, allowing the line to pass through them without the smallest restraint, and the reel itself ought to be facile in the extreme, having neither catch nor multiplicator. With regard to the quantity of line employed in casting, it should not greatly exceed the length of the rod itself. Considering the manner in which it is weighted, and the mode of using it I am about to point out, it is difficult to manage more.

Having baited his hook, let the angler take his place at the head of the cast or salmon-stream he intends fishing. Immediately on commencing operations, there is a matter of observance to which he must pay particular attention. It forms, in fact, to some extent the secret of the successful worm-fisher, and is embodied in this simple piece of instruction, *viz.*: Let him draw out with his hand, over and above what he uses in casting, a yard or so of line from off the reel, allowing the same to hang loosely down towards the butt-end of his rod. The intention of this is, that he may afford instant and unresisting compliance with the movements of the fish, on first seizing the bait. Should the least check occur in the running off of the line, the salmon will, in most cases, quit before gorging. I perceive that Younger makes no mention of the expedient I refer to, esteemed of such importance by many salmon-fishers; but I am not astonished at the omission, seeing his other directions are scarcely calculated to impress the idea that he knows much of this branch of angling, at least of the finer part of the practice. With regard to the gorging of the worm by salmon, I may here state what fell under the observation of my brother, Captain Stoddart, R.N., while angling on the west coast of Ireland, in the river Ballynahinch, in Galway. During the hot weather which occurred in June, and preceded the long-continued rains of that remarkable season, the streams had become in some places so clear and reduced in size, that (taking the oppressive heat also into consideration) fly-fishing was rendered, at certain periods of the day, a hopeless waste of labour and ingenuity. At the same time, there was no deficiency of salmon, and these were to be distinguished, with difficulty, from the high, rocky banks by which many of the pools are hemmed in. The only legitimate manner in which one or several of them might be captured was with the worm, and to that bait my

brother had recourse. As in many instances, while employing it, he had a distinct view of such fish as chose to approach, during the whole procedure and course of attack, he remarked that, on its seizing, the salmon instantly swallowed the worms, hook and all, but in nine cases out of ten as quickly disgorged them, expelling the whole mass from its mouth with considerable violence, and seldom appearing inclined to renew the charge. Accordingly, acting on a different plan from what is the recognised practice on Tweedside, he immediately, on observing the fish seize, struck with vigour, and almost always with success. Under ordinary circumstances, this expedient is almost impracticable; the fish not being observed, the angler has no direct intimation of its having engrossed the bait, and should such afterwards become vouchsafed to him, it is generally too late, the expelling process (being one of violence, and accordingly more fitted to convey the intimation in question, than the mere act of gulping over the bait) having already commenced. I may remark that, however dissimilar in appearance, the two modes of practice are quite reconcilable, and as suited to the habits of the salmon, severally, each in its own locality, deserve attention.

I may state here, that the late Walter Jamieson, one of the best anglers that ever waved a rod on Tweedside, and, as far as regarded salmon, the most scientific of worm-fishers, attached primary regard to the drawing out of the line, as a precautionary measure, and that it was his practice, as well as it is that of others famed in the craft, to employ a single hook, baited as I have already described. Recurring, however, to the subject treated of, I have placed the angler at the head of a cast or salmon-stream. Let him heave his bait across, and, in some measure, with the current, which I take to be so heavy or rapid as to bring round the weighted line, at a deliberate rate, until it attains its full stretch or tension. It is necessary, during this circuit, that the worm travel deep, in contact almost with the channel of the river, otherwise it will not prove attractive to the fish. On completing its range, the angler should allow it to hing, as it were, for a few seconds in subjection to the current, and when recovering, in order to renew the cast, should do so with extreme caution and deliberation.

When a check occurs, no matter from what cause it may, on the instant, be imagined to proceed, he ought at once to

give line, not merely exhausting what he has in preparation, but dealing out ungrudgingly a further supply from his reel, and this by means of the hand, so that it may run off easily, and, as it were, humour the movements of a supposed fish. The check itself may very possibly be occasioned by collision of the plummets with some stone or jut of rock, or it may proceed from the interference of a trout or eel, but this being quite uncertain, the angler has himself to blame, should he, by dealing with it as such and uncircumspectedly, give opportunity for a good fish to escape. In general, however, I may remark, a mere check or stoppage is not the usual indication of a fish having seized the worm. What takes place has more the nature of an attack, quick and vigorous as is that of the pike on a running bait. The progress of the hook downwards is disturbed by a violent jerk or pull, sometimes in the direction of the current, but as frequently to the side, towards the lair or retreat of the salmon. Should this attack on the bait be met with unresistingly by the angler, and sufficient line allowed on the occasion, it will generally, after a short pause, become repeated, with less violence indeed, but with more earnestness and effect. In the interval between the charges, however, care must be taken to sustain and give an animated appearance to the worms. If allowed to drop to the bottom, the salmon will no longer assail them. Accordingly, recover line with the hand, and be a little more chary than at first of yielding it when the fish renews the attack. At this point it is that a slight measure of resistance will act as a provocative; previously its effect was to alarm and beget suspicion.

The salmon will now, after two or three successive assaults, bolt the bait; and his doing so may be inferred from a peculiar strain upon the line, more fixed and continued in character than any it had yet been subject to, during the attack. The resolute and quick elevation of the rod will suffice to fix the hook deep among the entrails of the fish, and nothing further is left to be done but to fatigue and land him.

Such is the method of capturing salmon with the worm pursued in the neighbourhood of Kelso. It can be practised with success only when the river is clear and small. A slight degree of frost is also favourable, sharpening wonderfully the appetite of the fish. The greatest feat I

happen to have witnessed, in the way of killing salmon with the worm, was accomplished six or seven years ago, on the Hemp-side Ford stream, close to Kelso, by a friend of the late Sir Francis Chantrey, who himself, on the occasion I allude to, was also engaged angling on the pool immediately above. Sir F. I understand to have been held in repute as a Thames fisher, and from the specimen I then witnessed of his skill in heaving the line, the perfect control he exhibited over his rod and tackle, I could at once perceive that he was no raw or undisciplined angler. Quite otherwise it was with his friend, who, although I make no question but that he had frequently, before then, disturbed the finny tribe, was evidently a very inferior craftsman, compared with the sculptor. The latter, however, notwithstanding that he plainly knew nothing or little of the habits of salmon, relied upon his own address and attainments, as a Cockney angler, to achieve something extraordinary. Accordingly, instead of chiming in with the approved practice of the district, he chose to resort, as a means of capturing the fish in question, to the mode of taking trout adopted on some of the English rivers, and actually plied Tweed with a tackle comprising nearly a dozen hooks and a whole string of pellets weighing almost a quarter of a pound, while the bait, in absence of a bleak or gudgeon, consisted of an entire parr or fingerling. This he pitched from him, by means of a long, stiff rod, to an extraordinary distance, not less certainly than forty or fifty yards, allowing his line to spin out through the rings, and recovering it by the double action of his reel and hand, until the bait, having completed its course of transit, hung suspended midway betwixt the butt and top-piece. He then repeated, in a similar manner, the cast or heave out, causing the parr, as it returned towards him, to revolve with considerable speed and no doubt attract the notice of all the finny tribe within range of observation. I need not, however, state the result. The craziest salmon that ever cleft water would scarcely dream of showing snout to such a contrivance. At that season of the year especially, it was then about the end of autumn, there was not the smallest chance of obtaining even an offer, and unless the tackle should happen, by pure accident, to run athwart some spawning fish lying heedless on its redd, our distinguished sculptor might have ventured cast after cast, during a

whole term of weeks, without being able to hit the features of a solitary grilse.

While Sir F. was thus employed attempting to reconcile the monarch of the rivers to the food of the fresh-water tyrant, his friend Mr. W. had judiciously placed himself under guidance of T. Kerss the fisherman, who, as the water was small and the day clear, recommended the use of the worm in preference to fly. Acting according to Kerss's instructions, who stood at his elbow with the gaff-hook, Mr. W., in the course of two or three throws, had the satisfaction of fastening on a moderate-sized grilse. It was evident, however, that he had not been accustomed to deal with fish of great calibre, for no sooner was it hooked than he endeavoured, by a violent effort, to haul it directly to the edge—an act of temerity immediately repaid by the snapping asunder of his casting-line, and, of course, the escape of the fish. Being a dun grilse, the loss was by no means severe, and became speedily supplied by the capture of one in better condition. To this succeeded another, and after it a third. In short, within the course of two hours, Mr. W. landed no fewer than eleven fish, salmon and grilse, all within the distance of one hundred yards from each other —an angling feat, under the circumstances of the case, seldom equalled. It may be proper to state that the fish were none of them in the primest condition. Those taken with the worm, at a distance from the sea, seldom are so; for it generally happens that at least three weeks have elapsed betwixt the running of salmon during a flood, and the reduction of the water down to worm-fishing level.

Although the true salmon *(Salmo salar)* will seldom, in a full or swollen state of the river, show regard to bait of any kind, yet it does so occasionally. On the Nairn river, I captured with the worm a small clean salmon, the water being brown and full; and I have frequently on Teviot seen kelted fish taken by means of the minnow or parr-tail, under similar circumstances. I recollect capturing a newly-run salmon of above nine pounds weight out of the same river, under circumstances not at all favourable for the angler, the streams running large, and, although not absolutely dirty, being highly impregnated with snow water. As to bull-trout or whitlings, they will snatch at a worm, minnow, or parr-tail without much ceremony, I do not say freely or at all times, but with many degrees less fastidious-

ness than the salmon, during floods or while running. Cold weather also appetises them wonderfully; but when the river is clear and small they become a shy, distrustful fish. As kelts, however, they are, in all states of water, voracious, and will dash equally at bait and fly, with the fearlessness and avidity of the pike itself.

CHAPTER XIV.

PIKE AND PIKE-FISHING.

PIKE-Fishing.—Enormous Eel.—Ravages Committed by Pike among Salmon Fry and Trout.—Increase of Pike.—Pike Tackle.—Gorge Hook.—Mode of Baiting.—Spinning Bait Tackle.—Pike Fly.—Peculiar Disposition of the Fish.—When in Season.—Superiority of the Teviot Breed.—Weather and State of Water Suitable for Pike-Fishing.—Approved Method of Dispatching Large Fish.

Pickerel; Jack; Pike; Luce; Gedd.
FIN-RAYS.—D. 19; P. 14; V. 10; A. 17; C. 19.
GENERIC CHARACTERS.—Head depressed, large, oblong, blunt; jaws, palatine bones and vomer furnished with teeth of various sizes; body elongated, rounded on the back; sides compressed, covered with scales; dorsal fin placed very far back over the anal fin.—*Yarrell*, vol. i. p. 383.

ALTHOUGH, in common with most anglers, I esteem salmon-fishing and the capturing of trout, whether with fly, minnow, or worm, pre-eminent among river sports, the trolling for pike also in places where they are known to attain great size and are tolerably abundant is an amusement by no means uninteresting.

Of late years, I have occasionally practised this branch of the art with great success; my principal scene of action being the river Teviot, or, in fact, two or three pools belonging to it, which lie in the vicinity of Roxburgh, a small village situated about three miles from Kelso. As these pools, or the portions of them where pike lie (for they are not all throughout equally infested by this species of water-pirate), are neither extensive nor numerous, I generally managed to test them quite sufficiently for the day in the course of an hour or little more. In a brown water, and when the fish were in taking humour, I sometimes confined

myself to a single hole or haunt, from which, ere the elapse of twenty minutes, I have managed over and over again to abstract a large creel-load of fish, varying in point of numbers from two to six, and in point of weight from ten to two pounds. The period of the day I commonly, on these occasions, devoted to pike-trolling, ranged from one to five in the afternoon, and often succeeded a morning spent in trouting, when I was well supplied with fresh and proper sized baits. In their edible qualities, the Teviot pike are the finest I ever tasted. They cut firm and white, have little or none of that slimy flavour which this fish generally possesses, and in their formation are comparatively small-headed, deep-flanked, and broad-shouldered.

In respect to size they have varied considerably of late years, and at present, except in one or two spots difficult of access, few very large ones are to be met with.

The first time I had reason to suspect that pike were somewhat numerous in the part of Teviot alluded to was on the 29th of May, 1838. Previous to this date no one, I believe, ever dreamt of angling for them farther down the river than the pool at Mount Teviot, a strictly preserved stretch of water, into which the original stock had been committed by the late Marquis of Lothian, along with a breed of perch of a valuable description, attaining individually the weight of three or four pounds. On the day in question, the water being of a fine amber colour, I had been engaged trouting at the turn above Sunlaws Mill, the Nine Wells, and lower portions of the Ormiston streams, and had met with very fair success, having captured a fine whitling and several dozen of good yellow trout. Nearly three in the afternoon it was before I thought of retracing my steps homewards in the direction of Kelso, and this I did leisurely along the south bank of the river. On reaching that part of Teviot which runs opposite Roxburgh boat-house, I was struck, as I had previously been more than once, with the appearance of the water a little farther down, as being a likely refuge place for any stray pike which some large flood might possibly have carried away from the cauld at Mount Teviot. Accordingly, acting under this impression, I mounted appropriate tackle, appending the ordinary double-barbed gorge hook, and baiting it with a small trout. Holding the rod in my left hand, I hove the lure well out beyond a bed of pickerel

weed which extended to some distance from under the rush-lined margin beside me. Scarcely was the bait out of sight, when the half-expected token of a fish having seized it took place. No one that ever felt the first attack of a pike at the gorge-bait can easily forget it. It is not, as might be supposed from the character of the fish, a bold, eager, voracious grasp; quite the contrary, it is a slow, calculating grip. There is nothing about it dashing or at all violent; no stirring of the fins—no lashing of the tail—no expressed fury or revenge. The whole is mouth-work; calm, deliberate, bone-crashing, deadly mouth-work. You think at the moment you hear the action—the clanging action—of the fish's jaw-bones; and such jaw-bones, so powerful, so terrific! You think you hear the compressing, the racking of the victim betwixt them. The sensation is pleasurable to the angler as an avenger. Who among our gentle craft ever pitied a pike? I can fancy one lamenting over a salmon or star-stoled trout or playful minnow; nay, I have heard of those who, on being bereft of a pet gold-fish, actually wept; but a pike! itself unpitying, unsparing, who would pity?—who spare?

Returning, however, to the point in my narrative at which I broke off; I no sooner felt the well-known intimation, than drawing out line from my reel, and slightly slackening what had already passed the top-ring of my rod, I stood prepared for further movements on the part of the fish. After a short time he sailed slowly about, confining his excursions to within a yard or two of the spot where he had originally seized the bait. It was evident, as I knew from experience, that he still held the trout crosswise betwixt his jaws, and had not yet pouched or bolted it. To induce him, however, to do so without delay, I very slightly, as is my wont, tightened or rather jerked the line towards myself, in order to create the notion that his prey was making resistance and might escape from his grasp. A moment's halt indicated that he had taken the hint, and immediately afterwards, all being disposed of at one gulp, out he rushed, vigorous as any salmon, exhausting in one splendid run nearly the whole contents of my reel, and ending his exertions, in the meanwhile, with a desperate somerset, which revealed him to my view in all his size, vigour, and ferocity; the jaws grimly expanded, the fins erect, and the whole body in a state of uncontrollable ex-

citement. Being provided with a single-handed rod, and winch-line suited in respect of strength and thickness to light fishing, it was a marvel that either of these stood the test on an occasion so very trying. The worst, however, was over, and although the pike, as fish of its kind under similar circumstances always do, showed signs of remaining strength, coupled with great sullenness, it nevertheless, in the course of a few minutes, submitted to its fate, and allowed itself to be drawn ashore at a convenient landing-place, which fortunately was not far off.

This fish, the first I ever captured in Teviot, weighed nearly a stone, and preceded in its fate no fewer than four others, of the respective weights, or nearly so, of ten, eight, seven, and three pounds, all of which I took from about the same spot, in less than an hour's time. Shortly after, three or four days intervening, I killed two pike of twelve pounds weight each, close to the place mentioned, and in the same season met with an incident which, as it has some connection with pike-trolling, is worthy of being recorded in this chapter. It happened in the month of July, on which day Teviot, owing to recent rains, was somewhat discoloured, and I had ventured as far up its banks as the Roxburgh pool, intending to trout with fly and minnow, and also to give the pike a trial. That I might not, however, consume much time upon the latter fish, I had provided myself with a couple of set lines formed of strong cord. These it was my intention to lay out in a portion of the pool hitherto untried, and to allow them to remain there, while I angled for trout higher up the river. With the view of doing this I had secured, by desultory throwing in my progress towards Roxburgh, several small trout, and when arriving at the spot where I had intended to lay the lines, was unable to resist an anticipatory trial for pike with the rod itself, which, on this occasion, was a double-handed one, and provided with a good-sized reel and line to correspond.

Having affixed and baited a gorge-hook, I accordingly commenced operations, and in the course of a few throws hooked what I conceived to be a pike of extraordinary size. It pouched quickly, ran far, and forcibly crossed and re-crossed the river, which, at the spot in question, is by no means narrow,—rushed upwards to a distance of at least a hundred yards and down again, seemingly without the least

fatigue. Having regained, however, the spot from which it had commenced its run, all on a sudden the fish halted, and immediately, without any jerk or strain on my part, the line came to hand, neatly severed or cut through by the teeth, above the wire-fastenings to which the gorge-hook had been appended. No slight disappointment it was. I fancied of course that I had lost a pike of such uncommon size, as to have been able to engross, in pouching, the whole extent of arming in question, measuring nearly a foot. My sole resource, therefore, or hope of retrieve,—and I was by no means sanguine of the result,—lay in the setting of the two lines I had brought along with me, at or near the spot where the fish had made its escape. Accordingly, baiting each with a trout of at least four ounces in weight, I threw them in not far from one another, with small floats attached, in order to show off the lure and keep it from the bottom. This done, I pursued my way farther up the river and commenced trouting. On my return, after the expiry of two or three hours, to the place where I had set the lines, I found that both the corks were out of sight and the cords stretched to the uttermost, but quite motionless. Drawing the nearer one, I was surprised to observe it, although made of strong and fresh material, snapped through at the middle. It was not so, however, with the other. There was evidently something attached to it of considerable weight and bulk, without, however, any live resistance. Imagine my surprise, when, on hauling it nearer the bank, I beheld a huge eel enveloped among the cords, quite choked and lifeless. Of river eels it was the largest I had ever witnessed, although I certainly have seen congers of greater size. Above four feet and a half in length, and in girth fully eleven inches, I think it could not have weighed less than twenty pounds. This point, however, I wanted the ready means of determining, although I regret not having made an effort to acquaint myself with it. On examining the stomach of the monster, I found that it contained all the three gorge-hooks employed by me, and the trouts with which, individually, they had been baited. My experience in eel-fishing has not been very great, but I have taken some hundreds of them in my time, and I do not remember above one or two that showed fight in the same manner this one did, while on the rod. In general, they waddle or twist about, betake themselves under rocks, stones, or roots of

trees, but very seldom push out directly across or up the pool. With the gorge-hook indeed, and a small trout as the bait, I have often, both before and since the occasion above-mentioned, captured them; also while trolling for pike with gimp and swivel tackle, and that in mid water betwixt the bottom and surface; nor, indeed, will eels, when impelled by hunger, shrink from assailing the largest fish, should these happen to be sickly or in adverse circumstances. It is well known that what are termed river cairns, or heaps of stones raised by the tacksman of salmon-fishings for the purpose of inveigling running fish into a certain description of net attached to them, afford shelter to large numbers of eels and lampreys which, if the grilse or salmon happening to become entangled is allowed, through neglect or otherwise, to continue two or three hours in this state of thraldom, will, forcing an entrance through the gill or mouth, speedily disencumber it of its entrails; nay, if allowed to pursue their work of molestation unchecked, absolutely hollow it out, until little remains but a sack or skinful of bones.

To return, however, to the subject of pike-fishing, I may mention that, within the last eight or nine years, I have captured about one hundred and fifty pike out of Teviot alone, five-sixths of them with the rod, and, as has been already mentioned, chiefly during spare hours, and on my return from some trouting excursion. Of these, the largest was a male fish, and weighed about seventeen pounds. I caught another with the minnow and single gut line, on the 8th of March, 1845, weighing fourteen pounds, and I have not unfrequently taken others approaching to twelve pounds. That there still exist in the Heaton Mill Cauld several fish heavier than any I have named cannot be questioned. I once hooked and played one, apparently a twenty pounder, until quite exhausted, and had I been accommodated with a gaff-hook or convenient landing-place, would certainly have secured him. As it turned out, in the absence of either, I was compelled to use more than ordinary force, in order to bring him within reach of my hand. The tackle being formed of single gut, accordingly broke, and the fish, after lying motionless for some minutes on the surface of a bed of thick weeds, made his escape. A pike weighing nineteen pounds was killed, some years ago, with the leister, a little way below Ormiston Mill. This, perhaps, was the largest, actually secured, of Teviot pike.

The introduction of these fish into the principal tributary of Tweed, has, there is no question, conduced very materially to injure the salmon-fishings; nor, as may be supposed, have the common trout remained wholly unscathed. With regard to the ravages committed among the fry of the salmon, I may mention that almost every pike captured by me during the months of April and May contained in its stomach, or disgorged on being landed, the remains of one or more smolts. These frequently were quite entire—to all appearance, indeed, newly killed; they were sometimes also in a partly-digested state, and on other occasions presented to the eye little more than was sufficient to distinguish them as having been small fish. I have taken five or six salmon-fry, in the stages above described, out of the stomach of a single pike. Two, three, or four, are a matter of common occurrence. Such being the case, and if it be true, what many ichthyologists affirm, that fish dissolve their food with such astonishing rapidity as to rival, in some instances, the action of fire; nay, allowing that the stomach of the pike occupied a couple of hours in completing the digestive process, the amount of havoc committed by this ravager on Teviot, during the smolt season, is quite astonishing. Confining my calculation within very moderate bounds, I shall presume that each pike, on the average, as his daily meal, during the months already referred to, engrosess four salmon or bull-trout fry. This, in the course of sixty days, gives an allowance to every individual in Teviot of two hundred and forty smolts: and supposing there are from Ancrum Bridge downward, a stretch of water nine or ten miles in length, not more than one thousand pike, the entire number consumed by these in less than one-sixth of the year amounts to two hundred and forty thousand, or nearly a quarter of a million of salmon-fry—a greater number, there is no question, than is killed during the same extent of time by all the angling poachers in the district put together. This work of devastation among the smolts is the more to be regretted, seeing that there is not only no likelihood of its being brought to an end, but, on the contrary, from what I have observed, there is every chance of its extension and increase. The pike of Teviot, being well supplied with food, is of quick growth. I have ascertained pretty accurately that the average weight of a two-year-old fish runs from three

to five pounds. It is also a plentiful breeder, the leaf or waim of roe frequently taken by me from the inside of a highly-pregnant female pike exceeding, in point of size, what is generally found in a grilse or salmon of equal weight, and in the same advanced state of pregnancy. The ova or pellets, moreover, are much smaller, and consequently a great deal more numerous. They are to boot, in all likelihood, better defended during the spawning season from the attacks of trout and eels; and, in fact, every circumstance in connection with their growth and breeding subserves to impress the belief, that the pike, on many parts of Teviot, is in the fair way of adding to its depredations, and becoming numerically stronger and better intrenched. As lately as the year 1845, I captured several of these fish in portions of the river which until then had continued altogether free from their presence. One of these was previously a favourite minnow-cast for trout and salmon—excelled, in fact, by none on the river. It is now, as a resort of the former, nearly deserted; and even by the latter cannot be visited with security, for large and jealous pike will not hesitate to assail and drive away a fish so defenceless as the salmon really is, when interfering with what they esteem their acquired territories or strongholds. In the cast I allude to, I lost one day four minnow-tackles in succession, all of them having been bit through, directly above the hooks, by different pike. On attaching my bait, at length, to a small gimp-set tied on for the occasion, I secured two of the gang which, though by no means large ones, being only four pounds weight each, discovered in their shape and appearance the effects of ample and good feeding. An acquaintance of mine, also, not long after, caught a perch with the minnow in the same place—a circumstance which very rarely, if ever, happened so far down Teviot, certainly not in a rough, rapid stream which the greater portion of the cast in question consists of.

But indications of the increase of pike are, I understand, not confined to Teviot. They extend also to some of the pools in Tweed about Carham, etc. Fortunately, however, very few localities belonging to this river favour, as permanent haunts, their numerical increase. The rapid and clear nature of its waters, as well as their comparative freedom from weeds and bye-pools, secure the salmon-fry against any possibility of their suffering, as those in Teviot and Tay

do, from the assaults of so merciless an enemy. It is needless, however, to pursue this subject, being entirely one of local consequence, any further; nor have I done so up to the present point, with any intention of actually depreciating the fish in question as a sporting, or what a learned judge on the Scottish bench has expressed it, a game fish; all I wish to be inferred is, that its introduction into salmon or trouting waters is a matter of policy highly questionable —that at no time ought the rearing of a few pike to be effected, at the sacrifice of what are generally acknowledged, both with regard to sport itself and in their edible qualities, so very superior.

I shall now, therefore, proceed to make a few general observations relative to pike-fishing, and the ordinary modes of pursuing it. The pike-rod ought invariably to be long, stout in the material, and stiffish in the make. It should be provided with a reel or winch of corresponding dimensions, and line to suit. Of pike tackles, there are in common use three or four descriptions. The simplest, and in certain seasons and places the most deadly, is the gorge tackle. This consists of a double hook, having a detachable arming formed of brass wire.

The lure commonly employed on the gorge tackle is a small trout or parr, but it is capable, from its construction, of being baited in various ways and with diverse delicacies and attractions, such as frogs, morsels of bacon, etc., etc. In baiting with the trout or any other small fish, enter the detached end of the wire arming through the mouth, and passing it along under the skin of the fish, bring it out again, avoiding the vent, as near as possible to the tail or caudal fin. Draw all tight, and observe that the hooks protrude freely on either side of the mouth. The tail, if thought requisite, may be fastened with thread or small twine to the wire arming, in order to keep the bait in shape and allow of its being gorged more easily.

In angling, either pitch the bait forward by means of the rod, or heave it from you with the hand. Allow it, if in deep water, to sink well, before commencing to fetch it home. Do this by degrees, impelling it towards the surface, in short, urgent movements, and then, just as you catch a glimpse of it, relaxing your pull and thereby occasioning it to drop again towards the bottom. Repeat, unless prevented by weeds or other obstacles, this mode of drawing

home the bait, until you bring it to the water's edge. I have already described the manner in which pike generally attack the gorge-bait and the proper way of dealing with them. One instruction, however, I shall repeat, as most essential, with respect to this kind of fishing. Always give the pike time to swallow. If he is disposed to take time, allow him five, or even ten minutes. A slight measure of resistance generally, however, provokes him to be more expeditious, and even a prick from one of the projecting barbs of the gorge-hook casually inflicted upon him has often the same effect; but I would, in most cases, be careful how I use much freedom with the rascal, for the boldest fish are sometimes shy and distrustful beyond expectation. When a large pike has fairly swallowed the bait, he soon gives intimation of it, and even a small one makes his chain ring.

The running tackle for pike I recommend to be made up of three hooks, like the parr-tail tackle on a larger scale, and dressed upon good gimp traces with a pair of box-swivels, the lower one fastened about eighteen inches above the hooks, and the uppermost at or near the junction of the casting and reel lines. Bait with a small trout or parr, and according to the directions already given in my chapter on minnow and parr-tail-fishing, when treating of the spinning lure. Should the trout be too large to be employed entire, cut it as there instructed into two parts, using the lower one divested of its fins, tail-foremost, and the remaining or head portion, as the shape suggests. See that the bait spins freely, and let the striking of the fish command your particular attention. Never attempt this operation until he has fairly turned with the lure betwixt his jaws, and you actually feel his weight; then, knowing the strength of your tackle, drive the barbed hooks smartly across his mouth, and he is fastened to your heart's content.

In loch trolling from a boat, it is common, where pike are plentiful, to crowd the tackle with hooks. The advantage of this practice is very doubtful. Certainly, it does not in the slightest degree assist or improve the spinning, and as to rendering the getting hold of the fish more certain, experience has led me to believe that the parr-tail running-tackle, already recommended, is, if properly managed, as sufficiently effective as any other combination of hooks in use.

It may be from prejudice, but I must confess that, with regard to the form and making up of pike and trolling tackles, commonly used by English anglers, they appear to me to be, many of them, shop contrivances, mere fancy articles made to please the eye of the purchaser. In several cases, also, they are the produce of a whim or speculative notion, on the part of some angler who, no doubt, can expatiate largely on the virtues and marvellous facilities of his invention, perhaps can enumerate instances of its successful application, and bids defiance to the possibility of its being excelled or outrivalled. But there is a great difference, mark me, betwixt the actual and the possible—betwixt tackle tried by experiment and contrivances whose recommendatory points are only in the brain of the inventor. To the former, there is due a fixed degree of appreciation; to the latter, little more than the regard called forth by an object which excites our curiosity.

Of snap or spring-hooks for pike I shall say nothing, holding them, as I do, quite superfluous; neither shall I venture to describe the live-bait tackle, never having used it. I have no doubt, however, that angling for pike with the live-bait is, in certain places, a very deadly mode of fishing, but there is too much of the drowsy, set-line kind of work about it for my taste. Set-lines themselves and trimmers I forbear touching upon. They are all well enough in their way, and on many occasions afford very good amusement, but I can scarcely treat of them in these pages, as legitimate means of angling, much more so in fact than netting itself is.

With regard to fly-fishing for pike, I used to practise it, many years ago, with tolerable success in a shallow loch in Fife. I have also tried it in Perthshire, but the result of my several experiments with the pike-fly is, that I am convinced it is not a lure at all attractive to large or even middle-sized fish; that, in fact, few of a greater weight than three or four pounds are ever tempted to seize it, and these do so only in shoal water, and during dull, windy days. Pike-flies ought to be big and gaudy, the wings formed each of the eye of a peacock's tail-feather,—the body plentifully bedizened with dyed wool, bright hackles, and tinsels. Bead-eyes, also, are held in estimation, and gimp or wire arming is of course essential.

The pike, although a bold, vindictive fish, careless of the

angler's presence when in pursuit of its prey, is nevertheless sulky in its disposition, not to be tempted, at times, by any bait, although dropped immediately before its snout. It is liable, also, to be operated upon by the weather, more so even than the trout is; and moreover, in many places, has its feeding hours, apart from which it is loth, unless under very favourable circumstances, to follow the bait. As regards seasons, however, I have caught it in Teviot throughout all the year, but the pike of this river may possibly form one of several exceptions to the general rule; for in the Loch of the Lowes, in Selkirkshire, as well as in certain lakes in Ross-shire, where I have over and over again exerted my utmost skill, during the spring months, to secure a single fish, I never could accomplish my object sooner than the month of May; and even then, the disposition of the pike to take freely was very questionably manifested.

Out of Till, which is an early river, and swarms with pike, I once took several of these fish, during spring, and have no doubt, that, as in Teviot, they may be captured there at any season. Their spawning months, in the south of Scotland, are March and April; and they are considered by many epicures as finest in condition when full of roe. For my own part, with regard to the Teviot pike, at no season did I ever capture one which was not highly relishable, being firm, white in the flesh, and well tasted. Those of the Loch of the Lowes possess the same qualities; but it is very different with the pike of Yetholm Loch, of Earn, Tay, and twenty other places where I have taken them. On the contrary, the fish of these waters are, with few exceptions, soft and slimy—in fact, positively disagreeable to the smell and taste. It is a great improvement to the fish to have it crimped, immediately on its being taken, at the water-side. I have seen grilses and salmon also treated in this manner, and it brings out the curdy firmness of the fish amazingly in boiling. After cleansing, wrap up the pike in a cloth brought for the purpose, and transfer it to your pannier. The directions for boiling it are similar to those I have elsewhere given for the boiling of salmon; only it is advisable, first of all, to immerse the fish for a minute or two in hot, scalding water, and thereby render easy the removal of the scales by means of a knife or scraper. A pike of about eight pounds in weight, when baked or roasted,

forms an excellent dish. It is, of course, much improved by various sauces and stuffings; but it is not, as some affirm, mainly indebted to these for its edible qualities. As for the Teviot pike, I consider them, at all seasons, preferable to the general run of salmon captured in that stream, these being, during the spring months, chiefly kelts or baggits, and, after September, dun, soft, unhealthy-looking fish. Occasionally, it is true, one may alight upon a lively grilse in July or August, or even a clean salmon, now and then, but such events are of rare occurrence.

I have not, as yet, attempted any description of the places generally resorted to, and held in defence by the pike or jack. They consist, in lochs, of all shoal and weedy parts, of bays and covert places, such as are formed by a projecting wall or sunken tree. In rivers, they include the bye-water, and such spots as are not much operated on by the ordinary current. Damheads, moreover, or the pools superintending them are favourite haunts with this fish; the rich mould which settles and remains in many of them, after floods, conducing to the growth of various kinds of water-weeds, such as the pickerel, etc., the varied depth, also, and limitation of currents being in accordance with its tastes and habits.

Some naturalists affirm that the pike is a solitary fish. This I hold to be quite a mistake. They are, at certain seasons, as gregarious, if not more so, than the trout. True, they do not swim exactly side by side, like perch; but, as accords with their size and rapacity, maintain a wider range; and when on the bask, or in sunning humour, distribute themselves along the margin or plot of floating weeds, at short distances, each seemingly having its own lurking-place apportioned to it. I have captured frequently five or six pike, one after the other, out of the same hole, and from the same stance; although, in experimenting previously, for the space of an hour over the cast, I was unable to detect the presence of a single fish. None, in fact, I am convinced, were at that time upon the spot, and they had evidently, in the interval, taken possession of it, as a body, not as individuals.

As to the weather and state of water best suited for pike-fishing, the former I esteem most when dull and warm; there being at the time a breeze from the south or south-west. Sunny glimpses, now and then, are not unfavourable,

and the approach of thunder, so inimical to the hopes of the trout-fisher, may be held auspicious. On cold days, however windy, pike seldom bite well, although in Teviot, during the spring season, I have met with exceptions. In this river also, I have noticed that these fish are in high humour for taking immediately before a flood, and when the water is just beginning to swell. This is owing, no doubt, to the anticipations entertained by them, through instinct, of being deprived for some length of time of their usual food, which, during a thick, muddy water, they are unable to discern and secure. They, moreover, bite freely, when the river is of a deep brown colour, and I have caught them in pools highly impregnated with snow; in fact, there is no state of water, actual floods excepted, during which the river pike I allude to may not be induced to take.

Before concluding this chapter, a single advice as to the mode of despatching pike when landed, and of extracting most readily and with least danger the gorge-hook, may not be reckoned superfluous. The quickest, simplest, and most effectual way of killing the fish is by spining it, that is, by urging a sharp instrument, such as the strong blade of a pocket-knife, through the spinal marrow at its junction with the brain; a spot at once ascertained from its being situated immediately behind the skull bone. The pike being thus despatched, open the gill cover, and cutting through the gills themselves, allow them to bleed freely. This done, take hold of the wire arming of the gorge-hook, and, drawing it tightly up, you will discover your hook lodged fast among the entrails of the fish. You have then only to cut it out with your knife, and, disengaging it from the wire, draw the latter, along with the bait, through the lifeless and unresisting jaws.

CHAPTER XV.

COOKING OF SALMON, &c.

A Tweedside Kettle.—Directions for Boiling Salmon, Grilse, and Sea-Trout.—The Curing or Kippering of Salmon.—Berwick Mode.—Pickled Salmon.—Method of Roasting Salmon.—Recipe for Potting Charr, Trout, etc.—A Simple Way of Cooking a Whitling or Good Trout by the Riverside.—Frying of Trout.—Boiling and Baking Pike.

I shall conclude these chapters with a few culinary observations on the dressing of salmon, trout, and other freshwater fish. The method of cooking salmon on Tweedside differs in many respects from that practised elsewhere; but it is not, on this account, without its recommendations, and by one who has enjoyed in perfection what is termed a fisherman's kettle, the Metropolitan mode of dressing the king of fishes stands a chance of being resolutely decried in future. Our Border epicures, it is necessary to state, are in general good judges of a proper fish. Unlike the inhabitants of Leeds or Birmingham, they can distinguish at a glance the kelt, spring-spawner, or bull-trout from the clean or new-run salmon. They can pronounce also, without hesitation, upon the length of time a fish has been kept, whether taken from the sea or river; and if from the latter, how long ago it left the salt water. In all these matters, I grant, they are not only well versed, but somewhat fastidious, and regulate their cooking accordingly.

Boiling of Salmon.—It is essential that a salmon intended for boiling should have been newly caught; the fresher it can be procured the better, and a fish transferred from the net or gaff-hook to the pan or kettle, is always sure to give the most satisfaction. The way of treating a salmon, under one or other of these circumstances, is as follows:—Crimp the fish immediately on its being killed, by the water-side, making the cuts slantwise, and at a distance of two inches from each other; separate also the gills, and holding it by the tail, immerse its body in the stream for the space of three or four minutes, moving it backwards and forwards, so as to expedite the flowing off of the blood. In the meantime, give orders, if you have not previously done so, to have the fire briskened and the pot or cauldron

filled, or nearly so, with spring water, set on to boil. The fish, after being crimped and bled as I have directed, must now be conveyed to a table or kitchen dresser, and there thoroughly cleansed inside. This done, divide it through the backdone into cuts or slices, of the thickness already indicated in the crimping, throwing these into a large hand-basin as you proceed. I shall presume, by this time, that the water is at the boiling point. If so, convey to it a large bowlful of kitchen salt; do not scrimp the material or you ruin the fish. Allow the water, thus checked, again to bubble up, and then pop in the cuts of salmon, head and all. Several minutes will elapse before the liquid contents of the pot once more arrive at the boiling point; when they do so, begin to note the time, and see, as you measure it, that the fire is a brave one. For all fish under nine pounds weight, allow ten minutes brisk boiling, and when exceeding nine pounds, grant an extra minute to every additional pound. When ready, serve hot, along with the brine in which the fish was cooked. This is salmon in perfection, and constitutes the veritable kettle of Tweedside, such as frothed and foamed in the days of the merry monks of Melrose and Kelso, and what, no doubt, has been feasted on in a less civilised age than ours, by the crowned heads of rival kingdoms within the towers of Roxburgh, Wark, and Norham. Who knows indeed but some sturdy Roman imperator has tickled his palate at a fish-kettle on Tweedside, and taken home to the Seven-hilled city, and the gourmands of the senate-house, a description of the primitive banquet?

A fresh salmon thus cooked is remarkable for its curd and consistence, and very unlike the soft oily mass generally presented under that designation. Even when it has been kept a day or two, this method of boiling will be found to bring out more equally the true flavour of the fish, than if it had been placed entire, with a mere sprinkling of salt, in the fish-pan. Under these circumstances melted butter is preferred by some to the simple gravy above mentioned, but no true fish-eater can tolerate the substitute.

Through the kindness of Thomas Whyte, Esq., solicitor, Berwick-on-Tweed, I have been favoured with another much-approved-of recipe for the boiling of this delicious fish:—

"Cut off the tail of the salmon, grilse, or sea-trout about

four inches above the fin, then split the fish in two halves along the bone, and after removing the entrails cut it across into pieces of about two and a half or three inches in breadth, or a little broader if required. Remove all the blood from the bone, and wash the cuts perfectly clean in cold water. Hard water, both in washing and boiling the fish, is to be preferred. The scales ought not to be scraped off.

"The water in which the fish is boiled ought previously to be made nearly as salt as to float an egg; and the cuts should be put into this salt water or pickle when boiling, with the skin uppermost. The quicker they boil the better.

"If the fish weighs twenty pounds, let it boil twenty minutes; if fifteen pounds, eighteen minutes; if ten pounds, fifteen minutes; and if five pounds, ten minutes. While the cuts are boiling, the pickle ought to be continually and carefully skimmed, and when sufficiently boiled, the cuts cannot be too speedily taken out of the pickle. Dish quickly, skin uppermost, with a quantity of the pickle in which they are boiled."

THE CURING OR KIPPERING OF SALMON.—Kippered salmon is a well-known article of food, and in high esteem for its relishable qualities at the breakfast table; but it is generally met with in a faulty state, either too hard or too salt.

The salmon best adapted for kippering are large fish, averaging from fourteen pounds to thirty pounds in weight; the smaller ones and grilses make, however, excellent green kippers, to be eaten when soft and juicy. Such kippers as are intended for winter use should be prepared in the month of October, immediately before close time. Although the term kipper, signifying a he-fish, is likewise applied to salmon cured in a particular way, it is really a matter of indifference whether the male or the female be used for the purpose in question. It so happens that, in the kippering season, the generality of males captured are of a coarser, if not larger, description than individuals of the other sex; the market-price also is, in consequence, somewhat lower, and they are generally preferred as fitter to be operated upon.

In kippering a salmon, the first step taken is to lay the fish on its broad side on a board or table, and by means of

a sharp knife cut it up from tail to head, close along the backbone, taking care not to injure the belly or keel by inserting the blade too far. Disengage and throw away the entrails and gills; also wash the fish well, removing and pressing out every bloody particle from the inside. Take out the eyes and insert a pinch or two of salt in their place, also cut away the vent. This done, sprinkle a handful or two of brown sugar over the inside, and above it, the same quantity or rather more of common salt. The latter will occasion the sugar to penetrate and help to improve the flavour of the salmon better than if the materials had been previously mixed up together. Some recommend the rubbing in of salt and sugar, by means of the hand, against the scales of the fish externally, as well as over the inside; but this is not at all necessary. After the application in question has been made, lay the salmon flat upon a board, the inside turned uppermost; cover with a cloth, and allow it to remain twenty-four hours, or if preferred saltish, thirty-six hours in a cool place; after which, give it a slight wash, in order to improve its appearance, and arrange two or three wooden pegs or skewers along the interior from flank to flank, to keep it stretched; then hang it up to dry in a place neither too hot nor too cool. Should the weather prove fine, an hour or two of exposure to the sun and air will conduce to accelerate the curing process, and render it less liable to be injured by dust and smoke. Salmon, on being kippered, are subject to considerable loss of weight; for instance, a fish that originally weighed sixteen pounds will, when cured, not exceed eleven. In broiling kipper, it is a great improvement to wrap up the cuts, which ought not to be made too thin, in white paper. This will prevent them being smoked or becoming too hard externally. Fresh salmon broiled in the same manner is delicious, and made to retain its flavour in full perfection.

The gentleman already mentioned has also favoured me with an account of the modes of kippering and pickling salmon, adopted at Berwick, and communicated to him, the one by a fish salesman, and the other by a celebrated salmon curer in that town.

"KIPPERED SALMON.—Split the fish in two halves, along the bone, from the tail to the head, but without separating the two halves, and after removing the entrails and all the blood from the bone, wash the fish perfectly clean, in

cold, hard water. The scales ought never to be scraped off.

"Rub a little dry salt upon the outside of the fish, against the scales, from the tail to the head, and throw some loosely upon the inside, without rubbing. Lay the salmon or grilse, when thus salted, upon a flat table or board, and cover with another piece of board or thin deal; let it remain so covered for forty-eight hours or twenty-four hours, according to the size of the fish. A salmon of from ten pounds to twenty pounds requires to lie in this state for forty-eight hours,—a grilse requires twenty-four hours only. Three or four plaster laths or hoop sticks must then, to keep it flat, be placed across the fish, which should afterwards be hung up by the tail to dry.

"The fish is in perfection, as a kipper, after it has been dried about twenty-four hours; and it will keep, thus kippered, for many months, though apt to get too salt, and require steeping in cold water, before use."

"PICKLED SALMON.—Allow the fish to lie twenty-four hours in winter, or twelve in summer, after being caught. It will not take the salt when quite fresh. Then split, wash and cut into junks, as directed in boiling salmon. Boil these in a very strong salt pickle, allowing to a fish of eight pounds weight, nine minutes; one of twelve pounds ditto, fourteen minutes; one of fifteen pounds, seventeen minutes, and one of twenty pounds, twenty-five minutes. A number of salmon boiled together of ten pounds weight each require fifteen minutes. The time must, in all cases, be calculated from the moment the water returns to the boiling point, and not from that in which the fish are put into it.

"When the salmon has boiled the proper time, take it out of the pickle as expeditiously as possible, put it on a drainer and allow it to cool for twenty-four hours in summer. It should then be packed, skin uppermost, in kits or jars, and completely covered with cold vinegar and a small quantity of the pickle or liquor in which it was boiled. To exclude the air effectually, the kits or jars in which it is placed should be run over, on the top of the vinegar, with a little boiling lard and the whole secured by a tin or earthenware cover. Jars are preferable to kits, as the air can be more readily excluded from the fish. Care must be taken, on the exhaustion of the vinegar, to add a fresh supply. Salmon, in this state, will remain good for months."

The method of cooking or roasting salmon at the lakes of Killarney, in Ireland, is pretty generally known, but as the recipe is an excellent one, and I have seen it acted on in Scotland, with this difference, that the skewers employed were cut from the juniper bush instead of arbutus, I shall insert it.

"The salmon, as soon as caught, to be cut into slices, which are split and a strong skewer of arbutus run through each as close to the skin as possible. These skewers are then stuck upright in a sod of turf, before a clear wood fire, and constantly turned and basted with salt and water;—the fish, when sufficiently roasted, is served up on the skewers, which are supposed to communicate a peculiar aromatic flavour."

RECIPE FOR POTTING CHARR AND TROUT.—The following are the ingredients required, in order to pot a stone weight of fish.

3	tea-spoonsful	of ground	black pepper.
3	,,	,,	allspice.
2	,,	,,	mace.
1	,,	,,	cloves.
1	,,	,,	nutmeg.
½	,,	,,	cayenne.

Keep these carefully corked up in a small phial, and add, when employing them, a little salt.

Cut open the fish and clean well with a dry cloth. Remove the heads, tails, and fins, along with the back bones. This done, apply the mixture, transferring them, as you do so, to a baking dish. Cover well with fresh butter, and place the dish in a slow oven, allowing it to remain there until the bones of the fish become dissolved; drain off the butter and remove the charr or trout into potting dishes: press them well down and pour fresh butter over them. Trout, treated in this manner, ought to be red-fleshed and not exceed three-quarters of a pound in weight. If well selected and in good season, they will be found not a whit inferior to the best charr.

SIMPLE RECIPE FOR COOKING A WHITLING OR GOOD TROUT BY THE RIVER-SIDE.—Kindle a fire of dry wood. Take your fish when just out of the water. Fill his mouth with salt: roll him up in two or three folds of an old newspaper, twisting the ends well together. Immerse all in the

water, until the paper has become thoroughly saturated. Then lay the fish among the embers of your fire. When the paper presents a well-charred appearance, the trout is properly done, and will prove a savoury and acceptable morsel. The fish, I may observe, must *not* be cut open and cleaned. During the firing process, the intestines and other impurities will draw together, and not in the slightest degree injure the flavour of the trout.

THE FRYING OF TROUT.—Preparatory to frying trout, it is common in Scotland to enwrap the fish in a coating of oatmeal. I am not national enough in my tastes to approve of this mode of concealing its flavour, and I certainly prefer, if the fish is to be encrusted at all, the adoption of bread-crumbs and the yoke of an egg. Good red-fleshed trout, however, require no disguise, on being fried, and simple lard or butter is sufficient for the purpose. Trout upwards of half a pound in weight ought to be split open by the back bone, and placed flat in the pan, which should previously be well heated, over a clear fire, and elevated, when the fish are laid on. Small trout and parr make a delicious dish, if properly fried.

BOILED AND BAKED PIKE.—Pike and eels are fish not much relished in Scotland, at least on Tweedside. I hold both, however, in high esteem, as articles of food. The former, if intended for boiling, ought to be crimped when caught, and treated in the same manner as I have described the salmon to be by Tweed fishermen. A baked pike with bread stuffing is excellent, and oysters form a great improvement. The scales, or even the skin of this fish ought always to be removed; the flavour resulting therefrom not being the most agreeable. This is done by plotting the pike in hot water and thoroughly scraping or flaying him. Pike associated with trout, whether taken from a river or loch, are always better tasted than those which feed on eels and frogs.

Angler! that all day long hast wandered by sunny stream, and heart and hand, plied the meditative art, who hast filled thy pannier brimful of star-sided trout, and with aching arms, and weary back, and faint, wavering step, crossed the threshold of some cottage-inn—a smiling, rural retreat that starts up, when thy wishes are waning into despondency, how grateful to thee is the merry song of the frying-pan, strewn over with the daintiest of thy spoils and

superintended by a laughter-loving hostess and her blooming image! and thou too, slayer of salmon! more matured and fastidious, what sound, when thy reel is at rest, like the bubbling and frothing of the fish-kettle! what fare more acceptable than the shoulder-cut, snowed over with curd, of a gallant sixteen-pounder, and where, in the wide world, is to be found wholesomer and heartier sauce, to the one as well as to the other, than a goblet generously mixed of Islay, and piping hot? Stretch thy hand over thy mercies and be thankful.

THE END.

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