

THE GENTLE ART OF ANGLING

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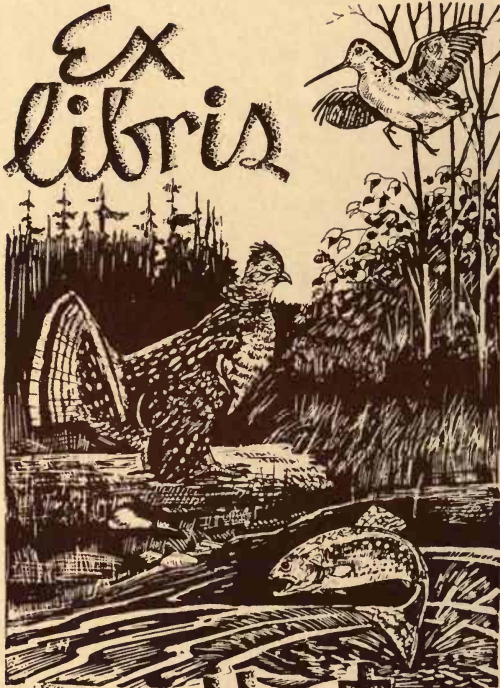


BY
CORRIGEEEN

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Don Horter

THE DRY FLY METHOD FOR SEA-TROUT.

THE DRY-FLY METHOD of angling, is, I am disposed to think, of general application. I tried it in the interior of Canada, on a river where I was assured a floating fly had never been used, and the Dolly Varden trout rise to it with avidity. I spent some time by the river and, strange to say, never noticed a fly on it. The wet patterns that killed best were small salmon flies that had no natural prototypes. Yet the fish rose to the red quill, olive dun, and blue upright with the ease and certainty of practised hands, very rarely missing.

My latest application of the art was to sea-trout. These sporting fish take the wet fly so freely that one rarely thinks of mounting anything else. The conditions in which they are caught lend themselves more freely to that method of angling. It is usually swift-flowing water, too turbulent for the light bark of a dry fly to travel many yards before being swamped. I was fishing such a river late last season. There were plenty of trout in the pools, but the water was so light and the sun so brilliant that they rose very badly, and only a few herring-sized fish were netted. I mounted the finest gut, reduced the flies from three to one, but it made little difference. Then I tried the dry fly, fishing the pool up from the bottom.

The fly had no sooner touched the water than it was down to where I stood, so rapid was the current. In the second or third swift passage a trout took it, making light of the flying shot it entailed, and darted across stream, firmly hooked. A second soon joined him in the creel. Then a big fellow entered the lists as competitor amongst the smaller fry, and half emptied my reel before I could stop him. Unfortunately, he went down a swift rapid, where it was impossible to hold him, and smashed me on a long run. Another, hooked on a stouter gut point, was prevented from embarking on a similar career, and weighed a pound and a quarter. These fish took a 00 March brown; then I rounded the corner of a dull interval by mounting an iron blue. It acted like magic, and brought up fish after fish. It is difficult to imagine anything less like sea-trout flies than the iron blue. It may have been its dissimilarity that formed the attraction. Whatever the explanation, it afforded me a fine piece of sport, and was instrumental in securing an excellent creel. I strongly recommend the use of the dry fly to sea-trout anglers as a change method.

CORRIGIEN.

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The Gentle Art of Angling

A PRACTICAL HANDBOOK.

BY

CORRIGEEN, *pen.*

Joseph Adams
"

LONDON :

Office of "Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes,"

VINTON & CO., LTD., 8, BREAM'S BUILDINGS, CHANCERY LANE, E.C.

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PREFACE.

THE number of books on angling proves not only the interest the subject commands, but the variety of points of view from which it may be treated. To cope with the wiles of the timid roach and carp, and wary trout and salmon, the craft has developed to such a degree as to rank among the sciences. Once having reached that position, it would be presumption on the part of any writer to claim to have said the last word.

It is clear, from the literature on the subject, that considerable diversity of opinion exists among the authorities; not only on the natural history of the fish and fish-culture, but also on the practical side of the art, in the choice and use of rods and tackle. It is among these gaps that a niche may be found for a new book on angling, which, while covering much of the ground already traversed by other writers, takes occasional excursions into less explored territory.

Every angler has his own method of approaching the suspicious quarry and wooing him to destruction. If he urges this as the better way, he does so out of the fulness of practical experience. Whilst infallibility does not rest with any one method, in the careful statement of different points of view lies instruction.

One departure from familiar paths in the following pages is on the make and weight of salmon rods. Reform in the use of heavy and unwieldy weapons is overdue. The practicability of the counsel I venture to give finds support in the fact that one of the principal manufacturers has produced a salmon rod corresponding in weight and efficiency with what I have advised.

The chapters on the art of rod-making and fly-tying are intended for the rapidly increasing number of young anglers who aspire to come into closer touch with the craft of so healthy and fascinating a pastime.

The illustrations throughout the book are original, and consequently have the defects of that virtue, as must be the case in amateur work. This course I thought preferable to using the familiar catalogue cuts that have been repeated in so many books on angling. The choice and variety of illustrations will, it is hoped, compensate

for the imperfections of the photographer. The assistance received from several of the leading tackle makers has considerably lessened this part of my task. In making this acknowledgment I desire to add my best thanks. Amongst these are included the names of Messrs. Hardy Bros., Alnwick; Messrs. C. Farlow, Strand; Mrs. Ogden Smith, Knightsbridge; Messrs. Enright and Sons, Castleconnell; and Mr. John Lydon, Galway.

I am also indebted to Messrs. R. and J. Beck, the opticians, who have assisted me with special photographic appliances. For the Natural History of Fish, I have consulted the standard authors; and for Dry Fly Entomology, Mr. F. M. Halford's book, which occupies the premier place amongst works on that subject.

THE AUTHOR.

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THE GENTLE ART OF ANGLING.

CHAPTER I.

GUDGEON AND ROACH.

INTRODUCTORY.

AMATEUR angling is primarily a distraction. As such it fulfils a purpose which all innocent pleasures are intended to subserve. It takes one amongst green fields and by the side of restful rivers where the jar and clash of business life are forgotten in the hush of Nature's gentle mood. In this respect it effects detachment from the hard, matter-of-fact pursuits in which most of us are compelled to engage.

To the busy man rest is not always holiday; to the man without a hobby retirement frequently shortens the span of life. An object to pursue is, as a rule, essential to the strenuous life, and the range of angling is so wide that some branch of it can be easily acquired which healthfully brings into play forces so accustomed to movement that they are disposed to chafe under inactivity.

In an address to medical men on the preservation of their health, reported some time ago in the *British Medical Journal*, the following advice is given:—“Every medical man, if possible, should have an outdoor sport of some kind; golf and cycling are good, but perhaps the best of all is fly-fishing. It takes one usually

into beautiful country; the exercise is gentle and varied; the interest is absorbing, and to my mind is far better for the jaded practitioner than scampering half over Europe in a hurry.”

Angling, therefore, in addition to being a recreation, fulfils a physical purpose. Those who pursue it corroborate the fact. Fly-fishing especially is healthy gymnastic exercise which brings not only the muscles of the arms into play, but also the chest. An example may be cited. A youth with hereditary tendencies to consumption was medically examined and declared to be abnormally flat-chested. Out-of-door exercise was prescribed, and he took to salmon-fishing, spending four or five consecutive weeks by the river, and as many odd days as possible. Ten years afterwards he was down with influenza, and another doctor, who knew nothing of his history, exclaimed, on sounding him, “What a well-developed chest you have! Very rare in a man of sedentary habits.” He told his story, and the doctor agreed that he owed it to the rod-casting exercise. It may give point to the story to add that it is a chapter out of the writer's own biography.

A well-known London medical specialist with a large practice thinks it worth his while to travel by the night train to Scotland, fish the next day, and return to town within the thirty-six hours. "It is the best exercise," he says, "and clears out the lungs." Salmon-fishing is an advanced stage in the art that can only be attained by prolonged practice. Coarse fishing is the matriculating stage, and as these instructions

cheap manufacture will have to be repeated again and again, and be the occasion of irritation and disappointment. The varieties of rods in the market are endless, and in order not to confuse the beginner by cataloguing rival designs and makes, and placing him in the position of the lover who sighed:

How happy could I be with either,
Were t'other dear charmer away,
intend to confine myself to a

A.

B

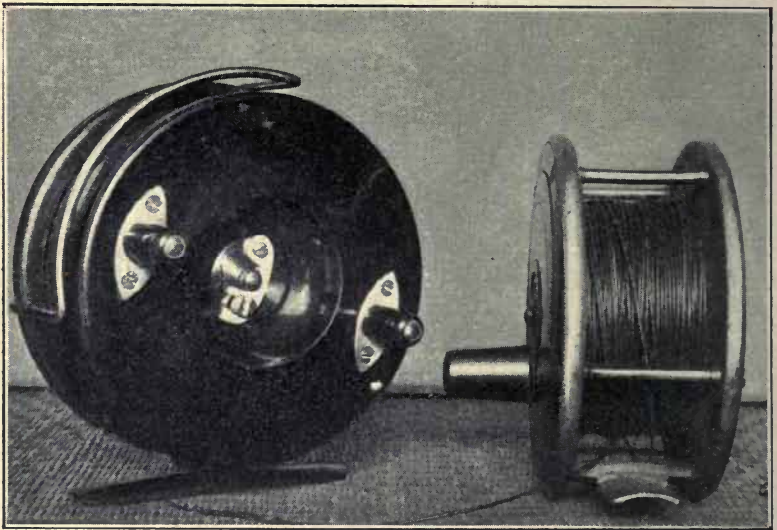


PLATE I.

BOTTOM FISHING REELS.

A.—Hardy Bros., Nottingham Reel with "Silex" and "Adjustable" Check Action.
B.—Gunmetal Reel.

extend from gudgeon to salmon, the latter will be fully dealt with in its proper place.

In regard to rods and tackle for coarse and game fishing, too much stress cannot be laid upon the wisdom of purchasing from the best makers at the outset. This course will prove the most economical in the long run. A really good rod will last the best of a lifetime, whereas an article of

make of rod of which I can speak from practical knowledge, and which, in my judgment, is at least as good as anything that can be procured. Possibly, as the young angler gains experience in the craft, he may become an eclectic, and select a modification of make suitable to his build and temperament. He will always find a good maker ready to meet him in this particular, and he is much

more likely to get exactly what he requires by graduating in a good school.

A rod, like a gun, must fit the user. To fail in this is to fall short in an essential particular. In coarse fishing this may not seem of much account, but in trout and salmon angling it is of the first importance.

I may have occasion to suggest some modifications in the action of rods under the head of game-fishing. Here again one speaks from his own point of view, and must suggest rather than dogmatize.

THE GUDGEON (Genus *Gobio*.)

The gudgeon is a small dark brown fish with spots on the sides and tail. It congregates in large shoals. It is a shapely fish, bearded like the barbel, and found in most of our rivers. It takes paste and gentles, but a small red worm is the favourite bait. An ordinary light roach rod, which is described under the roach section, is suitable for their capture. The finest gut must be used, varying in length according to the depth of the water. The gut must be shotted, so as to float down the stream perpendicularly. The strength of the swim will determine the number of pellets required; that nearest to the hook, and about 8 inches from it, must be very small, the rest graduated in size, always bearing in mind the fewer the better, as long as the float sinks properly. A No. 5 or 6 hook is the proper size for worms. The line should be of the finest quality, with a very light float of the A pattern shown in Plate II. Fix the float at a depth that carries the bait about 3 inches from the bottom of the swim.

Gudgeon frequent a gravelly bottom, which supplies the food on which they feed, and as perch

like a similar swim, and may take a fancy to the succulent worm intended for Master Gobio, it is just as well to be prepared for him. With a fixed line a good perch would make short work of fine tackle. It is advisable, therefore, to have a running line on a light reel. One of the best places to find gudgeon is on a recently baited barbel swim. After the ground bait is exhausted there remain odds-and-ends of worms, gentles, and such-like, too minute for the greedy barbel, but sufficient to reward the industry of gobio, who does not object to grubbing for dainty bits. It is quite possible that an odd barbel, with pleasant recollections of a good time, may return to look round and see what is going on, and on discovering a wriggling worm or pair of gentles drifting towards him, pounces upon it, to be immediately hooked. With a free running line, however fine the tackle, there would be some chance, by skilful management, to bring him to the net—a feat impossible with fixed tackle. In fishing a swim from a moored punt a running line is indispensable, as the bait drifts over a larger stretch of water. The strength of the current carries the line forward, aided by gently unwinding the winch with the fingers of the left hand.

Gudgeon swarm towards muddy water and are always taken in greatest number where the river is slightly discoloured during or after a spate. In the absence of this condition the angler artificially supplies it. For this purpose what is known as a gudgeon rake has become a part of the outfit. It is a long-handled implement which is drawn over the gravel in the bed of the river in front of or behind the punt. This rake stirs up the mud, and with it the food

beloved of gudgeon, amongst which the hooked bait drifts, and the feeding that was going off is renewed. Several dozens of fish may be taken by this device. Gudgeon make excellent live bait for pike and large perch, and are a delicately flavoured comestible for the table.

There is no special art in this branch of angling. With worms and gentles a little time may be given before a gentle strike is made. With paste bait the moment the float is drawn under the strike should follow. The line must be kept taut, as striking is impossible with a slack line.

ROACH (*Leuciscus rutilus*).

A higher stage in fishing is reached when roach become the object of the angler's quest. A good deal has to be learned before one is equal to the wiles of this shy and dainty feeder. He is a handsome fellow, with silvery scales, red ventral and anal fins; thick set, deepening rather than lengthening in reaching mature size. He rarely exceeds 2 lb. in weight, and few have been taken that size. His golden rimmed eyes are ever alert, and one must go to work with the stealth of a burglar to catch him. Silence on the bank is so necessary that list-soled boots would not be out of place. Any heavy tramping near the river will make him sheer off. One has to study his own shadow and choose the side of the river where it will not project across the stream. The stoppage of a mill tail, the lowering of a sluice, or any undue disturbance, will drive him off the feed.

Ground baiting is necessary to coax the shoal into a limited space and whet the appetite for feeding. This should be done the evening before, and if the angler is on the bank by daybreak next

morning his chances of sport will be enhanced. It is fatal to let a day intervene between ground-baiting and fishing—a remark that applies to ground baiting generally. It is folly to expect fish to remain after a long interval, and if they do they are not likely to be in the humour to bite after a surfeit of food so generously supplied for their consumption.

The usual ground bait is made of stale bread well soaked, and afterwards mixed with bran. The bread is placed in an earthenware vessel and covered over with water, where it remains for a night. It is then squeezed dry, adding the bran, and divided into small portions. Each lump is thoroughly kneaded, and a mixture of gentles added, which is one kind of bait that the angler is to use next day. Enough of the ground bait should be made to have a stock of balls to use when fishing "as occasion may require," to keep to dispensing terminology.

Let it be assumed that the angler is an early riser, and is on the river's bank by daybreak. The first thing to do is to mount a suitable rod. I have already expressed my preference for one to be used with a running line. Hardy Brothers "Guinea" roach rod, varying from 10 feet to 12 feet, is a suitable pattern. This is a useful length for punt fishing. In close quarters, where two or three anglers sit, a very long rod is in the way as well as unnecessary. This rod is made of whole cane in the butt and middle joints, and greenheart in the top. It is stained a dark green colour which is restful to the eyes, and not so scaring to fish as the bright-coloured cane used by some anglers. It is light and quick in action and capable of rapid striking.

For bank fishing a longer rod may be used to advantage. The

bait can be dropped in swims beyond weed patches. Many anglers use a fixed line, with long rods, and run the risk of being smashed up with chub and other large species, but some of the best authorities on coarse fishing advise the running line method.

The longer the rod is, the heavier must be the make, and two disadvantages have to be faced. A stiff breeze of wind makes a long

their caution. The gut must be very fine, especially the links next the hook. Before the manufacture of drawn gut horse-hair was used, but silk material, finer and stronger, may be now obtained. Unless the water is a little discoloured, the nearest point to invisibility in this part of the tackle the better. Shot the line as described under gudgeon fishing.

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

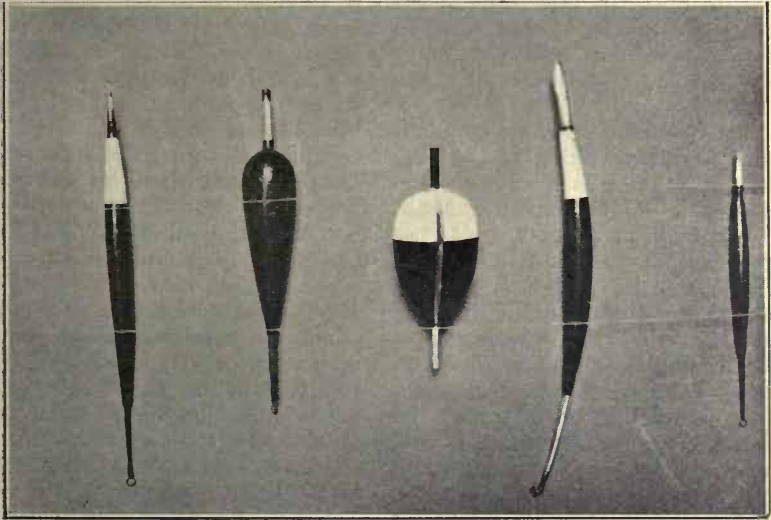


PLATE II.

FLOATS FOR BOTTOM FISHING.

(Hardy Bros. Patterns.)

A — Porcupine Cork. B. Sneck Head. C.—The Fishing Gazette. D.—The Nottingham.
E — Porcupine Quill.

rod unwieldy, and adds to the difficulty of rapid striking, a *sine qua non* in roach fishing. It further detracts from the pleasure of playing a fish, and play is always in inverse proportion to the rod's weight and stiffness. This point will have weight with most anglers.

Next, bear in mind that you are about to try for very wary fish, and you have to pit your wit against

Having mounted the rod and cast, plumb for depth; this is done with a cone-shaped lead, flat in the bottom, into which a piece of cork is let. The hook is passed through the ring in the apex of the plummet, and fixed in the cork. Several soundings should be taken, and ultimately the float fixed so that the bait swims about three inches from the bottom. A light porcupine quill float, a variety of which

is illustrated on Plate II., is suitable for roach. The line should be very fine, and consist of undressed silk. To prevent it from sinking several dressings of vase-line should be applied, each coating allowed to dry before the next is added.

Everything being now ready, a ball of ground bait is thrown into the river. If the swim is long, and fairly rapid, a piece the size of a pigeon's egg should be attached to the gut trace, and dropped gently into the water. As the float is carried forward the ground bait will be gently washed off, and sprinkle the swim.

As gentles were an ingredient in the ground baiting of the previous evening, it is advisable to mount a couple on the hook. They can be procured all the year round, and at a trifling cost; the angler is, therefore, advised not to get into disrepute with the cook and the household in general by attempting to raise them on the premises. Two are attached to a No. 4 or 5 hook, and the fishing begins. As the float drifts with the current, the line is paid out by an occasional touch of the reel, and kept sufficiently taut for rapid striking. Roach are dainty feeders, and the bigger they are, the more dainty they become. The smaller fry are bolder, and seize the projecting parts of the gentles and tear them away; the snatch is reflected in a sudden bob of the float, and on striking a bare hook returns. Heavier fish usually get the bait into their mouths, and suck it dry. In this case the float scarcely sinks. Several large roach were weighed into a club a fortnight ago, and the fortunate captor told me that in no case was the float pulled down beyond the cap. This is common experience. It is advis-

able, therefore, to strike the moment the float stops, or is agitated to the smallest perceptible degree. The strike should be short and sharp, and the hand removed from the reel when the fish is felt. This takes the strain off the gut, and transfers a share of it to the rod and line. Two objects must now be kept in mind: first, and chief, to land the fish; second, to achieve this end with as little disturbance as possible. If the fish break away, there is a loss to the basket, and a possible indirect loss by scaring others in a feeding mood. A roach that breaks away, probably dashes through the shoal, others take alarm, and follow him. It is advisable to get the fish away from the spot where he has been hooked as soon as possible. If one is fishing from the bank, he can be coaxed down stream by inclining the rod in that direction. From a punt this plan is impossible; the captive must be drawn up stream, but by leaning the rod to one side he can be brought away from the main swim. By sinking the landing net a little in the water, it is possible to secure him without a splash.

When the take goes off with one bait, it is advisable to try another. A variety of pastes are open to the angler's choice. Bread is the easiest made, and perhaps the best of all. The crumb of a white loaf a couple of days old is broken off and placed in a clean linen cloth, which is immersed in cold water until it is soaked through; it is then squeezed dry and kneaded in the cloth until the paste stage is reached. It must be kept perfectly clean, and not touched with the hands. Roach are clean feeders, and although they will take a specially prepared yellow, and even a red, paste, they draw

the line at a dirty white. Enough moisture must be left in the dough to keep it from crumbling off the hook. A very little practice will make one, never intended to be a cook, a passable hand in this branch of culinary art.

Biscuit paste is prepared in a similar way, first cutting off the crust, and yellow bait by adding a little turmeric to the flour. Cochineal is the colouring element used in red paste. A small piece the size of a large pea is placed on the hook for fishing. The strike must be of lightning quickness; the fraction of a moment too late enables Master Roach to strip the hook bare.

Well-scoured worms may be tried as another lure, using a No. 6 sized hook with a sneak bend. In this case longer time may be given when the knocks of

the float indicate a biting fish. The loose ends of the worm are first attacked, and if the bait is not drawn away, they tempt the appetite of the feeder to make further acquaintance with the lure, to his own destruction. Do not strike, therefore, at the first nibble; a second knock or perceptible deepening of the float is the time for action. In the winter months roach are in best condition, and give the most vigorous play; they then take to deeper water, and the light swims know them no more. The stock of larvæ and other diet in the gravel are exhausted, or swept by floods into the deeper pools, where they go in quest of them. There they must be sought, and to find them on the feed on a frosty winter's day is to enjoy the perfection of roach fishing.

CHAPTER II.

DACE AND CHUB.

DACE (*Leuciscus vulgaris*).

DACE spawn in April and May, and are in condition about September. Compared with roach, they are thinner in proportion to their length and of a bright silvery colour. It is the ambition of every angler to secure a pound-weight specimen—a rare achievement, as they have an aggravating way of falling short by a couple of ounces. Small chub resemble them so much in shape and appearance that the tyro's dream of having captured a unique specimen is often rudely shattered by an older hand pointing to the pink anal fin, which in the dace is colourless. They mix freely with roach, and are taken on the bait intended for the latter. They are a favourite *bonne bouche* of jack, and as the angler goes to the river armed with a shorter rod for live-baiting, he will no doubt be anxious to add a few of them to his can. The tactics are somewhat different from those followed by the roach angler proper. A light and rapid swim is chosen, all the better if it is flanked by bushes that overshadow the bank, and dip into the stream.

Dace feed on the washed-up food from these gravelly beds. If there is a ford in the river, they are sure to congregate near it on the alert for the spoil stirred up by the traffic. The best dace probably lie in the shade of the bank, emerging now and again in quest of food. A little ground bait judiciously placed will draw them. It should be looser than that used

for roach, so as to break up quickly, and disperse all over the swim. Less bread and more bran will answer the purpose. Dace are not great feeders, and a margin of appetite should be left for the bait to be subsequently proffered. This point is sometimes overlooked by anglers, too anxious to get the fish on the feed.

The best baits are gentles and worms, mounted on a roach rod and tackle. The bait that kills best is sunk deeply enough to touch the bottom, instead of drifting a few inches from it, as in the case of roach fishing. I have known two anglers fishing the same pool, one of whom took dace after dace by this plan, whilst the other, fishing in the orthodox way, caught roach only. To avoid too much slack and consequent missing, when the strike is due a good plan is to hold the float back a little, so as to give the bait time to drift forward. Dace bite sharply, pulling the float well down; the strike should be short and quick, making allowance for the tackle, which cannot be too fine. If a running line is used, it is well to have as little slack as possible. This can be arranged by fixing a small piece of wood in a loop on the line *between* the float and the top ring of the rod. The reel is winched round until the wedge jams, which gives all the advantages of tight lining and leaves the reel free to run if needed.

Dace rise well to the fly. Where the river is overhung with trees

and bushes, and casting is impossible, the dapping method may be used with effect. For this purpose a floss line may be used. It consists of fine undressed silk, which is caught by the wind and blown up or across stream. Natural flies are mounted, and impaled on a small round bend hook, through the back, so that they alight in the natural position. Any of the ephemeridæ afloat on the water will prove serviceable for this purpose. A place is chosen where the rod can be thrust through or over the bushes. With the wind at one's back the fly is carried up stream and settles on the water. By raising the point of the rod it touches the surface lightly, and daps on it in the manner of the natural insect. A grasshopper is an admirable bait to dap with. By these means excellent sport may be obtained where the fish are plentiful, and good specimens are often found in such places.

The favourite method in fishing for dace is with the artificial fly. With the wet fly the river is fished down stream. Three flies may be mounted and, casting across the river, they are caught by the current and swept down. When the line is fully stretched they are gently worked up by bringing the rod gradually back over the shoulder. When a dace rises there is a break in the water, and a sharp turn of the wrist secures him. If the fly has not been taken another cast is made over the spot where he rose. In this way, yard by yard, the swim should be fished from top to bottom.

The dry-fly method is to fish up stream, and in clear water is the most effective. Fishing down stream, especially in bright sunlight, the angler can be seen, and the fish dart off. Up stream one is behind them, and not so much in evidence, although due caution

is to be observed. By stooping close to the bank a long cast can be made. It is usual to wait until the fish rises. In the case of dace one has not to wait long, as when flies are on the water they rise freely. Noting the place where the break occurs, and a drifting ephemera has been sucked down, a dry fly suited to pattern is cast above the spot. The imitation with wings erect begins to drift down stream, a cunning device, capable of deceiving the elect among fishes. It is an exciting moment when the fly reaches the spot where its prototype has disappeared; then comes the break, and the answering strike from the rod, there is a flash and plunge, and the playing of the dace begins.

There is a great variety of flies which can be used in wet and dry patterns, black gnat, March browns, Wickham fancy, various coloured duns, silver sedge, coachman, &c., any of which, using oo (and ooo in bright sunshine), are suitable.

As fly-fishing comes more properly under the head of game fishing, descriptions of rods and tackle, and hints on methods of casting, must be deferred until that section of the subject is reached. For dace a 9-ft. or "feather-weight" rod is most suitable.

CHUB (*Leuciscus cephalus*).

As the most interesting chub fishing is obtained with the fly, it naturally falls under this section. The fish is easily distinguished by its broad, thick-set head. The anal and ventral pink fins differentiate him from dace, and the absence of red-rimmed eyes from rudd and roach. Those who have been curious enough to taste his flesh have concluded that he is intended for sport rather than diet, although Walton gives a recipe

for cooking him. The rivers in the days of Isaac were purer than in ours. I am of opinion that the chub, like the barbel, is not a clean feeder, but helps himself liberally to any offal that may find its way into the river. As a warning to experimenting on his flesh, it may be hinted that I know a whole family that spent a night of agony after doing so—a word to the wise! As chub run to a large size, 6 lb. or 7 lb., and are common enough at 4 lb., they offer a diversion, if not a comestible, to the fly-fisher. They are found in the deep pools of many of our rivers, and in July, when the trout at mid-day are obdurate and seek the cool shadows under weeds and high banks, they will take the fly freely. I know such a river, and instead of following the example of *Salmo fario* and seeking the cool shade, let us in imagination visit a certain pool and brave the tropical weather for an hour. It is below a weir, over which the water leaps with a roar. It trembles in a basin—at the foot, overflows and courses down a pebbly shallow, and is hushed to silence in a deep pool. In this the chub are to be found.

An 11-ft. trout rod is suitable for the work, but the reel with a soft dry fly line is taken off, and a plaited silk one substituted. The heavier make is needed for getting out the fly and sinking it, as the lighter silk make is required to keep it afloat. A stouter casting line is also mounted, to which a large-eyed fly is attached.

There is a variety of chub flies to choose from, palmers, alders, coachmen; but knowing the taste of the occupants of the pool, an Alexandra is selected. For trout this pattern is not generally permissible. An exception is made in the case of chub; the addition of a gentle or two on the point

of the hook is deemed lawful, a practice unpardonable in the case of trout, but *L. cephalus* is a low-bred species, and high morals do not apply to him. It is well to stretch the casting line and drown the fly in the swift current before approaching him, then fish it down carefully. At the neck of the pool a cast is made, and the fly begins to work round and down stream. The top of the rod is lowered, and the fly, well saturated, sinks below the surface. When the full strength of the current strikes the line it rises again, and is gradually worked up in preparation for a cast lower down.

This time it alights on quiet water, immediately sinks, and the usual movement of the rod to give life to the fly is commenced. This is effected by a slight motion of the hand up and down from the wrist, the top of the rod rises and falls, and the fly swims in short, sharp jerks. As the rod goes back over the shoulder the fly travels up stream. The line is taut, and the smallest touch can be felt. The strength of the current carries the line towards the bank. The pool is deep there, and very soon there is the sense of an unmistakable pull. That is the moment to strike by an upward movement of the wrist; resistance and convulsions follow.

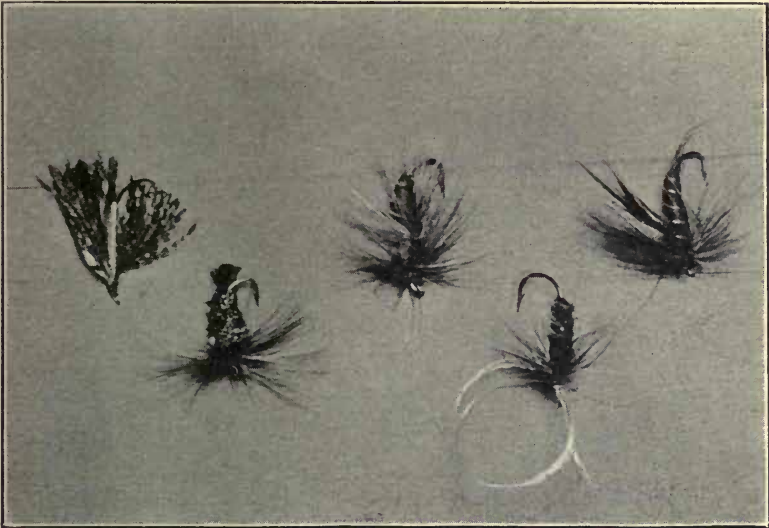
The moment the chub is hooked the finger should be removed from the line, bringing the reel into play. The captive will probably give two or three savage pulls and rush out into mid-stream. If the reel is not free to relieve the strain, something will give way. The first moment or two are critical; if he does not break away then—unless he is a big fellow—he will be landed, in all probability, if firmly hooked and cautiously handled. Even heavy

fish are arrant cowards and passive resisters at best, rarely putting forth their full strength or making a long run in the fight for freedom. No! up he comes to the surface with scarcely a kick, and suffers himself to be winched in and netted ignominiously.

The only fish that I know that takes the fly and yields to fate so sheepishly is the American rock bass. All head and a tapering body like the red gurnard, he gives a couple of pulls and then

his weight serves him as a resisting force, and the issue will be determined by the strength of the casting line. A dozen chub may be hooked in this pool, some breaking away through light hooking, others on the first strong pull. No break is made on taking the fly under water; they are sluggish risers as well as players.

Chub are also to be found under the overhanging boughs of trees by the river's side, where a 4 lb. or 5 lb. specimen is frequently



CHUB FLIES.

Alexandra.

Cock-y-bondhu.

Red palmer.

Soldier palmer.

Hackled bee (on gut).

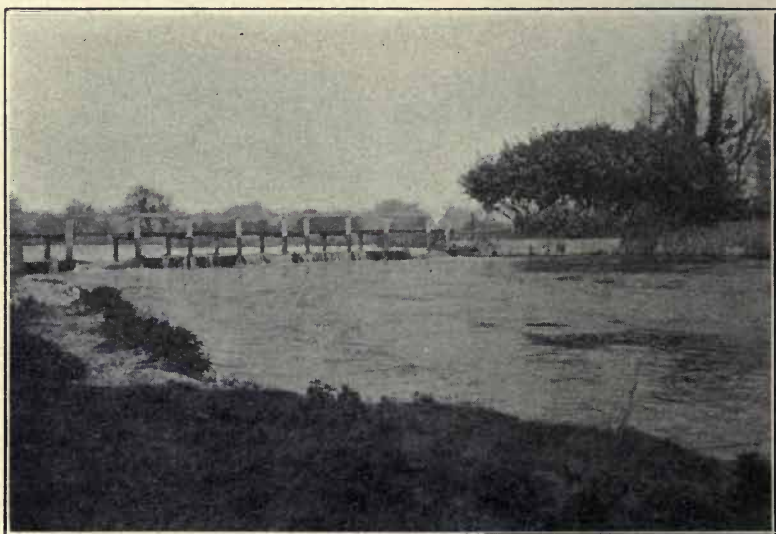
comes to the surface with his great mouth agape, and can be dragged 20 yards without a flip of the tail. The angler who knows the plucky fight of a pound trout, his gamey springs from the water, and helter-skelter rush down stream, will be disposed to hold in contempt the white-livered valour of the chub. All the same, he can give trouble if there is a clump of weeds within reach in which he can hide. Then

taken. The soldier palmer and cock-y-bondhu are excellent patterns to try in such places. Skilful casting will tell, dropping the fly under the boughs with a good splash—the *fly*, bear in mind, not three or four yards of line with it, which is bad fishing. Imagine a fat, hairy caterpillar falling from a high branch of an alder into the river, and the kind of splash it would make! Palmers are imitations of caterpillars; there lies

the *rationale* of this description of casting. It is not easy to describe it without a rod and ocular demonstration. It is done by a high cast, and dipping the top of the rod when the line is nearly fully stretched; this takes the strain off, and the fly falls heavily by virtue of its weight, and makes the desired splash. The rise of a chub to a fly proffered in this way is sharp, and the answering strike should be equally so.

it with an avidity that shows a discernment for good things scarcely credible in view of his baser proclivities. Even strawberries have beguiled him to destruction.

A float must be used proportionate in size to the bait. The hook should be larger and the gut stouter than those used for roach, and mounted on a heavier rod. When hooked, chub make for the weeds or the roots of trees, and one must be armed with a weapon



THE WEIR CHUB POOL.

Bottom fishing is a less scientific, but not less effective, method. Large specimens are taken with bait of different kinds, for the chub is not fastidious. Lures varying in degrees of nastiness comprise the *menu* with which the angler goes forth to beguile him—slugs, frogs, grubs, greaves, pith, and brains of bullocks, and ill-smelling cheese. *De gustibus non est disputandum.* To do him justice his low-bred tastes take an æsthetic turn, and if a cherry or damson tree drops its fruit into the water, he takes

of sufficient resisting power. In the winter they fight harder and give better sport than on a hot July day. If the water is discoloured, it is well to fish nearer the bottom, under normal conditions 3 or 4 inches above it. Lobworms, threaded on the hook from tail to head, are good bait. If the head is high up on the shank the hook is often missed, as all large-sized fish show a preference for seizing their prey by the head rather than the tail. This hint will be found useful,

and fewer chub will be missed if it is acted upon. Bread paste also is attractive, using a larger-sized bait that can be seen a good distance under water.

Cheese is, perhaps, the best lure of all; the red-coloured make shows up well, although many anglers prefer the white. A little preparation to get it into a soapy condition is necessary. Cut it into cubes and squeeze it in a cloth dipped in water. If it is inclined to crumble, a little added fat brings it to the right consistency. This can be done by the riverside, choosing a spot above the pool about to be fished. The moisture wrung into the river will find its way into the pool and set the chub on the *qui vive*. A little cheese thrown in as samples at the same time will not lessen the chances of sport. If you use cheese that is rather high, and are fishing from a boat, do not invite ladies next day!

Cherries are mounted on a triangle hook. A slit is made in the fruit and the stone removed. The triangle is slipped into its

place, manipulating the cherry so as to close up the slit and give the fruit a natural appearance. A few cherries thrown in from time to time will whet the fishes' appetite. A good hard pull is needed to get the steel home when the fish bites, as three prongs offer great resistance. With cheese a single hook is used, taking care not to bury the point too deeply, as the soapy paste is not easily penetrated when the strike is given.

Small frogs, when they are about, are mounted on a long shanked hook, similar to the reprehensible "gorge" used for jack by the pot-hunter. After killing the frog it is threaded through the body from head to the hind feet, leaving the points of the hook to extend from the mouth. With any of these baits the chub may be sought for under deep clay banks, near houseboats in quiet backwaters, or where there is an inlet by which food is likely to find its way into the river.

Legering will be dealt with under a separate head, as it applies to bottom fishing generally.

CHAPTER III

BREAM AND BARBEL.

BREAM (*Abramis brama*).

BREAM belong to the larger class of coarse fish, and are much in quest by anglers. They are plentiful in most of our British rivers and ponds, and are widely distributed all over Europe. Most of the large Irish lakes hold them, but they are seldom fished for, the presence of higher game discounting their value. Ichthyologists are divided as to the varieties. Some account for three distinct species : silver bream, bream flat, and the common bream ; others are equally dogmatic in alleging that the three are in reality one, viz., *Abramis brama*. As our business is how to catch the fish rather than classify them, we shall not enter on the vexed controversy.

They spawn in May, June and July, laying a large number of ova, and are consequently found in immense shoals in the rivers. The female fish, during the spawning season, loses the characteristic grey colour and becomes a redder hue. In five or six weeks they get into a fit condition to reward the angler's prowess. About October they take to deep water, and alluring them with any form of bait is next to impossible.

An acquaintance with the river is a great advantage to the angler, and it is advisable in the absence of such knowledge to secure the services of some one who knows their haunts. Failing this, a few hints may be serviceable.

In clear water and a bright sun they frequently indicate their

whereabouts by the flashing of their sides as they turn in the stream. Once discovered, it is well to keep to the spot, even though they do not at first patronize the angler's lure. One does not catch fish whilst moving about, and they may begin to feed any moment. If one shoal moves off, another may take its place, and be in a more sporting mood than the late occupants. Quiet, too, is indispensable, and prowling about the bank of the river may scare the bream that would otherwise be disposed to bite. When they cannot be actually seen their presence may be detected by air bubbles rising and breaking on the surface of the water. They emit a good deal of oxygen from the bellows movement of their mouths when feeding. The mud stirred up from the bottom when they root for food frequently discolours the water. This in conjunction with the air bubbles not only indicates their whereabouts, but is a sign that they mean business, and the angler may hopefully approach them with his ware. It is advisable to bait for them over-night, and be on the banks of the river at cock-crow.

The ground bait advised for roach, with the addition of potatoes, is suitable for river bream. For still water, bran and toppings, which can be procured at a corn-dealer's, kneaded into balls, is effective in drawing them together. Oil cake added to either of these forms of baiting is often used. Boiled wheat is another

prescription. Whatever kind is used, care should be taken that it is sweet and fresh, as bream are clean feeders.

The rod should not be too stiff, and light enough to get the best sport out of the bream. In length it varies, according to the circumstances in which one fishes. From a punt length is a matter of indifference. A long pole is an advantage when approaching them from the bank. Running tackle is indispensable, as one has to fish

porcupine or swan-quill float, about 5 in. in length. Bearing in mind the nervous temperament of your quarry, anything that makes a splash or bulks large in clear water is inadvisable. For the same reason fish fine, using a couple of yards of gut, the hook link being of the finest and best undrawn quality. If you get smashed up with a running line, it will be your own fault, or that of your tackle, as bream are fair fighters and rarely attempt to take



A BREAM SWIM.

fine, and a heavy bream is not to be trifled with. The winch should have an easy yielding check, a Nottingham or gun-metal make will serve the purpose. A No. 9-sized hook (new scale) will accommodate the bait, which in quantity should be larger than that used for roach. A crystal or a neck bend, with a long shank, is the most suitable pattern.

The nature of the water must determine the method of angling. In a slow-running stream, varying little in depth, it is best to use a

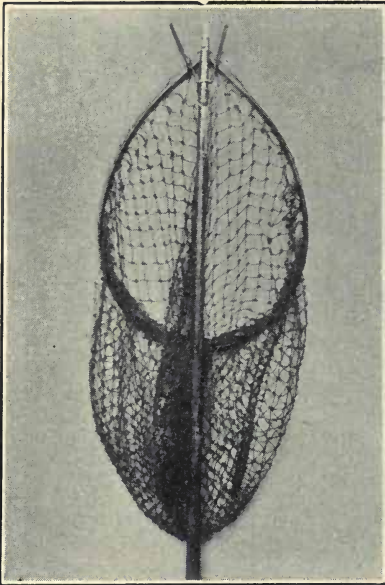
to the weeds or such harbourage, like our friend the chub. As they feed off the bottom the bait should be affixed so as to trip along the mud in running water, or rest on it in a sluggish pool. Bread paste, worms and gentles are all good baits, and if one does not attract the fish, try the others.

The first indication of the bream's address is shown in the float rising from the perpendicular and lying flat on the water. This proves that the bait is lifted off the bottom, and the float relieved

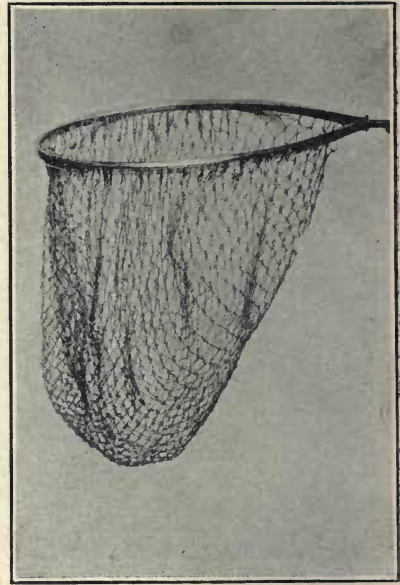
of the weight assumes the horizontal position. Bream in feeding look as if they were standing on their heads. They suck in the bait and then quickly move off, like *Oliver Twist*, in search of more. This action is further reflected in the float which gives a quiver rather than a bob, regains the perpendicular again, goes under and moves off in a slanting direction, following the sluggish movement of its captor. The

as the lure. More bream are lost by delay than precipitancy. In fishing without a float—a method much in vogue by some anglers—the fish is felt by vibration, followed by the slackening of the line, when the strike should follow with as little delay as possible.

When the bream is hooked the first plunges are formidable, not unlike that of the barbel, but the subsequent movements are



Shoulder-strap net with knuckle-joint closed.



Shoulder-strap net open.

moment the float goes under is the time to strike, which should be firm and decisive. It frequently happens that the fish does not move off after taking the bait. In that case the float still lies flat on the surface. It should not be allowed to remain long in that position without striking, especially if the bait be paste. Too long delay brings an empty hook back to the angler, as bream quickly strip it, even with worms

different. The barbel goes off in a straight line after boring downwards, if he goes off at all; the bream moves in a zigzag fashion. It is well to distinguish between them, as the barbel may mean mischief, and should be held up to prevent entanglement of the line. The bream has no such intention and may be controlled with a lighter hand. He does not maintain the promise of the hard fight that the initial plunges

foretell, but soon gives in. There should be as little fuss as possible in getting him to the net, in order that his *confrères* may not be disturbed.

Legering is another way of catching bream. It had its origin, no doubt, in negotiating portions of the river too far distant to fish with a float, although in the case of barbel it is often used for its own sake, and in preference to other methods. The device is simple, and consists in adding a leaden bullet to the gut tackle. About 3 feet from the hook a pellet of shot is squeezed on. Above this the leger is placed. There are several patterns, but the best is made of a round lead bullet filed or cut off on opposite sides so as to lie flat on the bottom. A hole is bored from edge to edge large enough to give free play to the gut. The pellet of shot prevents it from slipping down to the hook. The link on which it runs consists of fine gimp or gut. If the latter, it must be of sterling quality, as it has to bear a heavy strain. Salmon gut is not inferior to gimp in strength, and is less conspicuous in the water. When the fish pulls the bait, the gut travels through the hole without disturbing the bullet, and the movement is immediately felt by the angler. Care must be taken that it runs freely; any resistance or a slight prick of the hook makes the fish drop the lure before there is time to strike. Bream have a strong bellows power of blowing out a bait.

Swift currents and weirs are suitable places to leger. The rod must be of a stiff build, as the weight of the line and bullet have to be counterbalanced. A long sweeping stroke of the rod is the form the strike should take. The early morning is the time for bream fishing, and late in the

evening, and in August and September the fishing is at its best. Ground baiting overnight will materially improve the chances. For weirs, clay mixed with the food will prevent it from being swept away. River bream are better conditioned fish than pond, and give more sport, as their broad sides against the current offer strong resistance. Patience is a virtue in angling for them; they come on the feed in unexpected moments, and after long waiting; when hope deferred makes the heart sick they begin to bite, and a dozen may be landed in rapid succession.

BARBEL (*Barbus vulgaris*).

Barbel are the most sporting of coarse fish; they are found in rivers and do not flourish in ponds like the bream. The great rivers of Europe contain them, where they are reputed to grow to an enormous size, and to reach 50 lb. in weight. Every Thames angler knows the barbel, and attains the height of his ambition when he adds to his record the capture of a twelve-pounder. The fish is easily recognized by the hanging protuberances from which it derives its name. One is situated on each side of the upper lip, and two in front of the nose. The head is wedge-shaped, the body elongated, and of a greenish-brown colour on the back, and yellow on the sides; the throat and the under portion are white, and the fins reddish. They are shy fish and easily disturbed. Their feeding habits are most erratic and it is difficult to predict their mood. One may angle for a week without getting a bite, at other times they feed so ravenously as to be taken in large quantities. They move about the river in large shoals, playing in the water and kicking up Meg's diversions, for

no apparent reason but exuberance of robust life.

In a river like the Thames there is no chance of a good day's barbel fishing, except by copious ground baiting over night. The traffic, especially in the bright, sunny weather, when they are chiefly caught, scares them into the deepest beds of the river, or the weirs, where they are beyond the angler's reach. Boatmen are not always to be trusted to ground bait to the extent necessary for their capture. A few years ago a great slaughter was effected at Bourne End, but the swim was baited with five thousand worms and other food previously. One must personally attend to these preliminaries if he is to have sport. Bread, bran, greaves, gentles, and worms must be thrown in in large quantities, and the fishing start at daybreak. Then in the quiet of the morning, before the river traffic begins, sport may at least be expected.

Sound but light tackle must be the order of equipment, whatever method of angling be employed. Put your trust in an easy-running check reel, rather than strong gut and large hooks. One can bring a salmon to the net on a light cast and careful management, and formidable and dogged as the barbel is, he is no match in strength for *Salmo salar*. It is all done from the reel, and bottom fishers, *pur et simple*, in my judgment, do not trust it enough. If a barbel gets round a snag or other fastening there will be a smash up, however strong the tackle, but far more fish are lost by holding too tight a line than by running foul of a post or stone. The strain on the gut by the boring habits of the fish is relieved by the reel, and the object of the angler is to get as much sport out of his quarry as possible; the

harder he fights the sooner he comes to the net. The rod for barbel should be light, of sound material, and sufficiently stiff for legering or for float fishing. Eleven feet is a good length: whole cane is a favourite with most anglers, being light and pliable; a greenheart of carefully-selected wood, particularly the top joint, which has to bear a heavy strain, is another good make. The rings should be large enough to allow the line to run freely, and the winch fittings strong.

There are several methods of angling for barbel. Legering is alone possible in swift water and foaming currents. The tackle has been already described under the bream section. The leger bullet must be heavy enough to resist the strength of the water and remain in its place when thrown in. A swivel below the shot on the gut keeps it from twisting. Having selected the swim, mount a lob-worm on a No. 10 hook (new scale) to commence with. Worms are the best bait, but the changes may be rung on gentles, paste and cheese, if the sport is slow. The slack is rolled in, so that the line is taut, and the least movement can be felt. The bite of a fish comes in a palpable knock, which cannot be mistaken, sometimes singly, to be followed by a double tug, and a lateral movement of the line, when the strike should be made. It should be hard, and followed up by raising the rod, and not giving an inch of law until the hook goes fast. Some anglers give two or three tugs, but this is rough on the tackle, and there is a slight slacking of the line in between, which may serve the fish's purpose better than the angler's. The epidermis of a barbel's mouth is tough as wash-leather,

and when the hook gets home, it holds fast as a rule. The issue afterwards depends on sound tackle and good management. In quiet flowing streams, the float fishing method is adopted. The object of the float is achieved as long as it can be seen, and is heavy enough to keep the bait tripping along the bottom. The small porcupine make is the best. In stronger currents, a quill encased in cork should be used, and in the mist of the early morning or late in the evening a red-painted top will assist the eyesight. When the float is pulled under, the strike should follow immediately, holding tight until the fish is well hooked. Barbel play doggedly to the end of the chapter, the struggle sometimes ending in one long plunge to the bottom, and then coming to the net.

When changing to gentle or paste bait, a No. 5-sized hook should be substituted. What is known as tight corking is another good method. Having plumbed the depth, the float is placed a couple of feet higher up the line, so that a spare length of gut lies on the bottom. The shotting of the line must be sufficient to keep it from moving. Slider, or traveller floating, is a further modification. By this means, places of uncertain depth may

be negotiated. The float is free to travel up and down the line, and adapts itself automatically to the height of the water. There is a large ring at the base of the float, and another near the top. A stop is placed above the float by inserting a piece of double stout gut in a half hitch, and is sufficiently pliable to pass through the rod rings when the line is winched in.

A lump of ground bait, with dry bran in the centre, should be occasionally squeezed on the gut a couple of feet from the hook. This sprinkles the swim, and attracts barbel. When they begin to feed, one may get an hour's fishing not to be forgotten in a lifetime. A good-sized landing net must be in readiness for bream and barbel. The hoop should be large and the net deep and strong. A jointed make that can be carried by a leather cord on the shoulder is very convenient. In moving up and down the banks of the river, it is not unusual to forget this important part of an angler's outfit, perhaps to find oneself fast in a fish, and the net a hundred yards away. Such a mishap is not likely to occur if one makes a practice of carrying the net on a shoulder strap and ring. I give illustrations of an excellent make that I use habitually.

CHAPTER IV.

TENCH, CARP AND RUDD.

TENCH (*Tinea vulgaris*) stand high in the estimation of bottom fishers, not only for their dogged fighting qualities, but as a contribution to the larder. Much spoil of the angler's craft never find an honoured place there, and are dubbed "dry-eating things, only fit for the cat," by the practical housewife. The boy who, having graduated in the school of gudgeon and roach, adds, for the first time, a 2 lb. tench to his creel, gains distinction in his own eyes and that of his less fortunate companions that spoils his interest in school preparation for one day at least. He had probably gone in quest of eels to a sluggish pond and found himself battling with something that had swallowed his brandling and pulled under his float with a vigour not given to eels. What a fascinating object the tench seemed as it lay gasping at the youth's feet! I should not be far off the mark in saying that the captor, judging by his flushed face and trembling hands, was gasping too. The prevalent tint is a golden bronze, in which olive and dusky shadings blend. Beneath the slimy coating that covers the body, small, closely-set scales flash forth in rose-coloured hues. The eyes—not large compared with the size of the fish—gain intensity and depth from the brilliant golden iris setting. The fins, standing boldly out from the body, suggest strength and vigour in keeping with the hog-back neck and broad sides. The pectoral is large and the ventrals concave, which aid the captive in

the stubborn resistance it shows in fight. A pair of barbels assist the tench in quest of food, which it seeks in the muddy bottoms of rivers and ponds. Like the eel, which lives under similar conditions, its gills are protected with a slimy mucous coating, which adds to its vitality and prolongs its life out of water for an indefinite time. The peculiarity of the tench in this particular is remarkable. An instance comes within my own knowledge, which is worth narrating. My son, in his boyhood, fished a pond in which he caught three or four tench, averaging about 1 lb. in weight. They were knocked on the head and thrown on the bank for dead. In the evening I joined him and we rode home together with the spoil dangling from the bars of my son's cycle, secured by a piece of string passed through the gills and mouth of the fish. We rode over nine miles on a road extremely bumpy in many places. On reaching our destination one of the fish showed signs of life. We put it in a bath filled with water, but it turned over and appeared quite dead. The youth, who had a penchant for experiments and was deep in piscatorial lore, suggested brandy as a restorative, and half a teaspoonful was poured down the fish's throat. The effect was shown in a kick, followed by a movement in the gills. In a few moments it was swimming about vigorously, and lived for three days. It refused all food, however, and gradually languished. Had it been placed in a pond there is

little doubt that it would have survived.

I have known an eel to live two days in a field, and it seemed as lively as when it came out of the water. Unlike the tench, it was not injured in any way. I got it bobbing with worms threaded on worsted. It was night time, and I lost it in the grass. The gills of the eel are more protected than those of the tench, and of course the grass contained a good deal of moisture.

Muddy ponds and rivers, being the habitat of tench, angling devices must be adapted accordingly. For ground baiting a mixture of potatoes, brown bread, and bran is used. This bait is an excellent "draw" in large ponds. If the pond is small enough to fish all over with the rod I should not advise it unless one is certain that eels do not comprise part of the joint stock company. The latter congregate on the baited spots, and become a nuisance the moment one begins to fish. They will take the worm and swallow it, hook and all, to a depth that requires an abdominal surgical operation for its recovery. They will entangle and knot your gut hopelessly, and slime you from head to foot if you are not careful.

Brandlings are the best bait for tench; failing them red worms and lobs. Brown bread paste sweetened with treacle or honey and greaves may be tried, but in my judgment only when the stock of worms is exhausted. Fine gut cast and line will secure more sport than heavier tackle. The rod should be long and pliable, so as to yield freely to the play of the fish. The hold is not likely to give way as the mouth is leathery; it is simply a question whether the gut will bear the heavy boring strain which the

fish puts on; a stiff rod, therefore, would be fatal. It may be laid down as a general principle that the pliability of the rod should be in direct proportion to the lightness of the tackle.

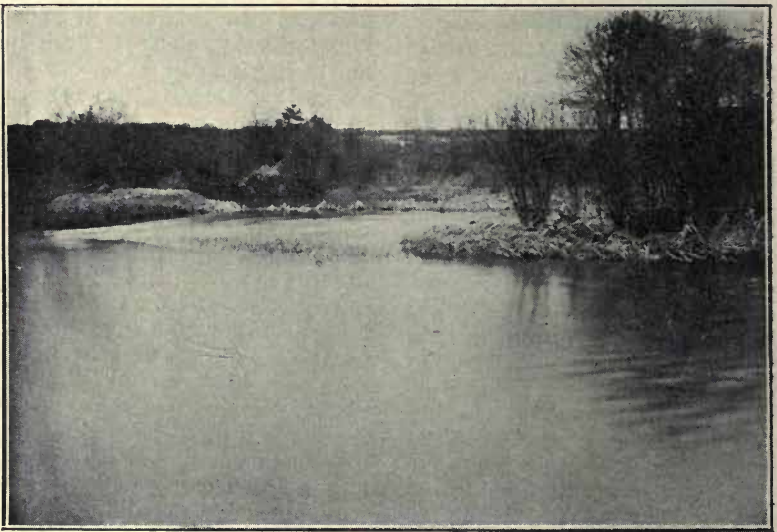
Tench do not move far from the spot where they are hooked, but content themselves with fighting it out on their own ground. This they do with praiseworthy energy. They take the bait from the bottom. Tight corking, already described, is a good method to adopt. A second hook mounted with paste may be used with advantage. In that case it should be adjusted so that one lure lies on the bottom and the other just clear of it. Legering is necessary to fish distant parts of the water, using a very light bullet that will not sink in the mud. Care should be taken not to drag it along the bottom, embedding it in the mud and the bait with it, and preventing the line from running when a bite occurs. The worm should be looped on rather than threaded on the shank, catching it lightly with the hook in a couple of places. It lives longer and attracts more attention mounted in this fashion. When the worm dies a fresh one should be substituted. Stale baits catch no tench. The bite is very similar to a bream's, the float rising to the surface of the water then going under and moving off in a slanting direction. When this happens the strike should not be long delayed.

A condition favourable to the capture of tench is slightly discoloured water. After a night's heavy rain the mud is stirred up in ponds, and fresh food is borne into the deep river holes. The angler on the spot under such conditions is not likely to go home with an empty basket. A strong wind that raises a wave

and causes a heavy bank wash has a similar effect. This brings tench to the margin of the pond in quest of food that is washed off. One is sure to find them in the discoloured water on the windward side, ready to seize the branding the moment it is offered. I have known the worm to be taken before the float had time to touch the water. They hug the bank where the water is deep, and anglers will be well advised to follow their example. Eels will

Anglers to be successful must use brains off the hook as well as on it.

Tench grow to a large size; specimens up to 11 lb. have been taken, but not with a rod. Four, five, and six pounders are by no means uncommon. To grapple with one of these dimensions is no light undertaking, and demands the angler's greatest skill to bring him to grass. There is a tradition that this fish has medicinal properties that appeal to the pike's respect, and that the latter will



WHERE TENCH FEED.

probably be on the war-path and give trouble, but tench can hold their own when they set their minds to it, and rise from the bottom to seize the prey with an agility that outwits their rivals.

In clear water the most likely place to find them is close to weedy patches. If they are routing, air bubbles will be seen rising to the surface, as in the case of bream. A preliminary survey of the river will help to "fix their location," as our Transatlantic cousins say. Time will be saved in this way.

not molest his benefactor. This sense of gratitude on the part of *Esox lucius* must be accepted with reservation. It is more probable that there is something in the slime of the tench not palatable to jack, and they are eschewed for this reason. The slime is very similar to that of the eel. Last summer I got sight of an otter in the Itchen. The next morning I found a 2 lb. eel on the bank, with the head eaten off. The passage of the otter through the sedges was unmistakable, and

close to the spot where I had seen him. The head of the eel is freest from slime, and the otter was content to eat that part and leave the rest. Pike have been angled for with small tench, but they declined to take them. When a dace was substituted, the bait was immediately seized. This is fairly conclusive proof of the pike's antipathy to tench as food. I regret to be compelled to dispose of the one virtue tradition ascribes to him.

CARP (*Cyprinus carpio*).

The angler who has successfully outwitted carp is to be congratulated. Of all fresh-water fish it is the most difficult to circumvent. Its wariness to all forms of lures is notorious. Catching a weasel asleep is a trifle compared with catching a carp awake. The precautions to be observed in approaching him are almost too much for human flesh and blood to undergo. The prescience with which he is credited makes him a detective that Scotland Yard might envy. Although his food normally consists of decayed vegetables and other untempting fare, in the matter of anglers' baits he is an epicure. He is supposed to smell the fingers that have handled the hook baited for his destruction. A veteran angler once advised me, in all seriousness, not to touch anything offered to him; counsel rather difficult to carry into practice. Tackle also has its difficulties. If you fish fine, he cannot be held; if coarse, he will laugh at your simplicity. Despite all this, I have never known an angler that did not try for him. One has only to get a glimpse of him to risk the odds, though it is one in a hundred against getting a nibble. His golden brown tint with a dash

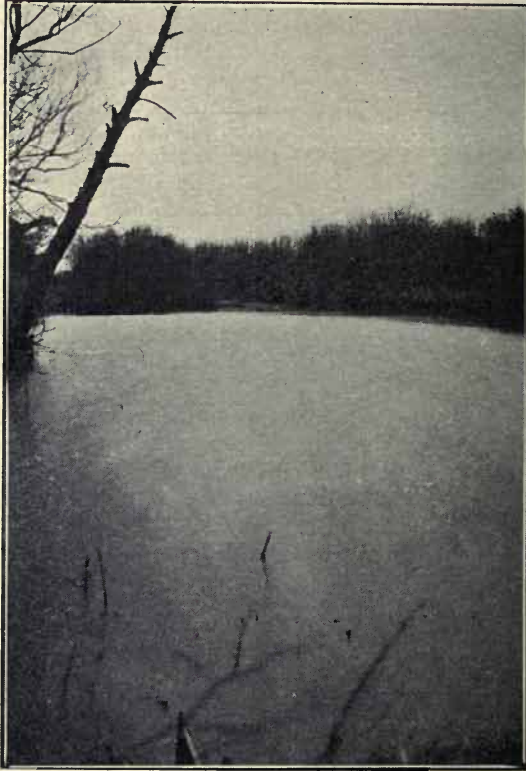
of olive in it, his large scales of over thirty rows, his huge dorsal fin, his thick-set, but by no means unshapely, body, make him a prize worthy of capture, though years be spent in the quest. Homer nods, and even carp are found napping. The angler fortunate enough to stumble on this exception to his wide-awake mood verily has his reward.

To encounter him is to experience some of the best play known to a rod. He fights like a demon, taking the line off the reel with lightning-swiftness, boring, jerking, and putting forth enough force to jeopardise the strongest tackle. All the weary months in which he passed by on the other side of the bait, all the precious time that might have been used to more profit among less sophisticated species, the vows of renouncing him and all his tribe, are forgotten in the moment of battle, when the "fox of the river"—as he has been appropriately called—has been hooked at last. And yet the chances are that he will not be landed; he breaks for the weeds, buries himself in the deepest hole and becomes as immovable as a log. It is not for nothing that he is given the biggest brain of all fresh-water fish; every ounce of it is drafted into service in the fight for dear life—small blame to him; all the more credit, too, to the rod if it wins the victory.

Ground-baiting has a purpose different from gathering carp into a particular hole, as in the case of bream and barbel. Its object is to disarm suspicion; and the process, to have a chance of success, should be repeated several days in succession before a hooked bait is offered. To imagine that a hole baited overnight will set carp on the feed is an innocent delusion. They will take the ground-bait with thanks, but when the same

food is offered at the end of a line they have a way of suddenly remembering an engagement at another part of the pond or river. It is a case of diamond cut diamond, and a plan of campaign extending over several days must be adopted. When they have been supplied with ground-bait for a night or two, small portions

before any profit is reaped. But the profit comes when a fully armed hook and stouter cast take the place of the decoy, that is, to those who have time and patience to go to all this trouble. If one is not ready to do all this, he will be better advised to go after whales or crocodiles—anything, in short, rather than carp.



THE HOME OF THE CARP.

should be dropped into the water at different times of day. Then pieces attached to a hook without a point to it should be lowered into the water on fine gut, stained water-colour. If this is taken, the process should be repeated, and the wearing off of the shyness will begin. A good deal of capital must be sunk in the business

The rod most suitable is a 14 ft. length, and fairly pliable. A very stiff weapon puts a heavy strain on the cast, a lighter make admits of using finer tackle—an important consideration. The latter should consist of salmon gut of the best quality. In still water on a fine day no shot should be used, and when a breeze is

blowing only what is needed to keep the bait in its place on the bottom. It must be placed 12 in. from the hook. A light quill float is the best pattern, and placed at a distance, so as to leave the bait a few inches of gut aground. This must be ascertained by plumbing beforehand. The line should be the finest and strongest procurable; 100 yards are not too much, as carp make long runs, and there is no holding them back when they go on the rampage.

The ground-bait usually used consists of red worms, gentles, paste and greaves. The paste is mixed with honey, for, despite their coarse habits, carp have a sweet tooth. Boiled potatoes mixed with brewers' grains and white bread is a favourite dish—bait-sized pieces are better than large balls; green peas and small peeled potatoes mounted on a triangle hook should follow up a copious potato ground-baiting.

Late in the evening carp roam all over the water, showing themselves freely by the edge of the weeds and making a peculiar sucking noise, which can be heard a long way off. The tail and dorsal are visible on such occasions above the surface. At times they plunge and rush, leaving great waves in their wake. The spectacle is calculated to move the angler to envy and stimulate his longings to grapple with the hard-playing quarry; but at such times the carp seems to have no more serious business in hand than an aimless gambol, and the lure lying at the bottom of the pond is not likely to attract his attention.

RUDD (*Leuciscus erythrophthalmus*).

The rudd in appearance is a glorified roach. They are frequently mistaken for each other. Close examination shows a marked difference in colouring. Instead

of the plain dress of the roach, red, orange, silver and gold comprise that of the rudd. The mouth shows an under projecting lip, the tail and dorsal fin do not correspond in size and shape to those of its cousin.

Roach have not been discovered in the Irish rivers or loughs so far, but rudd are plentiful, and are naturally mistaken for them. Some days large baskets of these fish are caught, as when they begin to feed they do so ravenously, and jostle each other in their eagerness.

They can be fished for after the manner of roach, using similar bait and tackle. In this way they are taken on the Norfolk Broads, but the best sport is enjoyed by fly-fishing for them, using a light trout rod and fine cast. One who has experience of this will scarcely care for rudd bottom fishing. Like grayling, they have very tender mouths, and the strike when they take the fly must be very gentle. One knows how grayling are lost again and again by a heavy hand; rudd need as careful handling. A 3 lb. specimen is a fine fish, although the average size is about half the weight. A few large-sized fish usually figure in a good basket taken in the Irish loughs.

Trout flies—the usual lake patterns—are the kind to mount, giving preference to gold-ribbed and mallard wing. The March brown, hare's ear, Flight's fancy will get them. They have a way of advertising their presence by moving about in shoals, and when they follow the fly in this fashion it is rather distracting; one cannot go by the break in the water as indicating a rise, for they are legion. A steady hand must be kept on the rod, and a gentle strike made only when there is a pull. When they are rising well the basket at the close of the day should be a heavy one.

CHAPTER V.

PIKE.

PIKE (*Esox lucius*).

BRITISH waters hold only one species of pike. Ichthyologists have discovered five in America. They range from the Mascalonge (*Lucius masquinongy*), which grows to a weight of 100 lb., down to the Little Pickerel (*L. reticulatus*), that does not exceed 12 in. in length. I have caught the cousin of the latter with the fly, when fishing for black bass in a lake outlet in New York State. It was streaked with numerous dark lines interspersed with lemon-coloured spots, which gave it the reticulated appearance from which it derives its name. Like our own pike, it was attracted by the silver doctor intended for bass, and played exceedingly hard, although not more than 1½ lb. in weight. *E. lucius*, which has no rival species, is a familiar object in our British and Irish rivers and lakes. His long, flat head is eminently adapted for cutting wedge-like through the water, with a rapidity that gives him an advantage over his unwary prey. It takes up little space as he lies in ambush. A small patch conceals it on the outer border of a bed of weeds, in the thick of which the rest of his body lies hidden. He attacks in short, sharp dashes, swift as an arrow. The eyes are set high up in the head, so as to command a view in front and above him. He does not possess the power of seeing objects at such an acute angle in the background as other coarse fish. His shape does not lend itself to rapid turning, and the

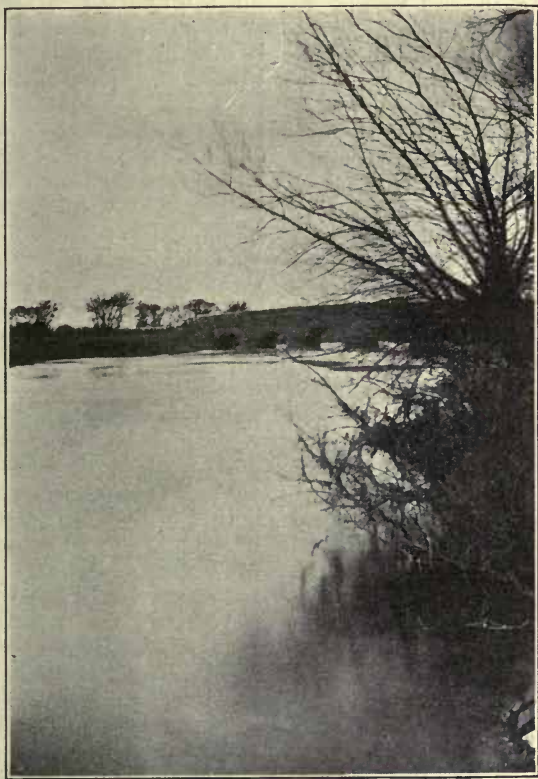
visual powers are adapted accordingly. The dorsal fin is placed so far back that it lies opposite to the anal, and both are small compared with the size of the body. The tail is forked and broad, and so constructed as to aid in rapid forward movements. The jaws of the pike are possessed of enormous strength, the lower projecting beyond the upper, and suggestive of bulldog tenacity. The cubic space of the mouth is far in excess of any other British fresh-water fish. It is a framework of bone and cartilage, the walls so thin as to be transparent. The formidable rows of teeth leaning inwards render hopeless the chance of any victim escaping that comes within their merciless grasp. They fall backwards on a hinge so as to favour easy access to the throat, and set rigidly against any attempt at egress.

Armed with such weapons, the pike must be handled with the greatest care. Either alive or dead, one is ill-advised to place the fingers inside the jaws. A bite might ensue that would not readily be forgotten. The fish, after it is supposed to be killed, keeps opening and closing its mouth. This is no doubt due to reflex action, and any touch on the inside of the mouth is likely to provoke it, and woe be to the fingers on which the jaws close! The gills of the fish also are very sharp, and fringed with needle-points capable of drawing blood.

Pike vary in colour, according to the season of the year and the conditions of their habitat. In

this respect they participate to an exceptional degree in the advantages of natural selection. They adapt themselves to their surroundings, mimicking in tint the changing flora of the river. The predominant colour of their skin in the early season is green, varied with yellow and white. It

of large specimens. The ova are deposited on weeds in shallows and backwaters, where they are not likely to be swept away. Many large pike are found in streams and ditches during the spawning season, and some of the largest fish lose their lives in that way. In Ireland a price is



A PIKE POOL ON THE STOUR.

takes an olive shade in winter, very similar to the colour of the water-plants, which have by that time lost all their verdant freshness. Pike spawn in March and April, laying eggs which vary in quantity according to the size of the female fish. Many hundreds of thousands mark the prolificacy

put on their heads, in and out of season, in defence of trout and salmon. The eggs are hatched in from a fortnight to three weeks. The angling season opens in the middle of June. It may be pointed out, however, that pike taken so early are worthless. They are in wretched condition, and give little

or no play. Genuine pike anglers leave them alone until August. From November to February they are in the pink of condition, and give the best sport.

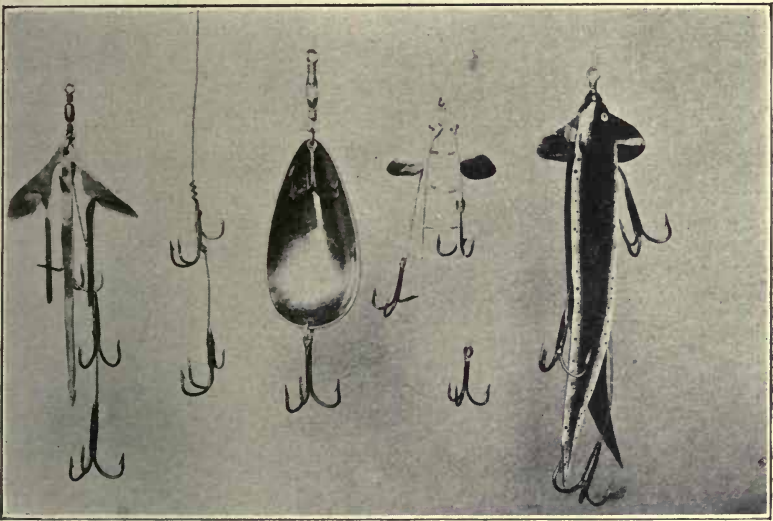
And now, having described his lordship the pike, let us go to the river-side and consider the various modes of capturing him. The rod is an important part of the equipment. In length and weight it varies according to the taste of the angler. The material, whatever its nature, should be of the best quality. It is subject to a heavy strain in casting and handling a fish, and one cannot be too particular in making sure that it is equal to it. In length it varies from 10 feet to 12 feet. For live baiting the former is quite long enough, whatever may be the material. I have a strong prejudice against heavy rods for any kind of fishing. I do not see the need for unwieldy weapons; they are a burden to the flesh, turning what ought to be pleasure into toil. The material is a determining factor in weight. Greenheart is the most common timber used in the butt joint. It is one of the hard woods, and of extreme specific gravity. Supplied by a good maker it is generally carefully selected and reliable. The butt has to bear a heavy strain, and must in consequence be large in circumference. A slight butt is very likely to split, and a large one is objectionable from the weight point of view. Ash is much lighter, and the straight grain makes it less liable to split. It is very pliable, however, and as stiffness in the butt is important for live baiting it is less suitable. This is particularly the case when a heavier wood, such as greenheart, is used in the middle and top joints. Bamboo makes a light butt, and its stiffness, especially for spinning, throws too

much work on the top of the rod, when one gets hold of a heavy pike. Messrs. Hardy Brothers, Alnwick, supply an excellent split cane pattern, the "Salmo-Esox," which combines lightness with strength, and is a model of what, in my judgment, a pike rod should be. It is 10 feet, and weighs only 18 oz. It is stiff enough to throw a live bait a long distance, and works so well down to the butt as to prove all that could be wished for spinning purposes. I have put in several long days spinning with this rod without getting tired. The bottom joint is brought well into play, which makes all the difference in commanding the movements of a fish. The rod must be fitted with upright rings, and large enough to allow the line to shoot through with the minimum amount of friction. The agate-cased rings on the "Salmo-Esox" admirably fulfil this condition.

Next to the rod the reel needs consideration; it should be large enough to carry 100 yards of line. The Nottingham pattern, with a check that can be put on or off at pleasure, is largely used by anglers. There are two methods of casting, one by drawing off the requisite length of line, and coiling it loosely in rings at the feet. As long as the cast does not exceed the length of line, this is a convenient method. If it falls short, the reel is brought into play, and revolves faster than the line is paid out; the result is over-running, which causes a sudden check, and shoots the bait off. Casting from the bank, twigs, stumps, bumpy ground may check the free passage of the line, and cause a similar mishap. The other method is casting from the reel. The check is taken off, and over-running is prevented by gently using the fingers as a brake,

and controlling the rate of revolution. It goes without saying that this method requires considerable practice. All the same, there are anglers sufficiently proficient in this style of casting, but they have not learned the art in a day. Messrs. Hardy Brothers "Silex" reel is, in principle, the reverse of the Nottingham. It is adjustable, so that the normal revolution may be stiff or easy. A turn of a screw effects this, in which condition the reel is silent. A lever is at-

is made of aluminium alloy, extremely light, which is an advantage to be appreciated in a long day's fishing. It has an additional adjustable speaking-check. The best line for all-round pike fishing is made of a soft-dressed silk material. Oil-dressed lines have a tendency to become sticky, which is fatal to casting. Hardy Brothers' New Indian is an excellent make. No oil is used in its manufacture. For live baiting, a rub of a paraffin candle is all that



(1) The Archer Spinner; (2) Jardine's Snap Tackle; (3) Pike Spoon; (4) Hardy Bros., "Crocodile" Spinner; (5) The new Rubber Swallow Tail.

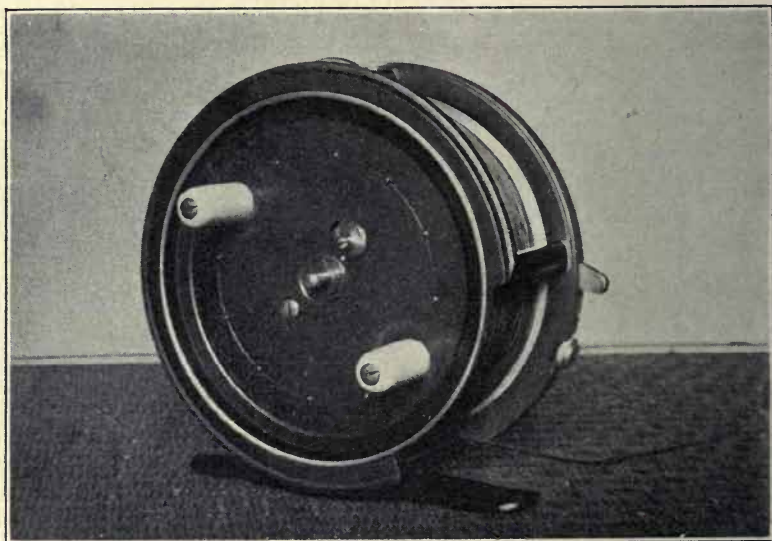
tached which releases the spring, and the winch runs as freely as the Nottingham make. In casting, this lever is pressed by the forefinger of the left hand, and the winch pays out the lines at the swing of the rod. By this contrivance the reel is completely under control, and the length of the cast can be easily regulated. There is no danger of over-running, and long or short throws can be effected without entanglement. It

is necessary to make it float. Messrs. C. Farlow and Co., Strand, make a special soft-dressed solid-plaited silk line for spinning and live baiting, of which I have a very high opinion. It is smooth and pliable. I have submitted it to several tests of heat and wet, which have made no difference to its quality; there was no trace of stickiness in either case.

It will now be necessary to describe in detail the various

methods of alluring *E. Lucius*. The first and easiest method is live baiting. For this purpose a can of bait must be procured. Dace, gudgeon, and roach may be used. It is important to secure the liveliest species. Bait kept long in captivity lose a great deal of their freshness. Procure them direct from the river side, if possible, as a good playing fish is more likely to attract his lordship. The bait should not be too large; 4 to 5 oz. weight are better

being more certain in quality. Gimp has a way of deteriorating without giving notice, and the least flaw in the over-lapping wire means a break when a strain is put on. To this trace the snap tackle is added, usually mounted on gimp or fine twisted wire. The latter should be of the best quality. Like the gimp, it has its drawbacks; any twist in it is likely to cause it to snap in two. This is possible, but not likely in the short length



“SILEX” REEL.

than half-pounders. Unless one encounters a pike running into two figures, a small bait hooks him more readily than a large one. The chances—monsters excepted—are equally in favour of large fish taking a medium-sized lure. Given an appetite, size scarcely counts. Dace are the best bait; they are hardier than roach, and live longer. A leaded swivel trace, which may be made of twisted gut or gimp, is affixed to the running line. I prefer gut as

required. Unquestionably, the best mount for a live bait is the Jardine snap-tackle. The smallest hook of the front triangle is inserted in the muscular portion of the pectoral fin. The second triangle is similarly placed in the dorsal. A large float—the *Fishing Gazette* pattern is as good as any—is slipped on to the line and adjusted to about five-eighths of the depth of the water about to be fished. It should be in size proportionate to that of the

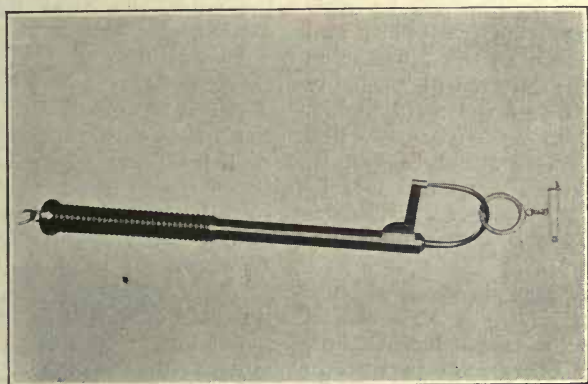
bait. If the float is unduly large, the dace cannot move about with any freedom. It should be small enough for the strength of the fish to pull it under the water occasionally, but not so small as to be kept down for more than a moment or two. The beginner will soon learn all that is necessary on that point by observation.

Casting the live bait is done in the following manner: If a Nottingham reel is used, draw off the requisite length of line from the winch, and coil it on the bank, taking care that the space is clear of anything likely to entangle it.

the left hand is let go, and the loose coils are carried through the rings with sufficient momentum to reach the desired spot.

Casting from the reel, especially with the "Silex," is a great advantage. The method of working it has been already described. There are places where it is impossible to find a clear space on the bank. Fishing from a punt, there are so many things likely to trip up the uncoiled line. The sooner, therefore, one learns to throw from the reel the better.

When the bait falls into the water the line should be paid out



TELESCOPIC GAFF AND REGISTERED SAFETY RING.

Stand sideways to the river. The butt of the rod should be firmly set against the hip at an angle of about 45 degrees. Holding the line in the left hand, allow the live bait to hang about 6 ft. from the top ring. Swing the bait backwards and forwards a couple of times. This can be done easily by the rod in the position described. When the bait reaches the furthest point backwards in the swing the cast is made by a swifter movement, which projects the bait forward. The moment it is on its way the line held in

to allow it free movement. If it works in towards the rod, the slack must be recovered. A pike's attention to the bait is shown in the sudden disappearance of the float. The attack is often so savage that a large ring is left on the surface of the water where the float has gone under. Small jack pull it along for a yard or two before it disappears. As a rule, a good fish does not dally with the bait; having secured his delusive prize, he goes off with it towards his lair. There is a good deal of spasmodic bobbing up

and down of the float caused by a lively bait; it is easily distinguished from the run of a pike, which is shown in the cork going down to stay. When this happens, the first thing to do is to tighten up the line. This is essential to efficient striking. If it is not taut, it is more than probable that an abortive tug will be given to the bait, which will not hook the quarry, and only succeed in scaring him. It must be borne in mind that float, lead, and the weight of line make considerable dead weight. The strike must be vigorous enough to counterbalance it, and leave a sufficient margin over to draw the hooks from the bait, and transfer them to the pike. The hold of the latter will probably include part of the snap tackle. It is best to tighten up the line until there is a slight drag on it, and the jack's resistance is felt. That is the time to strike decisively, and hooking generally follows.

In fishing a hole the near bank should be tried first, keeping well out of sight, then further out, searching every spot in turn to the opposite bank. Playing the fish requires tact; the great thing is to keep him under control, letting the winch run when he plunges, and firmly declining to allow him to rush into weeds or foul the line in a bush. When played out the gaff is brought into requisition.

I give an illustration of an excellent gaff made by Messrs. C. Farlow and Co. It is telescopic, handy to carry, and extended is 4 feet long; closed, 16 in. It can be carried on Farlow's "Registered safety hook ring," which is pinned on the coat, and is preferable to a strap. It is so light as to be no encumbrance. It is made of the finest steel, and

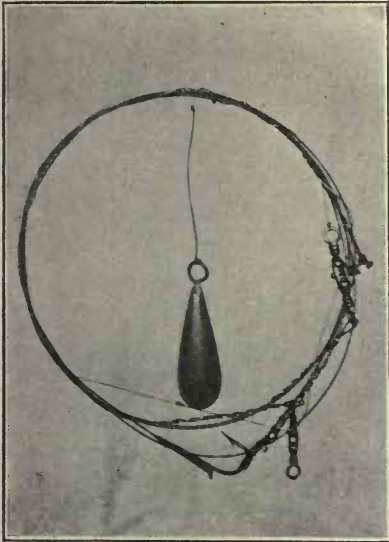
strong brass extensions, which are rust proof. It will be found a most convenient and useful weapon.

If the jack is takeable, it should be killed, which will expedite the extraction of the hooks. For this purpose a gag must be used, which prises open the jaws. There are several patterns, "Jardine's," "Bickerdyke's," and non-descripts which may be procured at any tackle makers. The hooks will be probably deep set and far in; by the use of a disgorger they can be easily extracted. The latter should be 9 to 12 in. long, so that if the instrument slips off the hook, the hand may not be carried against the sharp teeth.

Live baiting is an autumn and early winter method of angling. There is not much spinning until the frosts cut away the weeds. A little practice in casting is necessary to place the bait in the runs between reeds and rushes, and other spots likely to hold *E. lucius*. It is pleasant enough work on a mild autumn day; but it is cold comfort when the winter blasts cut around one's ears and almost chill the blood. Then the more vigorous exertion that spinning affords is preferable.

By means of the paternoster, places can be fished where live-baiting and spinning for pike would be impossible. In the early autumn months, before the river is clear of weeds, this is a deadly method of angling. Pike lie in weedy coverts at this season of the year, which serve the purpose of a shady retreat and a happy hunting ground. Live bait soon get hung up in the weeds, and look like dead fish. Pike do not put themselves out of the way for anything that does not show signs of vitality. With the paternoster the bait is anchored to one spot, and its movements

are limited to pirouetting round the trace. Any open space amongst the weeds can be fished with it. It is just on these open spaces that the jack keeps his eye, ready to appropriate anything that comes his way. The anchored bait soon attracts him. The tackle consists of $1\frac{1}{2}$ yards of strong salmon gut, which is attached to $\frac{1}{2}$ yard of light, best quality trout gut. To the end of the trout gut a lead plummet, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. weight, is added. We have now a trace of 2 yards in length. A swivel is placed be-



PUNJAUB WIRE PATERNOSTER.

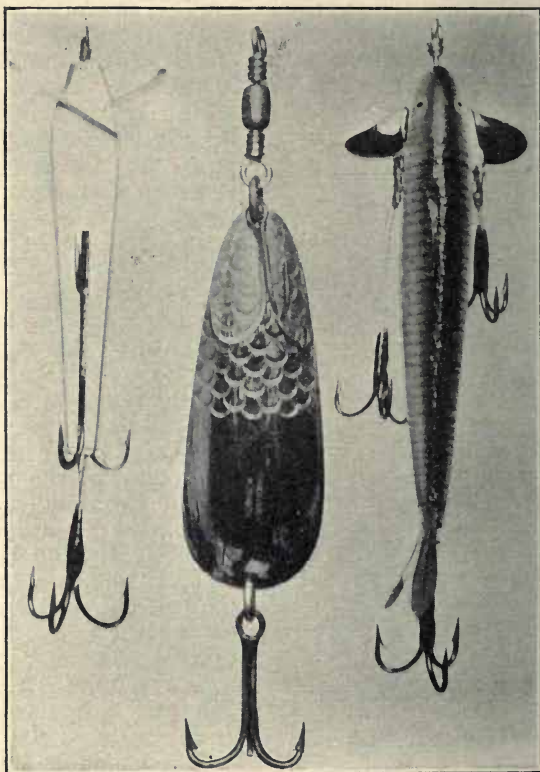
tween the heavy and the light gut. To the swivel is attached 12 inches of fine gimp, on which the live bait is hooked. The object of the lighter gut is in case of entanglement. The plummet is in danger of becoming fast in roots or other obstructions, and in the event of a break the fine gut gives way, and the main part of the paternoster is saved. A 4-inch dace is a good size for

paternostering. It should be hooked through both lips, inserting the hook through the lower first; it lives longer so attached. Messrs. Hardy Brothers make a "Punjaub" wire trace, which is as fine as salmon gut, and extremely strong and durable. For paternostering the danger of kinking, which is one of the objections to all wire tackle, is not so likely to arise. The flexibility of the "Punjaub" is very great, and it seems almost impossible to break it.

Now let us look for places by the riverside, where the paternoster may be used to advantage. Close to the bank there is a fringe of weeds, and further out a similar bed. Between these a clear stream runs. Begin at the top, and drop the plummet gently in, until it touches bottom. Roll up the spare line until everything is taut between the top of the rod and the plummet. A slight vibration will be felt, which shows that the dace is working all right in the water. Remain in that position for five minutes, and if there is no sign of a jack, which is generally indicated by a more vigorous drag on the tackle, lift the bait out, and drop it in a few yards lower down. In thick weed cover pike cannot see much that is not quite in front of them, and half a rod's length lower down one may be out of sight of the wriggling lure. He discovers it in the new position in the stream, and makes his attentions felt by a vigorous knock on the line. One must not expect this to be repeated for a moment or two, and the wisest course is to immediately drop the top of the rod, and let the line go slack. It is probable that the dace is caught crosswise in the pike's mouth, and to strike whilst in that position is not advisable.

Pike turn their prey head downwards before swallowing them, and further agitation in the line will mark this process, in all probability, a few seconds after the first knock is felt. That is the time for the angler to assert his authority and strike, by sharply lifting the top of the rod.

not be attracted. They have their feeding times, when they emerge in quest of food, in shallower water, where anglers may be fortunate enough to come across them. With the paternoster, any depth of water can be negotiated, and to discover a wriggling bait in the vicinity is too tempting to be resisted. Very



The Rectangular
Devon.

The "Kidney"
Spoon.

The "Ideal"
Phantom.

By means of the paternoster deep holes may be fished where spinning or live-baiting (which is adjusted to the average depth) would not attract attention. Heavy pike make their lairs in such places, and unless a bait is put before their nose they will

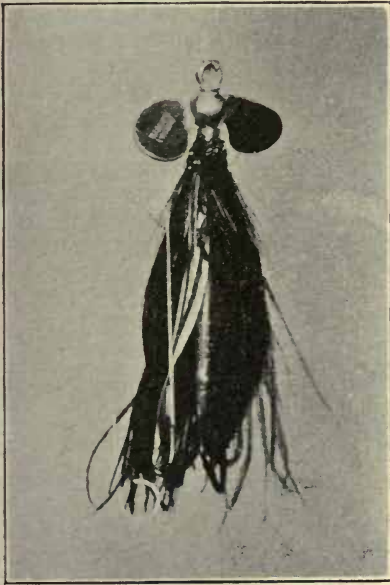
big fish have been taken in this way. By dropping the plummet in here, there, and everywhere, those out-of-the-way retreats are sure to be discovered, and a pleasant surprise often awaits the angler, who searches diligently for them. A longer top should be included

in the pike rod outfit for reaching out-of-the-way places. The "Salmo Esox" includes a second joint 9 inches longer, which is intended for salmon spinning, but comes in equally handy for this method of pike fishing. Long casts will have to be made; this alters the position of the line from the perpendicular to a slanting angle, and may sink the bait too

a fresh fish. A rest in the well of a punt or a large bait-can soon restores its vigour.

Closely allied to paternostering is legering. The tackle is similar to that used for roach, the trace consisting of strong salmon gut or gimp. Immediately below the leger bullet a swivel is placed, to which a couple of feet of gimp or wire, ending in the hook, is added. The bait is mounted in the same way as on the paternoster, with sufficient freedom to work backwards and forwards within super-scribed limits, and in eddies and at the slack of rapids often a very good pike is found by this means. In discoloured water the leger is an excellent device, as it takes the bait close to the bottom, where jack are more likely to find it. The line is kept taut, and when his lordship pays his attention the bullet will be felt dragging. Any slack would prevent hooking when the strike is made. It goes without saying that it should be vigorous, as the leaden bullet offers strong resistance.

Spinning is the most scientific method of angling for pike. It keeps one on the move, and affords healthy muscular exercise, which is an additional advantage. It is essentially a winter occupation, and is not possible during the early season except in occasional places. The first essential to spinning is the clearance of the river from weeds. In the autumn the tops of the weeds die off, but the tough, unyielding fibres below the surface catch the flight and obstruct the spinning of the bait. The effect is loss of both temper and tackle. A few days' hard frost rots the weeds, and after a flood most reaches of the river can be fished without obstruction. Of the illustrations given of spinning tackle on another page, I have a preference for



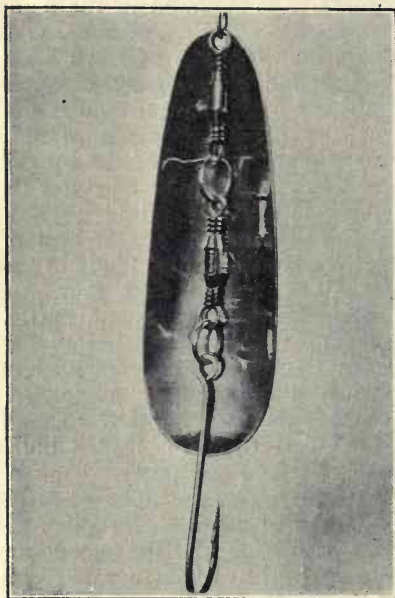
THE "HALCYON" SPINNER.

low in the water. It is easy to right this by adding an extra link of gut to the plummet. The bait will then be adjusted to the right depth.

Frequent casts are rather severe on the bait, and reduce its vitality. It is a good plan, when intending to search the whole breadth of a river, to throw a plummet well out at first, and in moving to a fresh place to pull the bait nearer in, without lifting it from the water. A live bait that seems exhausted should be replaced by

Hardy's Crocodile. The Archer spinner is a good second, but the large spikes closing on the bait tear it unnecessarily, and have a tendency to fly open. This is not possible in the crocodile; the barbed needle that pierces the sides is fastened by a clip, which keeps the bait intact.

A small dace makes an excellent spinner. It is bright and



HARDY'S SPOON FOR LOUGH PIKE.

hardy, and, mounted on the crocodile, I have killed three jack without having to change it. Grey mullet sprat, which may be procured in January and February, make capital lures for spinning. They are tough and shapely, and, with their bright silver sides, show up well in the water. I have killed seven jack with this bait in a short day's fishing. Gudgeon are also suitable, and are dainty comestibles to which pike are partial. The instructions given for casting live bait equally apply to spinning.

A short line should be used first, fishing close to the bank, and casting across and down stream. Pike make their lairs under trees and bushes overshadowing the water. Such places ought to be carefully searched. Next mid-stream should be tried, and, gradually lengthening the line, longer casts should be made to the opposite bank. The bait is made to travel by reeling in line, a movement which should not be done too quickly. A spinning bait is meant to represent a disabled fish, which turns over and over in the water. Naturally, under such conditions the pace is not a rapid one. To imitate the movement, the winch should be revolved quickly enough to keep the bait on the move. Spinning in rapid water, straight up stream, the force of the current will be sufficiently strong to keep the bait revolving. In such cases the line should be rolled in slowly. Across current the pace should be greater, as the bait has a tendency to sink. The weight of lead on the trace must be in proportion to the size of the bait. In sluggish pools very little lead is needed. Many anglers prefer to have the lead embedded in the bait, and in very clear water this is advisable. The crocodile "wobbler" is leaded for this purpose.

When a pike takes a spinning bait there is a dead stoppage on the line. This is so unlike the way a salmon or a trout takes a fly under water that the fly-fisher must be prepared for it. There is nothing of the sharp jerk that is given to the fly; the salmon dives down with his prey, the pike closes on it without moving; a weed or a log could not be more impassive. When such resistance is felt, the line should be tightened by an upward and firm movement of the rod. The fish cannot take the bait in his

mouth without including the triangles; an over-vigorous strike, therefore, is unnecessary, and may invite a smash in the case of light tackle. It will soon be evident whether the cause of stoppage is animate or inanimate. If it is a fish he will soon give a plunge that will insert the hooks beyond the barb. The art of playing him does not require unusual skill; he will no doubt try to get under a bush or other obstruction, and the main business of the angler must be to defeat these wiles as best he can. Any violent plunges can be counteracted by allowing the reel to run freely; he will soon play himself out, and be ready for the gaff.

There are many other lures to which *Esox lucius* falls a prey. A spoon is a good bait, especially in slightly discoloured water. There are endless patterns, most of which are killing. I prefer the pattern silvered on the concave side and bronzed on the back. A red tassel, to which a triple hook is attached, makes it attractive. Pike have a taste for full warpaint and feathers. This is a good river lure, and for lough fishing one of the best that can be mounted. I have fished some of the Irish pike lakes, and, trolling from a boat, took some large fish with the spoon. For the big specimens found in such water, the size of the bait can scarcely be too large. The water is very deep in places, and 40 yds. of line should be let out so as to allow the bait to sink well. Trolling along the reed-fringed margin the spoon was stopped again and again, precursory to a battle royal with the sturdy combatants. It is in these great lakes that the fighting power of the pike is seen to best advantage. They have plenty of sea room and make long runs, not unworthy of a salmon.

I have never known river fish to play with anything like their energy. No wonder, indeed, for they live in the purest of water, and trout comprise their staple diet! In an autopsy made on a twenty-five-pounder, taken recently in Lough Corrib, a waterhen and a shell duck were discovered. This ought to be a sufficient hint to anglers to use large baits. The "swallow-tail" is a good river bait; it is made of rubber and of the gaudy type that attracts attention. At the tails of swift rapids it has the knack of finding the whereabouts of an expectant feeder. All rubber baits are easily scored with the sharp teeth of jack, and consequently are less durable; but notwithstanding this objection, the swallow-tail, unless bitten through, lasts a long time. The rectangular Devon is metallic and not open to this objection. The fins, being set the reverse way, make the bait revolve well in the water, and as the hooks cover the lure at all points a pike cannot easily escape being hooked when he snaps at it. Large phantoms are now made of horn and other more durable materials, and present features of attraction to pike, which, like all other terrestrial creatures, have a taste for novelty.

When sport is slow, variety in the lures proffered to pike has to be studied. Another pattern fly frequently brings a salmon to the scratch literally. A dry-fly man changes from duns to wickhams, and from alders to sedges, and wisdom is justified of her children. The wary trout at length falls a prey to these beguilements. A parallel presents itself in the case of the pike. Though a voracious feeder, he gives ample evidence of fastidiousness. A bait presented in one form goes by unnoticed, offered in another it is

taken. I have fished the greater part of a day with live bait, carefully searching every likely spot without being flattered by a single run. I took the live bait off, killed it, and mounting it on a flight began spinning the same water, and was rewarded by taking four jack in rapid succession. I have not the least doubt that these fish had seen the bait they took spinning many times under conditions of helplessness that made it an equally easy prey. It was simply the method of offering the bait that made the difference. Spoon baits and phantoms are offered without effect, then a "halcyon" spinner searches the water, is seized, and verily the angler has his reward. Variety affects preferences. The angler who has the good fortune to put something before the nose of a pike that he has not seen before, in imitation of fish, fowl, or good red herring, is very likely to get on fighting terms with him.

Pike-fishing with a fly is a delightful pastime. Wherever a spoon or phantom may be used with success, it serves its purpose. On a hot August day it may be cast by a heavy trout or a grilse rod. I have had excellent sport on the river with the fly. The pike during hot weather lie close enough to the surface to be attracted by frogs, or other water food worthy of their attention. I have never been fortunate enough to get any very heavy jack that way, which forces me to the conclusion that big specimens lie deeper in the water; but seven and eight pounders are by no means unusual. Six inches of fine gimp should be attached to the fly, the rest of the cast being made of salmon gut. I prefer

3 yds. in length. Along the margin of weeds in deep pools and quiet eddies the fly may be any moment stopped, and an exciting piece of sport enjoyed. It should be worked so as to travel in short jerks, a movement well known to salmon anglers. Under the head of salmon angling this method of working the rod will be more fully described.

Pike play their very best held by a single hook; they are of course handicapped by a mouthful of tackle, and give in much sooner. Any kind of gaudy pattern suits; 2/0 and 3/0 standard hooks are good sizes. The body should be made of broad silver twist, packed underneath to give it bulk, with plenty of golden pheasant, peacock, scarlet ibis, and jungle cock mixed in the wings. Dyed seal fur, fiery brown, claret and scarlet, forming alternate coils, with the silver twist running down the body, makes another good pattern. This fly must be cast overhand, as in trout fishing, and there must be no delay in striking the fish when he takes it. Good salmon gut lends itself to firm holding, and, provided the rod is equal to it, there is not much fear of a smash. The great danger lies in the tendency of the pike to run into thick weed covering. On no account must this be permitted. Something must give way if he buries himself amongst the reeds. Trust in your rod and tackle and hold him well up. He will show himself amenable to reason if firmly handled, and will suffer himself to be drawn away from the hiding-place which is his only chance of safety. In clear water the strain may be relaxed, and the issue will be simply a question of strength *versus* science.

CHAPTER VI.

PERCH.

PERCH (*Perca fluviatilis*).

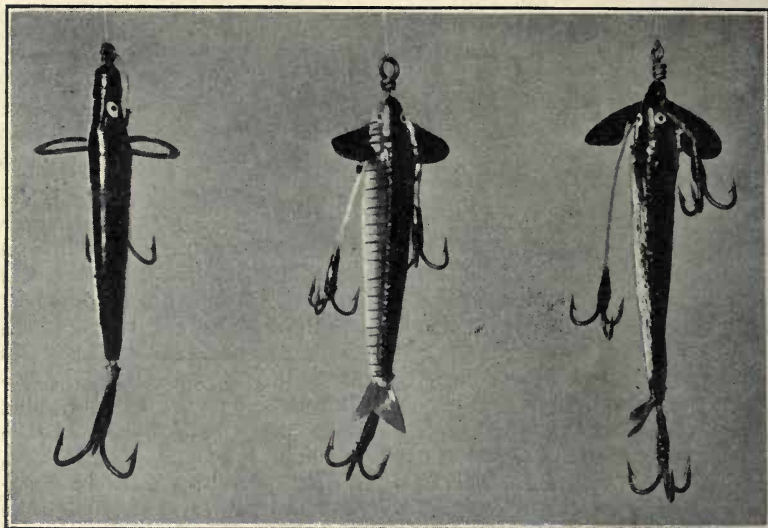
To encounter a $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. perch on a light rod and in a rapid stream is an event in a lad's life not soon forgotten. It is probable that the red worm which allured the fish was intended for a roach or a modest gudgeon. I have seen a youth in such an unexpected predicament; his face was blanched, he was trembling in every limb. No wonder, indeed, for *Perca* is no ordinary fighter. The rod was bent double, and more than once the top was dragged into the water. "Would the fight never end?" the face behind the rod seemed to be asking in its tense earnestness. At length the striped sides came to the surface surmounted by a large dorsal fin menacingly erect, and a mouth gaping wide enough to swallow rod and boy together. "I am the tiger of the river," it seemed to say, "touch me at your peril."

An effective swoop of the net was the answer to the challenge. The youth, beside himself with the delight of the prize, plunged his hand into the net only to withdraw it bleeding. By means of the sharp spines of the dorsal fin the perch had his revenge. This defensive part of the fish is indeed a formidable weapon. It consists of from fourteen to sixteen bristling rays sharp enough to penetrate any flesh or fish substance with which they come into contact. The rays are so arranged as to allow the fin to open and close like a fan. Whilst the fish is alive it is difficult to press

them down, and when released they fly erect again like a steel spring. The membrane to which the spines are attached is thin but exceedingly tough and not easily ruptured. A sharp bone covering the gills is another part of the perch's armour. With such an outfit this fish needs careful manipulation. The belief that pike eschew perch because of its bristling dorsal is an exploded fallacy. No doubt the prey must be swallowed tail first, but that the pike has a preference for it, compared with other baits, I have personally proved. A $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. specimen secured me a 16 lb. pike in Lough Conn, Ireland; what lucius' intentions were in the method of pouching it I had no means of observing. The appearance of the perch flatters the pike's taste; the vermilion tail and ventral fin, the golden-brown scales barred with transverse stripes, and the iridescent hue that flashes out from the skin make him an attractive object of prey. His white flesh possesses a delicate flavour which the pike likes to sample.

Perch spawn prolifically in April and May, laying many thousands of eggs, which are strung together and deposited on water weeds. In this respect they differ from the *Salmonidae* family, which lay their eggs collectively. The fish run to 5 lb. or 6 lb. weight, although the latter size is rare.

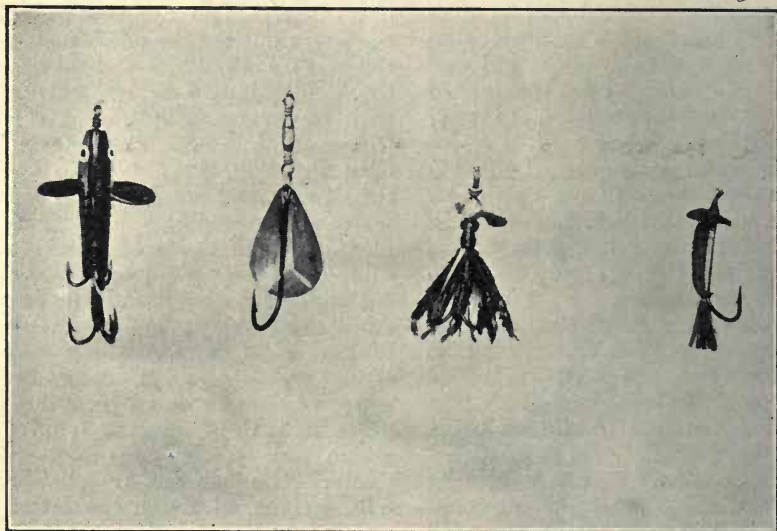
There is a great variety of the *percidae* family; one authority accounts for no less than ninety-five



Horn Phantom.

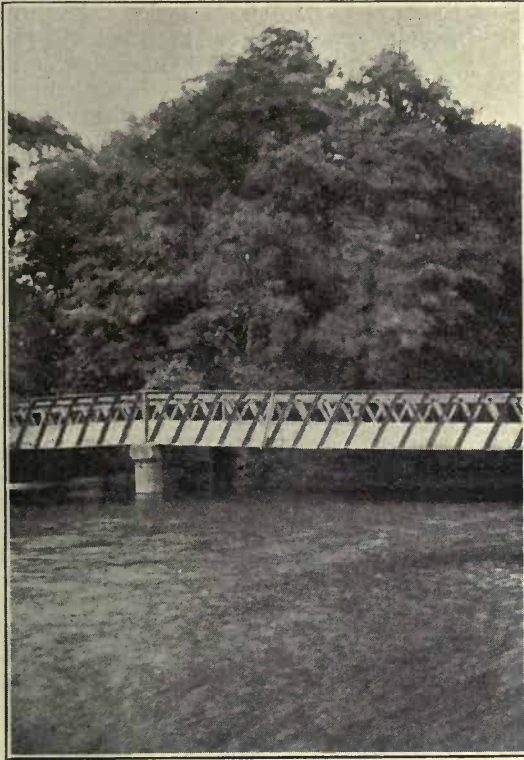
Hardy Bros.'
Leaded Phantom.

Rubber Phantom.

Pioneer
Devon Minnow.Hogback
Spoon.Hardy Bros.'
Halcyon.Minnow
Fly.

species, widely distributed over Europe, Asia, and North America. Most of the species are small. The pike-perch is the largest member of the *lucioperca* family. The sander (*L. sander*) is the chief species, which is found in Russia and Germany, and grows to 30 lb. weight. It thrives in brackish

in habit and appearance. The *L. canadensis*, another American species, is extensively cultivated in the United States. The "wall-eyed" pike (*L. vitrea*) of the great lakes belongs to the same classification. It grows to 3 ft. in length and attains to a weight of 25 lb. The North American black bass



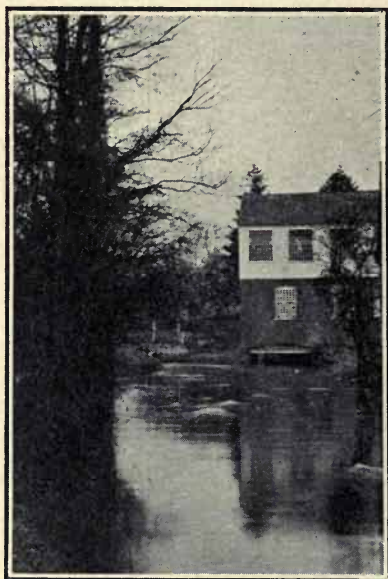
WHERE PERCH LIE.

water, and has been caught in the mouths of Dutch rivers. It derives its name from its pike-like appearance. The dorsal fin contains from nineteen to twenty-three rays, and there are eight to ten transverse bars on the body. The North American *P. flavescens* is very similar to the British tribe

is included in the *percidae* family. It is as highly esteemed for its sporting qualities in America as the trout and salmon of our own water. Dr. Henshall, the author of "The Book of the Black Bass," describes it as "the gamest fish that swims." Whilst not prepared to endorse this opinion, I

am in a position to vouch for its fighting qualities, having killed the species up to 3 lb. weight with the fly in America.

Perca labrax is frequently confused with *P. fluviatilis*. It is, however, the sea perch, a distinct species found in British tidal waters, and grows to a larger size and heavier weight than its fresh-water congener. The only other species found in England is the ruff, or pope (*Acerina cernua*),



THE OLD MILL POOL.

which is plentiful in the Thames, Kennet, and other rivers. It is a diminutive fish, 4 or 5 in. long, differing from the perch in the dorsal fin, and also lacking the distinctive transverse body bars, the skin being a marble colour, more like the gudgeon.

A bream rod with a fair spring in it is suitable for perch bait-fishing. It is advisable, however, to have one that can be used generally. A light spinning rod

will be found useful for all purposes. Worms are a favourite bait with perch, and no angler goes to the river without a canister replete with them. Lobs, brandlings, and red worms are all good, and may be tried in turn. They should be fresh and lively, and scoured in damp moss four or five days beforehand. The lob should be threaded on the hook from the head downwards, leaving an inch free at the top and another at the tail. This is better than looping it on in two or three places. A couple of red worms may with advantage be placed on the hook. A float is used for this method of fishing. A plain, slim pattern is better than a thick, gaudy one. It offers less resistance in striking, and is not so conspicuous in the water. Close to banks near wooden piles of weirs and in the slack of eddies are the places to search for perch with a worm. The attack of the fish will be shown in the disappearance of the float. A moment or two should be allowed to give time for the hook to get well within the mouth before striking. The gut should be fine, 1 to 1½ yards in length, and of the best quality. An ink or coffee stain makes it less noticeable. One or two shots, 10 to 12 in. from the hook, will be sufficient to keep the bait sunk. The best line is a light silk quality, coiled on a check reel. The float should be adjusted so that the worm drifts a few inches clear of the bottom.

In swift water, where the depth varies, a float cannot be used to advantage, and legering may be tried. A leaden bullet, with a sufficiently large hole to avoid friction, is placed on the line and stopped with a shot to prevent it running down on the hook. Anchored in this way, the current lifts the loose end of the gut from

the bottom, allowing the bait to sway about in a way likely to be seen by the perch. The line must be kept taut, ready for striking, a moment or two after the bite is felt. A few heavy shots securely closed on the gut may be substituted for a bullet. This prevents the possibility of chafing, which is one of the disadvantages of using a leaden weight, and which not infrequently leads to trouble. Both these methods of fishing can be used, with a minnow for bait instead of a worm. A fine round-bend hook is the best pattern for this purpose, hooking the minnow through the upper and lower lips in turn. Perch seize the bait crosswise, and, like the pike, turn it head downwards. Sufficient time should be allowed for this purpose before striking. Minnows are delicate bait, and must be carefully dropped into the water; they should not be moved about more than is absolutely necessary. Most tackle-makers keep them in stock, and the large species are the best. A small gudgeon is not a bad substitute, but big perch will not scruple to take a dace or roach when it comes their way. A 2lb. specimen is a fine fish on light tackle; it gives exciting play, and needs careful handling. A free-running reel is necessary to relieve the strain. Without this safeguard short work would be made of fine gut.

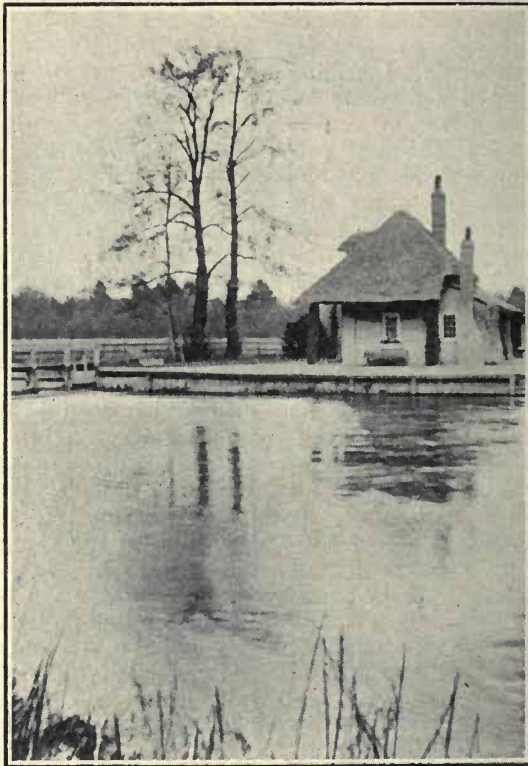
Paternostering is the most popular method of perch-fishing. It is certainly very deadly, and can be used in places where a float or ledgering is scarcely possible; any few feet of clear space among weeds can be negotiated by this means. The gut should be of a fine round quality, from 4 to 5 ft. in length, according to the depth of the water. A plummet, to which a finer short length

of gut is attached, is used for a sinker. A conical shape is better than a round one, as being less likely to fasten in the weeds. Half a foot above the plummet a 4-in. length of gut is attached to the trace, above a knot or by means of a loop, so that it does not slip down. Fifteen inches higher up a similar link is placed. To these a No. 6 hook is tied, on which different baits are mounted. A lob worm on the bottom and a minnow or small gudgeon on the top are a good combination. Thus equipped, any likely spot on the river should be fished. Perch, like pike, are found in clear spaces amongst the weeds, and close to reeds and rushes by the bank. Eddies near swift rapids are likely places to hold them. Under the shade of an overhanging willow is a favourite haunt, and whenever there is a deep hole into which food is likely to be washed, there is the chance of coming across a good specimen. Drop the plummet in quietly and let it sink until it touches bottom, roll up the slack, and await developments. If the perch is at home he will make his presence felt by a sharp pull on the trace. A moment or two afterwards the strike should follow by quickly raising the top of the rod. If much time is given, he will have the bait off the hook, as the hold is very slight and the minnow is tender mouthed. Lowering the top of the rod when the first touch is felt takes off the strain, and assists the perch in turning the minnow. If there is no sign of a bite, the paternoster should be moved a few feet further up or down stream. Patience must be practised; it will bring its reward in due time.

Playing a hooked fish needs care; he will plunge about vigorously for a while, but with the

resistance of the rod and plummet he cannot run far, and, aided by a free winch, there is no excuse for breaking the tackle or wrenching the hook from its hold. Whilst mounting a fresh bait the minnow on the paternoster should be dropped into the bait can ; the

course, is an advantage. A natural minnow, mounted on a flight, stands first in the various forms of spinning. A fine gut swivelled trace is required. The swivels prevent the line from twisting, and are a necessary provision for all revolving baits. A perch will



A WINTER POOL.

short rest will restore its vigour, it soon dies out of water.

Spinning for perch is the most scientific method of all. It needs more skill than any other form of perch angling. It enables one to fish parts of the river which cannot be reached by means of a float or paternoster. Every cast covers fresh ground, which, of

often take a minnow moving away from it in the disabled fashion which the flight mimics, when it may not be disposed to patronize it pirouetting round a fixed point. There are many descriptions of flights on which the bait may be mounted. A Hardy "crocodile" wobbler is a favourite. It has a spear, which runs into the body,

made of pliable metal, which can be bent after insertion to the shape required. There are two triangle hooks; one fastens in the side of the minnow, the other hangs below the tail. The "Pennell" flight has three hooks, a single that passes through the lips of the minnow, a triangle which fastens below the dorsal fin, giving the necessary twist to the tail, and a third that hangs loose. This flight puts a strain on the bait, and the hold gives way more frequently than is desirable. A lead is attached to the Pennell flight which passes through the mouth into the body, but it is not pliable and is only intended for weight. If a flight of hooks without a spear or lead is used, the trace must be shotted to sink it. Weirs or mill tails and such places are suitable for minnow spinning. The lure should be drawn across the current. Fishing straight down stream, the force of the water carries the minnow to the surface, where it splashes about, and is more likely to scare fish than attract them. Commence at the top of the stream, and cast towards the opposite side. The force of the current will keep the bait spinning. When it comes round towards you, draw it up through the slack water. Perch are more likely to be taken on the sides of the rapid than in the full strength of the current. Food washed down is thrown off into the slack, and in such places fish are on the look-out. Round the margin of deep pools should be carefully tried. When perch are on the feed they move into the lighter water, where a wobbling minnow is likely to tempt them. The moment the bait is stopped the line should be tightened by raising the top of the rod. The cause will be soon apparent: if a weed, there will be passive

resistance; should it be a fish, active. He is not likely to escape the array of bristling hooks that cover the bait; there is no need, therefore, for hard striking—it courts disaster; a firm tightening up of the line is all that is necessary. Play your fish steadily, and don't be in a hurry to land him. He will come to the surface before he is ready for the net, in all probability. There are many fish lost by premature attempts at landing, and not a few within a yard of the net. If he happens to be hooked lightly and not played out, a final plunge at the last moment is certain to give him liberty. On the other hand, a lightly-hooked fish played until there is not a kick left in him often finds its way to the basket.

Next to the natural bait come artificial spinners, of which there are many patterns. A small hog-backed spoon is good for rivers. Rapids are favourite places to use it, and on the edge of deep pools it will be frequently taken. The glitter of the spoon can be seen where a minnow would not be noticed. A small Devon is an excellent bait, and the leaded pattern sinks well in deep pools. A phantom is an old favourite. It is light and can be used in rapids without getting fast in the bottom. There are sure to be deep spots unknown to you where perch lie, and a phantom sweeping across proves irresistible.

The partiality of perch for silver-bodied flies is well known to trout anglers. In fishing Irish loughs I have taken them up to $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. On more than one occasion, whilst playing a trout on the dropper, or middle fly, the weight of the rod was suddenly increased, a perch having taken the leader. I have sometimes managed to land both. Fly devices have become a regular part of perch

lures. The "halcyon" spinner is a fly imitation; it has a silver body covered with peacock and a few strands of scarlet ibis. It revolves in the water, and its colour shows up well. For this description of angling it is best to use a fly rod, casting overhand. A spinning rod such as is used for minnows and leaded traces can only be used for underhand casting, and phantoms, halcyons, and other fly imitations, unless weighted, are too light for that method of throwing. A perch on a fly rod gives good play, and is

worth more, from a sporting point of view, than one caught on a heavier rod.

Trolling for lake perch, a larger-sized spoon is used. It is mounted on a leaded trace, with a long line, so that it sinks well in the water. To effect this the boat should be pulled very slowly. In the deep water heavy perch are to be found. It is well to use fine gimp on the spoon, as it is not at all unlikely that a pike may regard the lure as intended for his benefit, and appropriate it accordingly.

CHAPTER VII.

TROUT, RODS AND TACKLE.

TROUT (*Salmo fario*).

TROUT and salmon rank so high in the estimation of sportsmen that they are designated "game" fish. They are the partridges and pheasants of the stream, and everything else is relegated to another and inferior category. Acquaintance with them justifies the flattery. The sport they give and the superior art which their capture entails make them the coveted objects of fishermen. Comparison with other fish found in British waters can scarcely be seriously made by anglers acquainted with both. As food and sport they are unrivalled, but trout and salmon compared with each other raise considerable diversity of opinion as to which stands first from a sporting point of view. The question is not raised here for the purpose of discussing it, let us be thankful that we are not compelled to choose between them, but can address ourselves to the capture of both as opportunity offers.

Trout are classified under different heads:—

- (1) The common trout (*Salmo fario*).
- (2) The great lake trout (*S. ferox*).
- (3) The white (or sea) trout (*S. trutta*).
- (4) The bull trout (*S. eriox*).
- (5) The rainbow trout (*S. iridens*).

The white and the bull trout are included with the salmon in the migratory family. The rainbow is an importation. Of the

non-migratory family, despite the variety in colour and shape, there are only two known species of British *Salmonidæ*, viz., *S. fario*, which frequents the rivers and streams, and *S. ferox*, which is found in the lakes. The variety in colour is nothing more than adaptation to environment. The common trout is yellow, green, brown, black, chameleon in short, varying in tint according to the nature of the water it inhabits. In this respect it follows the order of all creatures with enemies stronger than themselves, and is endowed with powers of mimicry by which it may outwit them. The rapidity of these changes is very remarkable. Experiments prove that trout transferred to a new environment undergo a change of colour in a few minutes. The effect is produced by the fish assuming a tint that blends with, or is not easily distinguished from, the predominant colour of the water. In a tributary of the Test, a pure chalk stream, I discovered, after close scrutiny, trout of a pale greenish tint, which for some time had escaped notice. In a weedy stretch dark-tinted specimens proved difficult to distinguish from the trailing weeds amongst which they poised. Ichthyologists have wisely ignored tint in classifying the species.

The difference between *S. fario* and its congener *S. ferox* is well marked; the following points distinguish them. The breeding places of the common trout are the shallow portions of streams

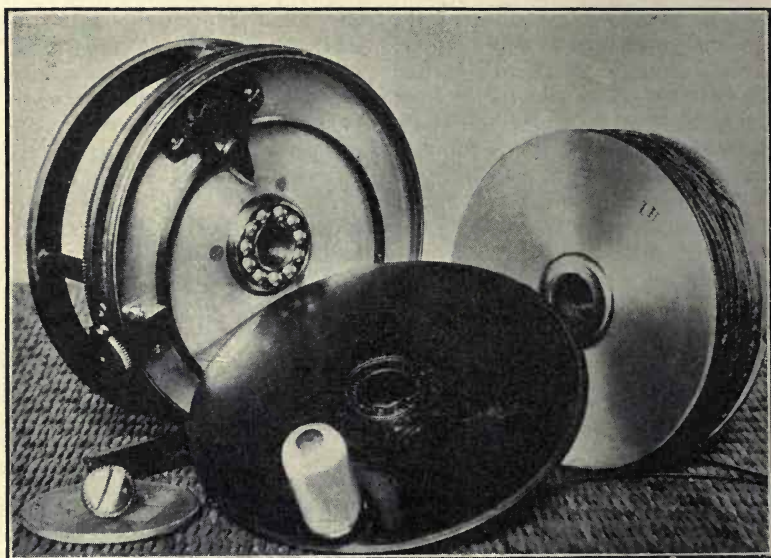
and rivers. The great lake trout always choose the lake or the deep portions of rivers leading to it for spawning.

The head of the common trout is smaller than that of the lake species. This point of differentiation must not be pressed too far, as the head of the common trout differs a good deal in different rivers.

The nature of the spots is a more important guide. In *S. fario* they are single marks; in *S.*

distributed abroad. They spawn from the end of October up to the beginning of February. The "eye" shows usually within a month, and the eggs are hatched in about six weeks. The fry grows rapidly from the time it makes its appearance, particularly where plenty of food is obtainable.

Of the outfit for trout, the rod naturally comes first. There are three kinds, the fly, trolling, and dapping rod.



HARDY BROS.' "PERFECT" TROUT REEL.

ferox there is a second and lighter colour surrounding the crimson spot.

The tail is an important feature. That of the great lake trout is very broad and almost square. In the other it is narrower in proportion to the size of the body. The cooked flesh of *S. fario* is generally white, whilst that of *S. ferox* is almost invariably red.

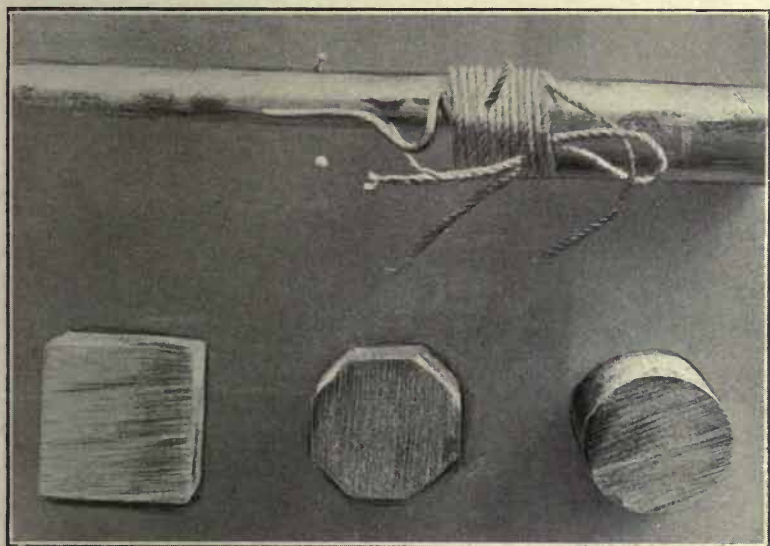
Trout are found in all parts of the United Kingdom, and widely

The first is used in the capture of ordinary *S. fario*, the second is required for the cannibal specimens, which have got beyond the fly age, and are only tempted by a minnow or otherwise substantial bait. The third is employed dapping with the natural May-fly and daddy longlegs. The fly rod preferred by the majority of anglers ranges from 10 to 11 ft. long: the shorter length is preferable. It is comparatively rare

now to meet an angler by the river-side using a rod that exceeds 10 ft. 6 in. For lough-fishing, where flies and tackle are on a larger scale, the length used is from 11 to 12 ft. There is really no reason why a lake rod should be longer and heavier, except that it is often required to do double duty, trolling phantoms, minnows, &c., as well as casting the fly. A proper equipment should include a special rod for this kind of work.

When the breeze is light, the blow line is not carried forward sufficiently by a shorter rod, and the fish are consequently scared.

Trout rods may be further classified according to the make. Greenheart, ash, hickory, and other solid woods form one class; split cane another. Greenheart is the best of the hard woods used in the manufacture of rods. One must go to a first-class maker, however, to obtain reliable



AMATEUR ROD-MAKING.

Quadrilateral section.

Octagonal section.

Round section.

The stiffening and the increased weight are decided drawbacks in a fly-casting weapon.

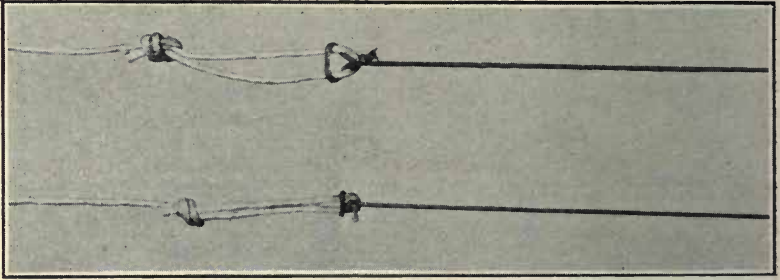
A trolling or spinning rod is usually 9 to 10 ft. long; the action is stiff enough to hook a fish that takes a minnow or phantom trolled behind a boat. The speciality of a dapping rod consists in its length, 14 to 15 ft. long is by no means unusual. The object is to keep the dap well in front of the drifting boat.

quality. The timber is either very good or very bad. Absolutely flawless lengths and long in the grain alone give satisfaction. It is not easy for the most expert to tell good timber from bad in a finished rod. Polish has always been a' deceiver, and silk wrappings cover a multitude of sins! One is therefore at the mercy of the vendor. I would advise going to the best makers and purchasing a rod of the first quality,

whatever it costs. It will prove the cheapest in the end.

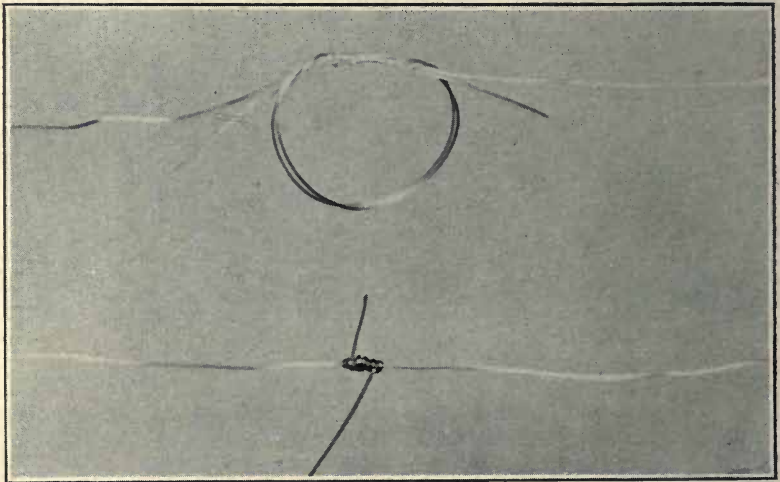
It is a great advantage for an angler to know how to make a rod as well as tie a fly; I intend, therefore, to deal with both

rod-making. It must necessarily be limited to rods of solid material. Anything, therefore, that cannot be done with half a dozen tools at a simple bench is outside the province of this chapter. One



JAM KNOT FOR ATTACHING LINE TO GUT.

Top—Prepared for drawing.
Bottom—Drawn tight.



THE DOUBLE WATER GUT KNOT.

Top—Prepared for drawing.
Bottom—Drawn tight.

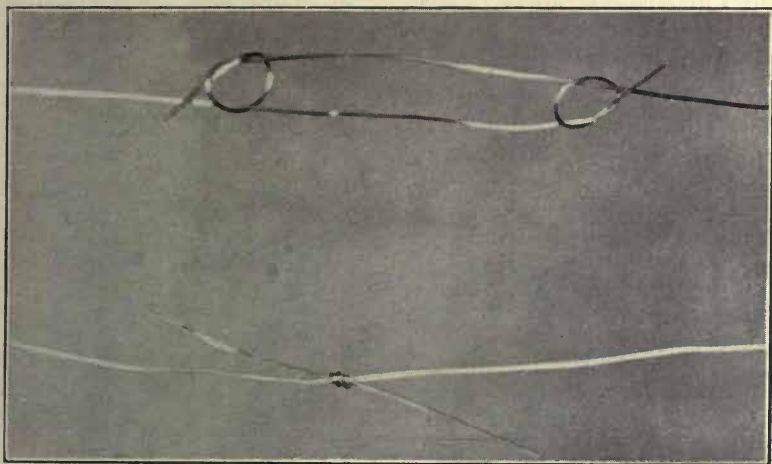
branches of this part of the art of angling. One of the most common pursuits of the man with a hobby is amateur carpentering. This can be readily applied to

result of amateur rod-making is the better insight it gives into constituent elements. It will soon be discovered why a rod breaks without undue strain, why it

warps and loses its balance. The plane reveals many things, particularly the difference between good and bad material.

Greenheart is undoubtedly the best wood to try one's hand on. Quality consists in the weight and regularity of the grain. If it is heavy and hard to work the wood is good, if sappy and it goes into powder under the plane it is worthless. Black knots are not necessarily hurtful; white ones are fatal. A little cross grain

8 in. for the splice. The butt-piece in the rough should be $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. in diameter, the top joint $\frac{1}{8}$ in. These thicknesses allow for superficial defects which may be planed out. The first thing is to plane the wood quadrilaterally (*see fig.*). This must be done with great care, it is the basis of a straight rod, and any defect will run through all subsequent processes. Continue to plane until the diameter is reduced to $1\frac{1}{8}$ in. Next mark off 2 ft. from the butt



THE BUFFER GUT KNOT.

Top—Prepared for drawing.

Bottom—Drawn tight.

material in the butt may not be serious, but the middle and top joints must be free from defects. When the grain runs in opposite directions it must be planed accordingly, using the tool with the grain, not against it.

A spliced rod is the simplest pattern, as it does not require brass ferules. This is known as the "Castleconnell" build. Let us attempt a 15-ft. grilse rod. Two pieces of timber are selected each 8 ft. long; this allows a clear

and commence from that point to plane out the remainder, gradually tapering the wood, until it is $\frac{7}{8}$ in. at the top. The other joint is similarly treated, the tapering, however, must be much greater until the extreme point is $\frac{1}{4}$ in. in diameter.

The next step is to change the quadrilateral into an octagonal figure (*see fig.*). By planing off the edges of the quadrilateral this figure is obtained. Again, great care must be taken in order to

get a true octagonal. The edges of the latter figure have only to be planed off to obtain a round rod in the rough (*see fig.*).

Instead of working from the bottom as before, begin now at the top, to plane off the sharp edges. The joint must be held in the left hand and turned round gradually at each stroke of the tool. Having treated both joints in this fashion, the splice should be made and the balance of the rod tested, further reductions being made until the desired balance and action are secured. I have made a rod 15 ft. of the scantalon just given. It has had over twelve years wear, killed many salmon, and is in good condition to-day. It is fuller in the butt than the typical "Castleconnell," but plays down to the hand and has great killing power. The circumference is as follows: Butt (extreme) $2\frac{5}{8}$ in.; 10 in. from bottom, $3\frac{1}{4}$ in.; 5 ft. from bottom, $1\frac{3}{4}$ in.; 10 ft. from bottom, $1\frac{1}{4}$ in.; extreme top $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

The rod is finished off with glass paper, using the coarsest quality at first and turning the rod round until all unevenness is removed. Defects can be detected by twisting the joint between the finger and thumb from top to bottom. Next a finer glass paper is used and the rubbing repeated until a smooth surface is obtained. Lastly the rod is French polished. This is a tedious process, but necessary; the polish must be laid on, and rubbed off several times, using fine glass paper. When the surface is well prepared in this way the polish is applied permanently. Cotton-wool makes a good rubber, and a drop of boiled linseed oil occasionally applied will keep it from sticking.

If the rod is jointed and fitted with brass ferrules more labour will be entailed. The important

matter is to fit the brasses on tightly. The fortunate possessor of a lathe will find no difficulty in securing mathematical exactness. In the absence of machinery the joint must be rubbed down with glass paper, and the brasses forced on; a rivet will completely secure them. Shrinking them on is a more delicate process, and the plan adopted by professionals, but I have not attempted it. The brass should project beyond the wood so as to make room for the top ferrule; this is a matter of measurement. The wood must be bored the size of the tongue, which is the smallest part of the ferrule that pierces it. A bit and brace will accomplish this. It is necessary to hold the joint in the vice and bore about $\frac{1}{4}$ in., where the tongue enters, taking care to get the centre. The brass can then be slipped on and the rest of the depth bored without splitting the wood.

A very fine drill must be used for the rivet hole. Mark the spot with a centre punch and drill until the brass is pierced, then use a smaller drill and continue the boring half-way through the diameter. Use a brass rivet the size of the larger hole, and drive it in three parts of the diameter. File down the rivet with care, so as not to scratch the lacquering.

The rings are next whipped on, beginning at the butt; the upright case-hardened are the best; they must be carried in a straight line to the top. A piece of cord fixed on the bench between two props can be used as a guide. For a 15-ft. rod two rings are required for the butt, four for the middle, and seven for the top. The plate shows the correct method of rolling on and fastening the whipping. The end of the silk is caught under, and after three

or four turns the waste is cut off and the coiling is continued. The photograph shows the end projecting, before finishing off. The last three or four coils are rolled over a loop of gut or fine wire, then the end is passed through the loop, and by means of it drawn underneath and out between the coils. Cut off the loose ends close to the wrappings. The silk used for this purpose must be of good quality, and rubbed over with colourless wax. Scarlet is the best colour for rods. The top joints require finer silk than the butt and middle. The wrappings are afterwards varnished. The top ring is whipped on with fine copper wire and finished off with silk. The sides are filed or planed so as to make the ring fit closely.

Patent lock-fast ferrules require no hitches. When the former cannot be obtained, the hitches are whipped on with wire and silk like the top ring. The winch fittings should be sweated on or riveted and made to fit exactly. In these simple instructions and illustrations will be found the art of amateur rod-making. A handy man will have no difficulty in applying them, and producing a useful and well-finished rod.

Split cane rods have obtained well-deserved popularity. They are dainty but costly weapons; like forbidden fruit, they are "pleasant to the eye," and sooner or later every angler falls a prey to their irresistible beguilements. The method of their manufacture is expensive, but it must be said of them that a good sample need not be repeated in a life-time. From the soundest portion of whole canes sections are cut—hexagonal, octagonal, and nonagonal, as the case may demand, and cemented together. The strength of the combination is

very great, and, given fair play, practicably unbreakable. It is delightful to handle a good make. I am the possessor of a Hardy Bros.' "Houghton," which I use for wet and dry fly, on river and lake; it is 10 ft. long, weight 9 oz., of quick and powerful action. The way it gets out a line against the wind and drops a fly with accuracy is unequalled by any rod I have ever used.

The makes of trout reels are legion. The essential thing is to procure one of good material, and as light as possible. Great improvements have been effected of late years in workmanship. The old reel of numerous screws and heavy metal has had its day, and is replaced by one of few screws, ball bearings, and lightest material. The danger of getting out of order is reduced to a minimum. My favourite is a Hardy Bros.' "Perfect," of which I give illustrations. It is made of an aluminium alloy, with ball bearings, $3\frac{3}{4}$ in. in diameter. It carries 35 yards of heavy line, backed by 50 yards of lighter material, and only weighs 6 oz. The check is regulated by a screw on the rim. A great advantage is the facility with which it can be taken to pieces, oiled, and kept in order. A turn of a screw with a coin effects this.

For wet fly-fishing a plaited silk line is the best make, varying in thickness, according to the lifting power of the rod. Too light a make cannot be got out against the wind, nor ensure accuracy in casting.

The tapered make is the most suitable for dry fly-fishing. It is specially oil dressed, so as to float well and keep the fly up as long as possible. The Houghton line, specially made for the rod of the same name, I have found in every way suitable.

Another and important part of the outfit is the casting line. For wet-fly fishing 3 yards length is usual. Too much care cannot be taken in the selection of gut. Good casting lines can be procured ready made.

I have found the "Hercules" brand, which is manufactured by Messrs. Alcock and Co., Ltd., very reliable. One is able, however, to get the right material from any of the tackle-makers by paying a fair price. It is better, however, to buy gut by the hank (100 strands) or by the dozen, and make one's own casts. It is easy to learn how to tie the knots, of which illustrations are given. The strands must be well soaked in tepid water beforehand. The best is the double water knot. The loose ends and main links must be caught firmly in the finger and thumb of each hand and drawn tightly together. Then each part must be drawn in turn, holding the opposite link meanwhile. The main links can be drawn by the fingers, but the short ends need a pair of pincers, or—a very useful appendage to anglers—the teeth. The loose

ends are cut off as close to the knot as possible.

The buffer knot makes a neater fastening, and for heavier gut, especially salmon, is preferable. It is easier tied when a cast breaks, as the rest of the gut and flies have not to be pulled through as in the case of the double water knot, I have not found the buffer knot reliable for trout casting lines, and do not advise it, although for salmon gut it is the knot I always tie. An illustration is also given of the jam hitch, by which the reel line is attached to the casting line. A case for flies is necessary, of which there are various patterns. One made of japanned tin is cork-lined, with ledges, into which flies can be stuck ready for use. Another pattern is fitted with spring teeth on which the flies are fastened. It is more suitable for May-flies, alders and such like. There is a danger of breaking off the barb in forcing down o and oo hooks. I have learned this from bitter experience and advise feelingly. A creel and landing net complete the outfit; a suitable make of the latter is given in an earlier chapter on coarse fishing.

CHAPTER VIII.

FLY-TYING.

To know how to tie a fly ought to be the ambition of every angler, and by a master of the craft the best results of river and lake are achieved. From an economical point of view, especially to the salmon-fisher, considerable expense is saved, and in emergency a knowledge of the art will save both time and disappointment.

Anglers not infrequently find themselves a long cry from a tackle-shop. A small box of furs, feathers, and flosses does not take up much space in one's kit. Like the sportsman twenty miles from anywhere and the wrong cartridges, the Waltonian may find his stock of flies neither the right size nor pattern. The fly-tier, under such circumstances, will have an advantage over his brother who is dependent upon the professional for this part of his outfit. On one occasion I found myself in the wilds of Donegal, five and twenty miles from a railway station. A state of consternation prevailed amongst the anglers who, like myself, had sought out this remote region in quest of white trout. The loughs had run very low, and the stock of flies contained nothing small enough to cope with the abnormal state of the water. A rough-bodied pattern, locally called "old leather," was the favourite with the trout. Letters had been sent and telegrams despatched, but none of the tackle-makers could supply the desired article. Fortunately I had both small hooks and the right materials, and half a day's work enabled me to supply

myself and share with my brothers in distress.

An amateur fly-tier cultivates simplicity. It is by no means making a virtue out of necessity to add that this is an advantage. Elaborately dressed flies are by no means the best killers. Over-colouring is a common fault. It is necessary to bring down the mighty from his seat to make him practical, and I have known many a gaudy fly to be denuded of much of its court dress before proffering it to a salmon. The artistic is not always the artful, and in this, as in a great many things, *summa ars est celare artem*.

But the most stimulating consideration to the would-be amateur tier is the pleasure of killing a salmon on his own fly. We are all proud of our own children, even when their constitution consists of nothing more than fur and feather. They are to be trusted, too, for the gut loops have been carefully selected and tested, and tied to the shank with the greatest care. Flies tied by the gross contain many faulty specimens, as most anglers have learned to their cost; the commonest of all is defective gut loops, which the innate conservatism of local tiers prefer to the eyed-hook pattern, which in small flies at least is preferable.

Most anglers eschew fly-tying under the conviction that the art is impossible to achieve. I do not say that it is easy, but it is by no means impossible. Given ordinary deftness of fingers, and the usual amount of patience with

which all anglers are supposed to be gifted, the difficulties will be surmounted in the majority of cases. Practice, too, will work miracles, and it is encouraging to notice how each attempt will be an improvement upon the last, until there will not be much to choose between the work of the amateur and the professional.

Tying depends upon a few definite instructions, which it is the object of this article to supply. They are accompanied by photographic examples of each stage in the process, from the unmounted hook to the fully equipped fly. Every tier has his own particular method, and to him it is naturally the best. My experience covers twenty years, and the flies I have made have a fair record behind them. There is no secret in their manufacture beyond what is stated in these pages.

The tier's outfit is simple and inexpensive. It can be purchased for a few shillings. A pair of angler's scissors, watchmaker's tweezers, and hackle pliers, are all that are necessary as far as tools are concerned. For small trout-flies, vices and other implements are required. The best salmon-fly tiers I know never use a vice, and as the examples I give concern large flies, I confine myself to the essentials. The principle of tying is the same whether the flies be small or large. The hackles, fur, twist, &c., involve a larger outlay. Golden pheasant crests, Indian crow, jungle cock, and suchlike, are expensive, but when a stock is laid in the number of flies that can be made makes the cost per pattern very slight.

The number of elements in a salmon fly amount to from fifteen to twenty-five; all these from first to last are tied with a single piece

of well-waxed silk, varying in thickness according to the size of the hook. If the thread breaks, it must not be knotted, but reattached by one or two coils, catching the end *underneath* on the shank of the hook. Constant rewaxing is important, especially where any of the elements, such as twist hackle or wing, are finished off. A little turpentine or methylated spirit should be used to keep the fingers free from wax, as the delicate flosses and feathers are easily stained; inattention to this precaution will spoil one's best work.

I have chosen the simplest flies as examples to tie for an obvious reason; more complicated patterns may be tried when the beginner has mastered the principles upon which these are built up.

The orange goshawk is the first example. In Galway it is called the goldfinch, in other places the sun fly.

The hook is held between the finger and thumb of the left hand, point downwards, the waxed thread is attached to the bare shank close to the end, but leaving sufficient room for the floss, twist, hackle, and wings, which are finished off at this point. In attaching, the end of the waxed thread must be caught by one or two close coils underneath and drawn tight. If it is an eyed hook, the thread is attached opposite to the point of the hook. If a gut loop is used, the gut should be soaked for a few minutes in warm water, then bent to form the loop, which projects a little below the end of the shank where it is to be attached to the casting line. The two loose ends of the gut are laid along the top of the shank and carried up towards the finger and thumb where the hook is held. The thread is

now coiled upwards closely, binding on the gut until the point of the hook obstructs the coiling. This is the point to stop, and the gut ends are cut off close to the wrapping (Plate A, 1). To keep the thread tight, coil it four or five times down the shank; the wax will keep it in this position until it is needed for the next element. (Plate A, 2, shows this method of temporary fastening.)

Tag.—Take an inch or so of fine round silver twist, lay it on the near side of the hook where the gut has been cut off, indenting one end with the thumb-nail where it is about to be fastened. Leave sufficient space for it to be coiled round three times. Now unwind the thread from the temporary fastening, and, holding it tight, coil it twice round the twist where it has been indented, get the thread out of the way by coiling it down the shank again, catch the end of the twist and roll it three times downwards as closely as possible, place the third finger of the left hand on it to keep it from uncoiling, and with the right hand catch the waste end of the twist in the pliers and let them swing loose, their weight will keep the twist from uncoiling. The right hand is now free to bring back the thread and fasten the twist on with a couple of tight coils. Temporary fastening again. Cut off the surplus twist close to the fastening. It may now be said once for all that, whenever any part is attached by the thread, the temporary fastening follows. This part of the process it will be unnecessary to repeat.

Take about two inches of light blue silk floss, straighten it out, and divide it with the point of the scissors. Take one of the parts proportionate in thickness to the size of the fly, and fasten it to

the side of the hook where the twist has been attached, coil it two or three times below the twist and refasten, taking care that in this and all subsequent processes the thread wrapping is covered over. Cut off the surplus floss.

Butt.—The butt is made of a single black ostrich feather. By holding it up it will be found that the fibres branch from the central rib in a V-shape. The feathers must be placed so that they branch away from the shank of the hook, and lie upwards. Strip off some of the fibres from the butt of the feather and attach it by the thread to the side of the hook. Catch the feather by the top in the pliers, and, passing the first finger through the pliers-ring, coil the feather on the hook a few times by means of the pliers; let the pliers swing, and fasten on with the thread, cutting off the waste portion.

Tail.—The tail consists of a golden pheasant crest. The rudimentary is torn off and part of the white portion of the feather near the butt. The crest is tied on the *top* of the shank, not on the side, as in the case of other elements. It must be attached close to "butt" so as to lean against it, and curving upwards; a glance at the feather will show the correct side by which it is to be tied on (Plate B, 1).

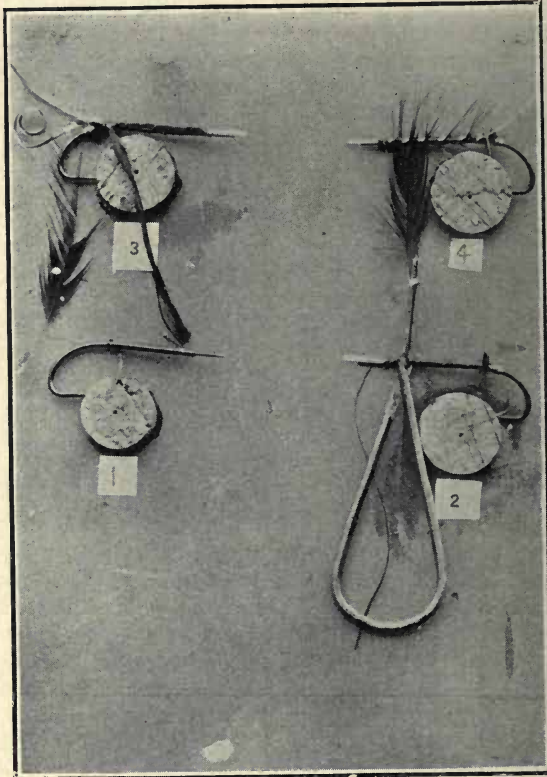
Body.—The body consists of a piece of orange floss silk, about three times the length of the hook. Unless the fly is very large, the silk must be divided, and one portion used. Before attaching it to the hook, preparation must be made for the twist that is to be coiled down the body, and also the body hackle. The steps to be taken are as follows:—

(1) Take a piece of broad, flat silver twist, about twice the

length of the hook, indent the end with the finger-nail, and fasten the twist to the near side of the hook and parallel to it (so that the other end of the twist inclines from the shank), and as close to the "tail" fastening as possible.

(2) Take a dyed golden olive

fastening, taking care that the stripped side lies close to the hook. The hackle must incline in the same direction as the twist. We have now two elements fastened almost on top of each other, but so neatly as not to form a bulge. Just below these the silk floss to



A.—(1) Gut loop tied. (2) Tag and butt. (3) Twist, hackle and body ready for coiling. (4) Hackle, with pliers swinging.

cock hackle, cut a small notch in the fibre near the top of the feather where it is to be fastened on. Strip off with the fingers about one-third of the fibres of the other side of the hackle so that the spine is quite bare. Fasten the feather where it has been notched over the twist

form the body is attached. In this case, however, the tie leaves an end of the floss loose, which stretches down close to the loop. The tying thread is coiled round it and fastens it, and is now in the right position to secure the body floss that is about to follow it. This extension down the

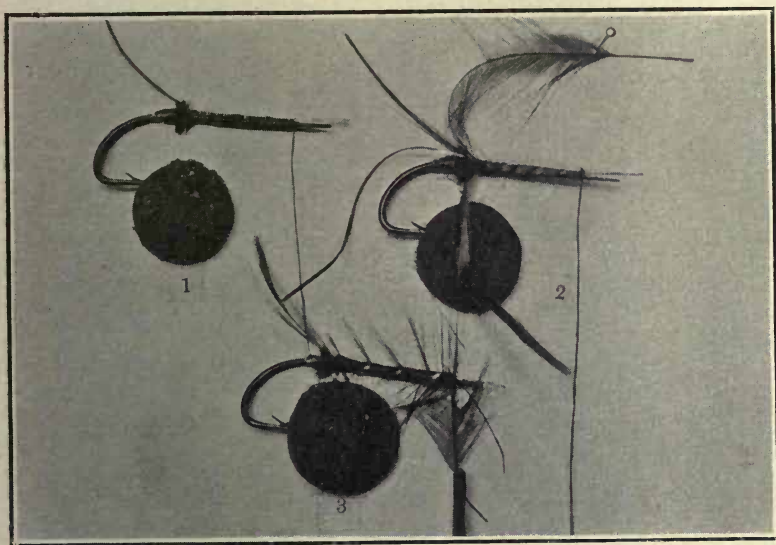
hook is necessary for padding, and gives the effect of a fuller body. The waste ends of the twist and hackle are cropped close (Plate B, 2).

A spare finger of the left hand must be now used to keep the loose parts out of the way whilst the body is being formed as follows: The extreme end of the floss is taken between the fingers of the right hand and the rolling on begins. To effect a sheen the hold

must be left for the wings, and shoulder hackle. The last coil being made, the floss is fastened by the thread and the waste cut off.

The silver twist follows next. It is a matter of taste as to the number of coils—four to six are usual; the twist needs careful fixing and the thread should be well waxed at this point, for its responsibility is growing greater every moment now.

The body hackle follows the



B.—(1) Tag, tail and butt. (2) Twist hackle and body. (3) Hackle in pliers.

must not be relaxed until the last coil is made. In this way all the threads of the floss have the same tension in them, and this is the secret of the sheen. The floss should be tightly rolled on throughout. The first coil is made close to the "butt." There are a number of thread wrappings of the different parts that have been affixed at that point, the floss now hides them. Care must be taken not to carry the body down too low on the shank, space

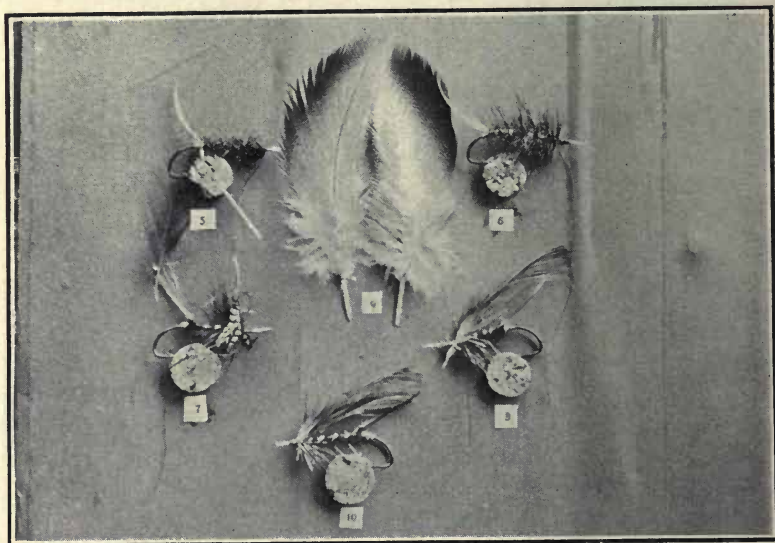
twist, the extreme point is caught in the pliers, and rolled on with the weight of the tool to keep it in its place. The hook is twisted round, and care must be taken that the fibres of the hackle shape upwards as everything else does. It follows the line of the twist, very close to and *above* it, until three parts of the body are covered, then the coils become closer, and a bushiness is effected at the finish. Let the pliers still hold it whilst it is firmly fastened

to the shank by the waxed thread. The remainder is cut off. (Plate B, 3.)

Shoulder Hackle.—This is composed of a feather from a blue Jay's left wing, and is prepared as follows: tear away the plain side on spine, leaving the blue part intact, except where a notch is cut close to the top, where the hackle is to be tied on. Place the feather on the bench and flatten out the quill with the back of a knife, or some other flat instru-

fibres lie in the same direction as the fibres of the golden olive. It must be rolled closely and evenly so as to present a bushy appearance. Let the pliers swing and finish it off with the thread, cutting away the surplus. (Plate C, 7, shows the shoulder hackle fastened in preparation for being rolled on.)

Wings.—When the shoulder hackle is in its place there must still be sufficient space on the shank to take the wings. Plate C 7, shows this. The Goshawk



C.—(5) Rough body ready to be picked out. (6) Picked out. (7) Hackle ready to be rolled on. (8) Rolled on and wings partly tied. (9) Right and left mallard feathers. (10) Wings, tied and trimmed.

ment; stretch the feather along the first finger and slit it down with the scissors, removing all the pith. The object is to leave as little of the quill as possible, so that the hackle may be pliable enough to be wound round the hook. Tie on the feather to the shank, and catching the quill end in the pliers, roll it on close to the fastening of the "body hackle," taking care that the

wings consist of six golden pheasant crests, three rights and three lefts. There is very little difference between them, but there is a difference, and the feathers will lie all the better if this point is studied. Tear off the rudimentary feathers.

This is the easiest of wings to tie, as the feathers are stiff and will shake into their places with a little care. A right and left are

taken and one placed on each side of the shank and gently pulled into position by the thread—one at a time, of course. Two more are treated in the same way above those affixed, and so on until the six crests become a unit, and comprise the wings. None of the feathers must be allowed to straggle, and with a little practice this can be avoided. Fasten firmly with the thread and cut away loose ends.

Horns.—A strand of macaw on either side, which can be easily attached.

Head.—Take an ostrich feather and roll it on in the way described for affixing the “butt.” A few neat rolls of thread well waxed and secured with a knot which is known as the “whip finish” completes the fly. This part is treated with anglers’ varnish, one coat allowed to dry before another is applied.

THE ORANGE GROUSE FLY.

As this is an all-round standard fly for both salmon and trout, I have selected it for the second pattern to be tied.

It differs from the Orange Goshawk in the body hackle and wings only. The tag, butt and body are similar, and are tied in the manner already described.

The body hackle consists of an Irish grouse feather, which is prepared by stripping off the fibres on the left side half way down. The fibres do not pull off one by one like the cock hackle; a film of the quill comes away with them, and when the required length is peeled off, it must be cut with the scissors. When the hackle is rolled on it must be trimmed in a slant from the bushy part down to the “butt” and on a level with it. This can be effected by a single snip of the scissors.

Wings.—The wings are mixed and contain so many parts that practice alone will bring proficiency.

Two toucan breast feathers are tied on the upper part of the shank, as close to each other as possible; if they slip to either side they straggle. Two strands of bustard feathers are tied on the right and left *side* of shank, but not too far down; one part is tied where the other leaves off. Two strands from the right and left spine of the golden pheasant tail follow the bustard on the same principle. Two strands (right and left feathers) of teal come next. The top feathers consist of bronze mallard, a right and left. The strands must be deep enough to practically cover at each side the parts already affixed; the right and left join on the upper part of the shank and look like one when properly fixed. Horns and head are tied as in previous pattern. Plate C, 9, shows right and left mallard feathers.

ROUGH-BODIED FLY.

The only part needing detailed description is the body, which consists of dyed seal fur, or similar material. Preparation having been made for twist and body hackle, the tying thread which remains near the butt is drawn straight and a small portion of the fur is teased out and wrapped round the thread loosely, then the thread is twisted round and round so that the fur is coated by it. The process must be continued until the thread is embedded in the centre of the fur and becomes a spine to it. Next roll the thread furred over down the shank as if it were floss to the required point, taking care that it is done evenly. If it has been evenly distributed on the

thread when rolled together there will no undue lumpiness. The surplus fur must now be separated from the thread. It can be easily slipped down the thread and got out of the way by the finger and thumb. Fasten the body securely on the shank. If different coloured fur is used, as in the case of the Butcher fly, one part must be fastened off before the next is proceeded with, the second colour fixed at the point where the first leaves off, and in such a way as to hide the fastening. The twist is now rolled down over the fur body and fastened. The next step is to make the body like a hairy caterpillar. The process is simple; pick out the fur between the rolls

of twist with a pin, taking care not to dig too deep, and disturb the thread. Trim off any unduly long hairs.

SILVER-BODIED FLY.

When the hackle and twist are prepared as previously explained, a piece of floss silk to cover the body for padding follows. Then a long coil of plain broad tinsel is affixed, the floss is rolled down the shank and fastened, and the tinsel is treated in the same way, taking care that the padding does not show through the joints. The body twist that follows should be round instead of flat, next follow the body hackle, shoulder hackle, and wings.

CHAPTER IX.

TROUT WET-FLY FISHING.

HAVING described the trout-fisher's outfit, we may now extract the parts from their respective receptacles, and spend a little time in explaining their use. This is best done practically, but there are some general principles which, borne in mind, will be helpful.

The first thing is to become master of the rod. Begin by putting it together the correct way; the top joint fixes into the middle, and then the middle into the butt. If you are detected in the act of screwing the middle joint into the butt first you may be written down an ignoramus, although many who are nothing of the kind sin in that way. If a ferrule works stiffly, you have more power over it in adjusting the top and middle pieces first. It also puts less strain on the joints. The thickness of the line must be adjusted to the length and power of the rod. For wet fishing plaited silk is best. It should be light enough to be easily lifted from the water, and to cast 25 yards with ease. A fairly heavy line carries better against the wind, provided always the rod is equal to the strain. It should be tapered, so that the part joining the gut collar corresponds with it in thickness and does not show conspicuously on the water.

It is important to learn how to manipulate a rod. A golf professional gives three parts of a lesson to the art of swinging the sticks, before allowing the learner to touch a ball. A similar plan may be commended with the

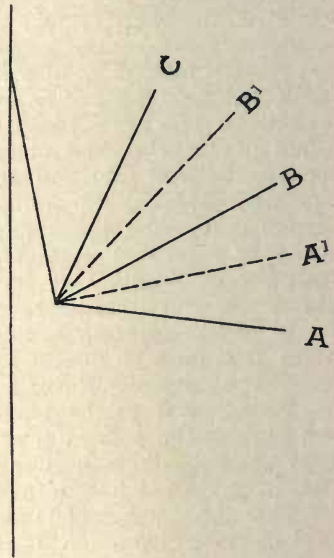
fishing rod. Grasp it firmly above the winch, and, standing erect, swing it forward and back equal distances. The forearm only should be brought into play, the upper arm held loosely against the side. If the forearm is lowered to the position A (*see diagram*), the rod will be parallel with the ground; if it is raised to c, the rod will be at an angle of about 45 degrees. This, roughly speaking, is the range the rod covers in full play. Swung to the full extent, within these limits, it will be found that the forearm gains power as it goes forward, and loses it in the same ratio as it goes back. Between A and B it is strongest, between B and c it is weakest; B and c are the points between which the arm chiefly moves in making casts within easy range. The mistake beginners make is using the arm instead of the rod. To get the best action, the butt should be held in almost a fixed position, and the movement of the forearm confined to the smallest limits. Hold the butt firmly and let the forearm work between B and B', allowing the wrist to come well into play. In this position the rod works well down to the hand. This movement must be carefully practised to become master of the weapon. In making a long sweep of the arm between A and c, the action of the butt will be confined in the same proportion as between B and B'. A little practice with the rod will make these points clear.

After this the line should be

threaded through the rings, and a few yards drawn off. To lift it in preparation for casting the rod should be held at A' position. By a sharp upward movement of the forearm, between A and B, the line will be lifted and carried over the shoulder. Time must be allowed for it to be fully stretched behind before casting forward. Then the rod is brought back to the position from which it started with another sharp movement. The line should be gradually lengthened until longer casts can be made. This is done by pulling out about a yard at a time from the reel. In lifting the rod to re-cast the loose length is drawn through the rings. After a little practice the line can be lengthened without re-casting, a slight upward movement of the rod being all that is needed. As the line is lengthened the difficulties of casting increase. Instead of falling lightly on the water, it catches in the grass behind, or becomes entangled round the body. Several things must be understood to avoid this state of confusion, which wastes much time and does not improve the temper.

First, in the backward movement of the rod, sufficient time must be allowed to let the line be fully extended. Theoretically, it should go as far back as it does forward. Practically, this is not always possible. In stopping it to cast forward when it is not quite stretched it cracks like a whip, snapping off the tail fly and part of the gut. The principle on which a cowboy cracks his long whip loud as a pistol is to stop the thong when it is not quite stretched, and suddenly jerk it back. This is what the angler ought not to do, but which he will do unwittingly. It is good practice to mount an old line without gut, and learn how easy

it is to accomplish the cow-boy trick, and keep on until the line can be wielded without cracking. With a strong breeze at one's back it is a simple matter to make forward casts, the line is carried with delightful ease, and the tyro thinks all is going well. Soon he finds fly after fly cracking off. In proportion to the ease of casting forward the backward cast grows difficult. The line is caught by the wind, and the gut being the lightest part is blown into the loop, cracks, and



Range of the arm in casting and working the rod.

sheds a fly each time. This can be avoided to some extent, although it sometimes happens to the most skilful. The plan is to cast back vigorously enough to counteract the force of the wind behind and prevent curving as much as possible. It does not require much effort to get the line forward when the wind is at one's back; and if it is curved by the breeze,

as it will be, despite all efforts, a gentle forward cast is not so likely to crack off the fly.

The direction of the wind has also to be studied. If it is bearing to the left of the body, the line is recovered from the water by raising the rod over the right shoulder; if it blows to the right, the rod is brought over the left shoulder. Attention to this will prevent fouling, and the fixing of the flies in sundry parts of the angler's person, possibly his ear. To cast the flies lightly, care must be taken not to let the top of the rod drop too low. The secret lies in arresting the movement of the rod. Between B and B^1 , for example, let the forearm be abruptly stopped at B^1 in the backward cast, and at B in the forward. This movement shoots the line forward, and allows the flies to drop gently on the water. Do not shoot the flies *into* the water, but over it. To prove tempting they should fall light as thistledown; any splashing is likely to create suspicion and scare the quarry.

To effect the longest cast, the rod must be held perpendicularly, and travel in the same plane backward and forward; any deviation from the perpendicular means loss of force. In manipulating a trout rod the loss is not so perceptible, but with a salmon rod the difference is soon felt.

In casting against a head wind, or aslant of it, a good deal of inconvenience is caused by the flies catching in the grass behind one's back. The extra force needed to get the flies out under such circumstances endangers the safety of the rod, the sudden stoppage frequently breaking the top or middle joint. The head wind blows the flies down. By adopting the steeple cast the rod is arrested in the backward

movement, so that the flies go well up and out of reach of danger. This is one way of meeting the difficulty, another is to fish with a shorter line, holding a good length of slack in the left hand, and shooting it through the rings as required. Practice enables one to get out a long line this way. It is important to master the method.

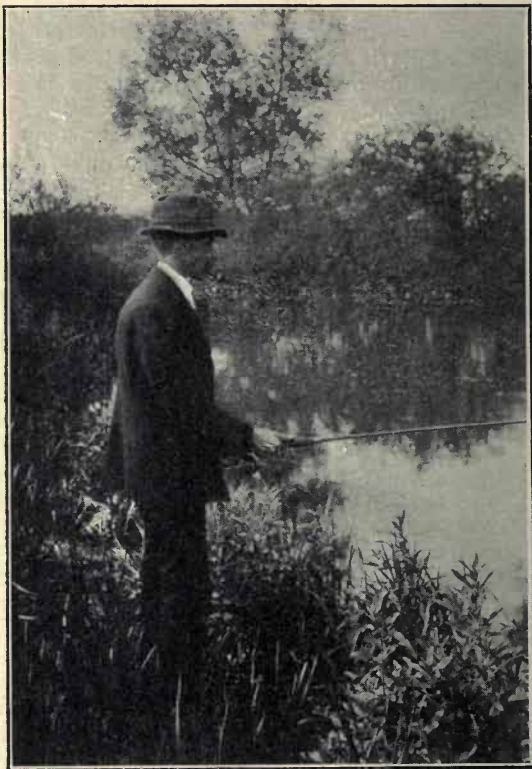
These are the principles of handling a rod which may now be applied to wet-fly fishing. The gut casting line or "collar," as it is called, should be 3 yards long. It will be all the better if it is tapered, heavier where it is attached to the reel line, and growing gradually finer towards the point. Wet flies are best tied on gut links instead of being attached by eyed hooks. They are neater mounted that way. The gut is stouter than that used for dry-flies, and knots are consequently more conspicuous. Three flies are generally used, called the "leader," or "tail," fly at the end, the "middle," a couple of feet higher up, and the "dropper," or "bob," as it is irrelevantly called in Ireland, equidistant from the middle. The links of the two latter should be attached to the casting line by a loop above a knot, so that they cannot slip down (*vide* diagram). They should not be more than a couple of inches, if longer they soon get twisted round the gut, and do not swim properly in the water. The dropper link can scarcely be too short to bob the fly properly on the surface for any length of time without getting entangled.

Soak the gut well in water before mounting, and stretch it out between the finger and thumb, so as to remove all creases. This is a necessary method of detecting flaws if there are any. It is

better for the angler to break the cast than a fish to break it, and gut to be reliable should bear a considerable strain.

In wet-fly fishing one proceeds down stream, keeping well back from the water. The flies should be cast as close in to the near bank as possible, then further out,

made more line must necessarily be in the water. The important thing is to drop the flies yard by yard down stream, so that they are noticed by the trout before several feet of line are trailed over him. Sometimes he looks at the leader, smells the middle fly, and wholly appropriates the dropper.



HOW TO CAST.

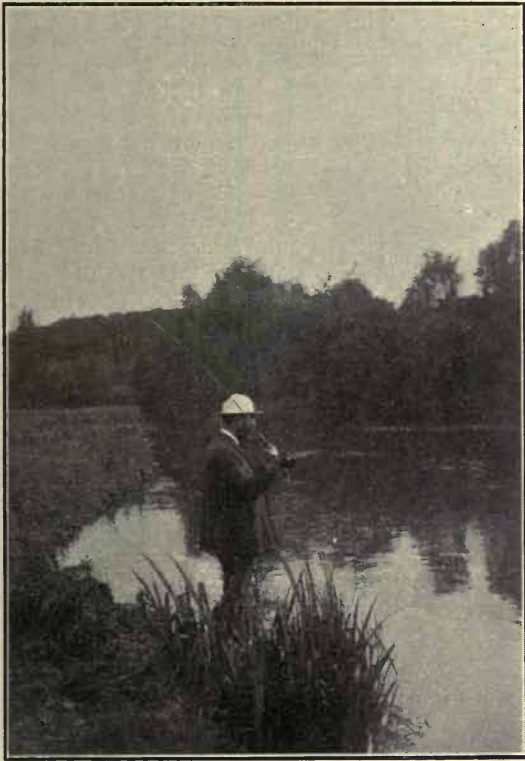
Position of the arm in forward action of the rod.

and so on to the opposite bank. When the line falls on the water, if there is a current it catches it and carries it down stream. The rod, meanwhile, is gradually raised, so that only the gut lies on the surface. The less line the fish are invited to look at the better. When long casts are

Two or three casts should be made over likely spots; a trout refuses a fly half a dozen times, and then takes it as if unable to tolerate its intrusiveness any longer. I have watched him going through the process. The appearance of the fly first made him sway about more vigorously;

then back away, and return again immediately; next he rose nearer to the surface, and finally pounced on the fly with a dash of positive anger. If a trout stirs at all, it is advisable to stick to him like grim death. He may have attempted to take the fly and missed it, or he may be interested,

indicated by a swirl in the water made by the tail when the trout turns back after following the fly some distance. In that case, put down your rod and wait for ten minutes, smoke a pipe, meditate on the scenery; do anything but show the smallest apparent interest in that fish. On trying



HOW TO CAST.

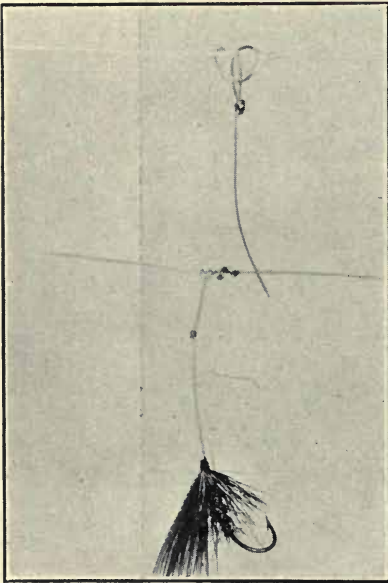
Position of the arm in backward action of the rod.

but suspicious. If you think he missed the fly, offer it again without a moment's delay; he is probably looking round and wondering what became of it. The rise that means business has a boldness about it that the angler soon learns to distinguish.

The suspicious rise is usually

again, do not cast immediately over him, but let the fly show itself two or three times a few feet higher up stream, then let it gradually work down to where the swirl appeared. If he is still obdurate, change the flies. Put an alder on the tail, instead of a March brown, or try and whet his

appetite with the glitter of a Wickham fancy. If you think he has an eye on the dropper, gradually let it down towards him, jauntily tripping on the surface, as if it had not a care in the world. Whatever you do, do not let him see an inch of silk line. He may have been hooked before, and be gifted with a memory that recalls painful associations. If all these dodges fail, go away for



How to Attach Fly to Casting line.

Top—Loop undrawn.

Bottom—Loop drawn tight.

half an hour, and come back again.

When he does come, as he may, with a dash, do not spoil all your labour by striking so heavily as to cause a smash. It is easily done, and probably will happen, despite the wisest counsel. It is prudent for one to school himself against growing heavy-handed. When one has been fishing for hours, without stirring a tail, and

dreaming of something totally different, the sudden dash of a fish is likely to cause an involuntary jerk of the arm fierce enough to harpoon a whale. Then something happens, which gives cause for moments of silent but painful reflection. If the fish were only to give us notice that he was coming, we might be calm; he prefers storming our nerves unmercifully. Striking from the winch is one way of counterbalancing violent action, but it is not always possible. The left hand often holds the line, which, of course, prevents the reel from immediately unwinding. It is better to face the vice and determine not to do it, and to firmly school oneself against impetuosity. A turn of the wrist is all that is needed, and one can practise this when fish are not rising, and make up one's mind to risk losing fish by not stiking at all rather than lose them, plus flies and gut, by violent measures.

When a fish is hooked, the slack line should be reeled in until a firm hold is gained by the rod. This is the first stage in playing. If well hooked, there is little fear of losing him, except by breaking the gut or fly. By leaving the reel free to run when he makes a rush this is not likely to happen, and by keeping him away from the bank dangerous obstacles may be avoided. A little firm pressure will be sufficient to control his movements. He should be allowed his own sweet will, except when he tries to get into mischief; in that case sterner methods must be risked. When a trout is exhausted he rises to the surface and turns on his side. The landing net should be held in the right hand in readiness. It is best to slightly sink it in the water, and draw him over and into it. Care must be taken not

to allow the other flies to fasten in the meshes of the net. A good many fish are lost in that way. Never make a dash at a trout; it is a certain way of missing him, and causes a struggle when he comes to the net again that may be fatal to the gut.

In swift rapids, which lend themselves to wet-fly fishing, the cast should be made across stream, allowing the flies to drift round, gradually raising the point of the rod, so as to keep the casting line well stretched. Hold it for a few moments in the strength of the current, and let out a yard or two more line to carry it further down stream. Trout are on the look-out for drifting flies in such places. Then gradually shorten the line by drawing it through the rings with the left hand. In that way the whole of the rapid may be searched, and patience in due time rewarded.

In sluggish pools it is well to put a little life into the flies by a wrist movement of the rod. The hand is raised up and down, which causes the top to sway gently to and fro. This frequently tempts a fish. Flies floating down stream do not need to be worked, but drawn up; the movement mimics insects that are swimming against the current. The gut should be raised

sufficiently to allow the dropper to bob up and down on the water. An alder or a governor serves well for this purpose. A March brown or a Zulu makes a good leader, and a Greenwell's glory, hare's ear, or one of the many duns is suitable for the middle fly. Late in the evening a coachman or silver sedge has great attractions for trout; but of course one must study the species of fly that are about at different months, and mount facsimiles. On a rough day big trout often come on the rise, and a March brown not infrequently tempts them: the more gold twist on it the better. Alders are blown from the sedges on to the water at such times, and trout are on the look out for them. The angler should be ready to oblige them.

Lake fishing requires a boat, and a gillie who knows the haunts of the trout. Rough-bodied flies, claret, olives, and orange grouse are almost universally excellent patterns. They must be a couple of sizes larger than those used for rivers. Where bank fishing is possible, late in the season, big fish find their way in towards the shore, and often give a pleasant surprise to a diligent angler. Flies are not worked on the lake as they are on the river, but simply drawn along the surface of the water.

CHAPTER X.

TROUT DRY-FLY FISHING.

THE dry-fly method of angling has probably sprung out of a necessity, viz., how to circumvent the wariness of chalk stream trout. It has come into general use of late years, and on rivers where fish might be caught by the usual down stream methods, there is a preference for offering the fly dry by votaries of the new cult. In the Hampshire streams it is the only way of catching fish. One might angle for a week with the wet fly without getting a rise; unless it was blowing big guns, and the time the early part of the season. One wonders how our fathers made their baskets in these streams, which were as clear then as they are now, and to whom the science of the dry fly was practically unknown. Have the fish grown in wisdom since then, and is the difficulty of alluring them the result of education? There is abundance of evidence that our forbears fished down stream, and wet, and secured excellent baskets. Several things have to be borne in mind, which space will not allow us to do more than mention, such as the increase in the number of anglers, the diminution in the quantity of fish by river pollution, &c., the freer methods of angling, worming, spinning, and such like, which are barred in modern times. Even old Isaac boasts of his bottom fishing prowess amongst trout. These were the methods practised on streams where to-day the use of the fly only is permitted. With such licence it would not be difficult nowadays to do big things.

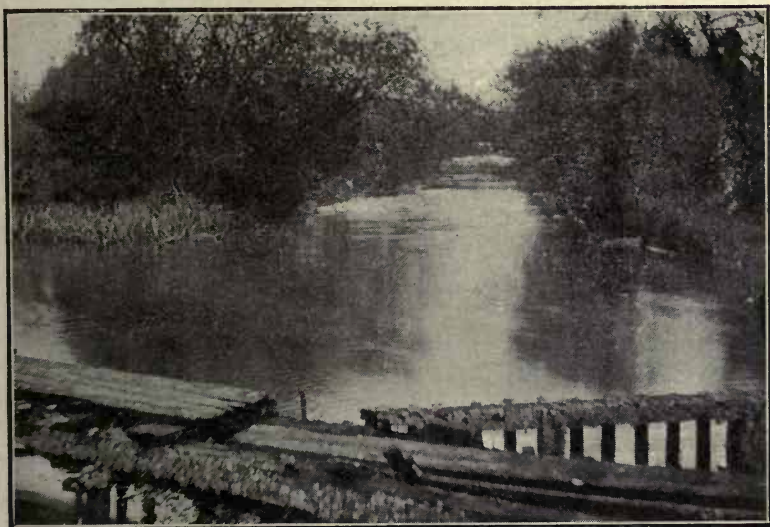
Dry-fly angling is most fascinating. The chief interest lies in marking your fish, and devoting exclusive attention to his capture, regardless of all his kith and kin, and everything else in the universe. It is like singling out your bird, instead of firing haphazard into the covey; one catches the fish aimed at, and when that is achieved, there is a delightful sense of one's own importance in bringing to a successful issue the plot so carefully laid and patiently worked out in all its details.

The dry-fly gut cast is generally two yards long and tapered to a fine point. An additional link of gut is added for the most delicate fishing. These "points" are sold separately, and the angler should have a stock in hand ready for use. For clear light water the size used is the nearest grade to drawn gut. If the river is free of weeds, by careful handling, a $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. trout need not break one's tackle. Where the river is weedy or not a chalk stream, it is well to use a stouter point. The additional strength of the gut will be required to keep the fish out of the weeds.

Flies o and oo are the sizes generally used for morning and afternoon fishing. In the evening, when sedges and moths are about, larger patterns may be mounted with advantage. It is important to have the best make of dry flies; clumsy imitations will be detected by the trout, and only succeed in driving them down. The finest I know are made by Mrs. Ogden Smith of

Knightsbridge, who has a reputation for supplying exact colours and neat patterns. Well-made flies tell in dealing with shy fish. One has to pay a good price for them, but there is compensation in their alluring powers. The fly is attached to the gut by passing the point through the eye and forming a running knot on the end. The loop is passed over the bend of the hook, carried down and drawn tightly on the shank, just above the eye; care must be

procure. Its speciality consists in its buoyancy. A twisted make sinks too quickly and drags down the fly with it. Most anglers prefer it tapered, but when fishing a long length it becomes very heavy and places a good deal of strain on the rod. After a time the floating power of the line can be restored by a rub of vaseline, of which two or three coatings should be applied. This should be done the day before the line is used.



THE TEST.

(A Dry-fly Chalk Stream.)

taken not to include any of the hackles. The wings and hackles are touched lightly with a specially prepared oil, which increases the fly's floating power. Any ordinary rod and reel can be used for dry-fly work, but there is a special make, a little stiffer in action than the usual wet-fly pattern, which secures accuracy in casting and getting out the line against a stiff wind. There is a dry-fly make of line which the angler must

A pair of wading stockings or trousers are an advantageous adjunct. If the river can be waded, more success will be achieved by getting in a direct line behind the fish, and casting over him. In a swift river this is almost essential, as in fishing across stream the line drags and drowns the fly before the trout is covered. Waders also secure dry feet, a point that has to be considered on the banks of a marshy

river. For kneeling they come in handy and take the place of pads. So much for the outfit.

In practice, dry-fly fishing lends itself to the contemplative mood more than any other method of angling. By the riverside there are the ephemeridæ to study; trout in awkward places to circumvent; the time the rise comes on and goes off; the condition of the water, &c. On the Test, Itchen, and Avon, one or more species of the dun family are generally found afloat, and the first thing will be to ascertain the pattern, and mount a facsimile. The flies vary from month to month, and one must be supplied with alders, sedges and moths for evening use. The time of the rise varies on different rivers. In the early part of the season it comes on in the morning; later on, morning and evening. On portions of the Test there is a rise the greater part of the day during June. It is prudent to spend a day by the river beforehand and notice what is going on; for example, the species of fly afloat, and mentally marking the spot where good fish are feeding. Where one has only a day or two on a choice piece of water, the time will not be wasted by a little scouting.

When fishing a river, one chooses the side of the stream which the breeze favours. The place to look for fish is close to the bank on the windward side; the flies drift in that direction, and the trout follow them. If the breeze raises a ripple, the break made by a rising fish is so slight as to be almost imperceptible. Sometimes the suck of the fish can be heard where the break is not seen. A feeding trout lies close to the surface of the water, and takes down the flies with the least possible

movement: a falling seed would scarcely make a slighter impression.

When a fish is on the rise, a dry fly must be offered to him in the most delicate fashion. Any splashing of the line or gut would be fatal. The kind of fly on which he is feeding should be mounted, and a size smaller rather than larger. A few preliminary casts should be made below him to obtain the right length of line, and the lure dropped a few inches above his nose. The closer it is placed to the fish, the less gut is in evidence, and it is the gut that scares, not the fly. If the fly floats by unheeded, let it get well clear of the fish before re-casting. Two or three throws should be made over him, and if he persists in refusing it, rest him a few minutes until he begins to feed on the natural insect again, then follow up a drifting fly with the artificial, and await developments; a change must be made if the fish is obdurate. Here, again, close observation is necessary. It is frequently discovered that a feeding fish lets two or three flies go by him, then rises and sucks one down. This generally means that there are different kinds on the water, for one of which the trout shows a preference, probably an iron blue; to this kind trout are particularly partial. One may not be near enough to tell what the favourite is, but when trout pick and choose, it is safe to mount an iron blue. A hare's ear is another fly which makes an excellent change. Trout feeding on olive duns will rarely let one pass them.

The moment the fly goes under and its disappearance corresponds with an unmistakable break in the water, the fish must be struck. This is a critical moment for the

angler, and on his *sangfroid* much will depend. Firmly tightening up the line is sufficient to hook the fish. The moment the trout is hooked he will go under to fight it out. The harder he plays, the sooner he becomes exhausted, and the more easily will he be landed. Beware of the last struggle close to the net, and keep the reel free to counteract it. The line and fly after this submersion are dried by casting half a dozen times in the air.

the fish that will be seen poising near the surface. I think one would be better employed to go after them than to seek a shady retreat, and give oneself up to the contemplation of a novel and tobacco, a prescription much commended by some angling authorities. By stealing along the bank, or carefully wading, these possible feeders may be discovered. You may cover them half a dozen times without effect, and then fatally tempt them.



THE ITCHEN (CHALK STREAM), ABBOTS BARTON.

Whenever the fly seems inclined to sink, its floating power is restored in that way. While the rise is on, the possibility of sport continues, and every moment should be used to the best advantage. It is the brief harvest of the angler interspersed by long and uneventful hours. Between the morning and evening rise trout are apathetic. It is possible, however, to find some of them with unappeased appetites, and ready to take the fly. Such are

It does not follow that all rising fish are capable of being beguiled by the dry fly. Some are indulging in the habit known as tailing. These are trout that lie over or among weeds, and are feeding on water shrimp or crustaceans frequenting such places. Their tails break the water as they assume almost a perpendicular attitude in search of their food. But they rarely condescend to give an upward glance, and it is idle to waste time over them. Other fish seem

to be busily feeding on nothing. This conclusion is a libel on their industrial habits. They are feeding, but on flies so minute that it takes sharp eyes and a bright light on the water to discern them. They are after the smuts, or what are popularly known as the "angler's curse." The uncomplimentary soubriquet explains itself. The flies are too minute to be imitated artificially, although the task has been attempted. To the naked

dry-fly man comes with the May-fly season. This occurs only once a year, and on English rivers lasts from ten days to a fortnight. Whilst *Ephemera danica* is up, the trout feed on it ravenously. During this period stronger gut casts are mounted, as fish are not so particular, and nothing but stout tackle will hold some of them. There are three periods of the May-fly season: (1) When the insect is rising in the nymph form



THE BOURNE (CHALK STREAM).

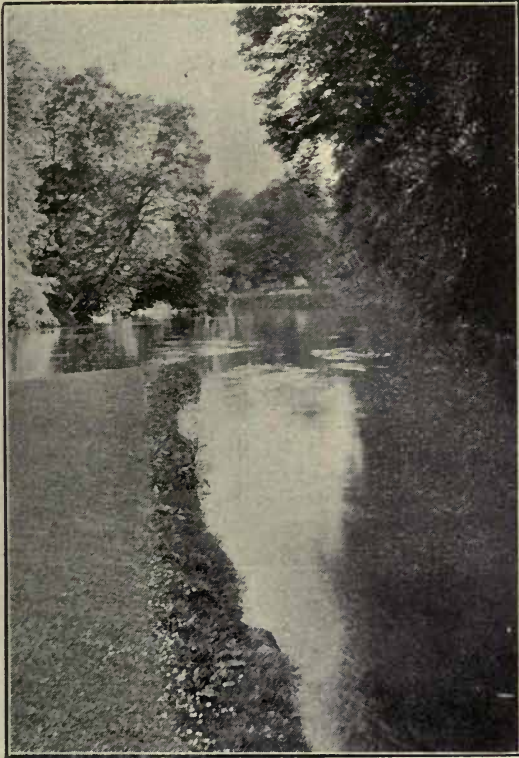
eye they look like coarse black gunpowder, but under the magnifying glass smuts show themselves to be delicately tinted creatures with finest gossamer wings. I have a suspicion that trout take them by the dozen rather than singly, and the angler's solitary imitation, many sizes larger, does not often interest the fish, intent on a wholesale trade in such dainties. The smallest wingless flies are the only patterns likely to tempt them.

The great opportunity of the

from its bed in the river; (2) when it reaches the green drake stage, before it is fully matured; and (3) after laying its eggs and dropping helplessly on the water as the spent gnat. Flies are tied artificially to represent the insect in these three stages. When trout are taking the nymph they rarely come to the surface. Their presence will be indicated by big waves, which are caused by chasing the fly as it rises, popularly known as bulging. Floating the fly over fish thus employed is

generally fruitless. The only way to get hold of them is to fish up stream with a hackle fly, letting it sink slightly under the water. In this fashion it will be taken for a nymph and prove successful. When the fly begins to lay its eggs, the trout come to the surface and lie in wait for the

insect. When the spent gnat stage is reached the fly proves an easy prey. It drifts helplessly on the water, once fallen, never to rise again. Then trout revert to deliberate habits and make little more than a dimple in sucking them in. During the egg-laying stage, when the insect trips on



THE AVON.
A Dry-fly Stream.

giddy dancer as it lightly touches the stream. The dashes made at it are so sudden as to be very disconcerting to the angler, and provocative of hard striking, with fatal results. The vigorous dash of the fish is due, no doubt, to the touch-and-go habit of the

and off the water, and is difficult to catch, there is a disposition on the part of trout to rise to other large flies, such as alders and March browns. When they decline the imago (the May-fly in its mature form) one of the other large patterns frequently tempts

them. It is advisable to go prepared with a variety of artificials and try them in turn. It really seems as if trout had abandoned *E. danica* as impossible, and laid themselves out for game that was attainable. I have tried a May-fly several times over a rising fish, and he declined it; on substituting an alder, he took it the first cast.

On the Irish and other loughs dapping with the green drake is a favourite method of angling. Some very large fish are taken in this way. The natural ephemera are collected in wicker baskets, and one or two are impaled on round bend-hooks to form the dap. Long rods, 14 ft. to 15 ft., are used, and stout casting lines. The extra length of rod enables the angler to get the dap well in front of the drifting boat. A gossamer silk line is used, sufficiently light to be carried forward by the breeze. A fine undressed backing line is, in my judgment, the most suitable for the purpose. The rod is raised high enough to allow the dap to touch the surface, taking care that only a few inches of gut show in the water. There is little art required to float the dap, one who has never used a rod can acquire the knack without difficulty. It is simply a question of raising or lowering the weapon so as to keep the flies afloat. There is an art, however, in striking the fish, not so easily attained. The important matter is not to strike when the fish breaks the water, but when the dap disappears below the surface; that is the psychological moment, and to wait so long, only a matter of a second, imposes a self-denying ordinance difficult to endure. To catch fish one must submit to it, otherwise dap after dap will be stripped off without hooking a tail. It is pretty certain that fish make two

bites at the flies offered to them, one secures the wings and other external appendages, the next includes the hook. During the months of August and September, the daddy-longlegs is mounted in a similar fashion to that of the green drake, and the same rule about deliberate striking applies. Fish taken either way play exceedingly hard, often drawing a score or more yards of line in a single run, and giving first-class sport. Trout 8 lb. to 10 lb. weight are frequently caught during the May-fly and daddy-longlegs season.

THE UNDERHAND CAST.

To become accomplished in the art of dry-fly angling one must learn to cast the fly in awkward places. In a ribbon of clear stream flowing between weeds a trout may be lying ready to rise to the fly. Underneath the boughs of trees the best specimens are frequently found. To negotiate such places one must learn the underhand cast. It is generally made in a kneeling position, the rod held nearly parallel with the stream in preparation for the throw (*vide* illustration). The important matter is to cast under the boughs without getting hung up, a double misfortune when it happens, scaring the fish in the attempt to get free, and usually leaving the fly and part of the gut behind. The line should be drawn from the reel a few feet at a time, and the rod kept well down in making the cast. A short length can be switched backwards and forwards without allowing the fly to touch the water, an advantage in the case of a dry fly. With a longer line the difficulties begin, as the weight causes the fly to drop behind. To obviate this, shooting the line must be practised—that is, a few yards must

be drawn off and shot with a single throw. Care must be taken to have sufficient line off the reel to reach the desired spot; if it falls short, the fly has a tendency to jerk up and become entangled in the boughs.

For the underhand cast a light rod and line are helpful. Hardy Bros. make a three-guinea "Perfection" split cane, which is a delightful weapon for this kind of work. The lightest make is 10 ft. long, and weighs $7\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

The 10 ft. 6 in. make is about 1 oz. heavier. The "Corona" line, made by the same firm, is perhaps the nearest thing to perfection that has so far been produced for dry-fly fishing. It is extremely light, and floats like seaweed. It carries a long way without taxing the strength of the rod. To be well equipped with a good rod and tackle makes all the difference to the success and pleasure of the difficult art of dry-fly fishing.

CHAPTER XI.

TROUT SPINNING AND TROLLING.

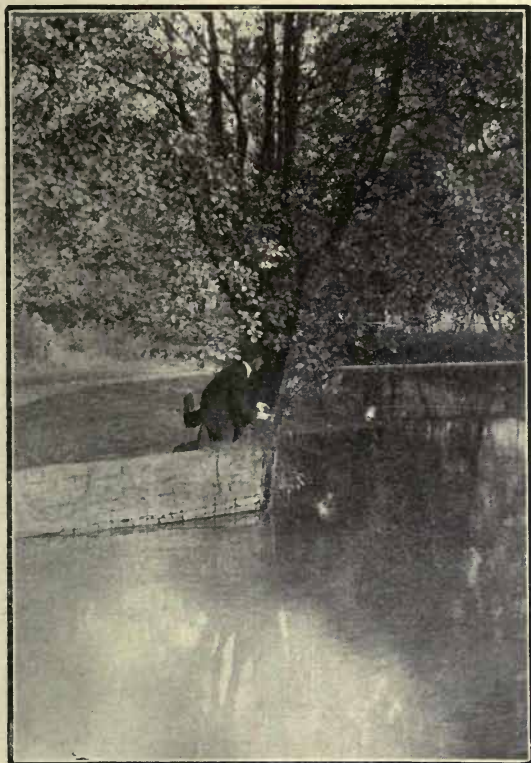
FROM the scientific method of capturing trout with a fly we pass to the less artistic system of spinning and trolling. The art is more easily acquired, although, like fly-fishing, it has its special difficulties. Less store is set upon spinning, because it is a form of angling that hampers the movement of the fish, and consequently prevents it from giving so much sport to the angler. As a method it is most deadly, only a small proportion of fish escaping that are hooked on the tackle. This in itself is not sufficient for thinking any the less of it. The reason must be sought in the fact that fish that might be taken with the fly, sooner or later, are frequently captured with a spinning bait. Under these circumstances we rank it with pot-boiling methods. When the conditions make fly-fishing impossible—that is, in deep pools and in such rivers as the Thames, where there are no shallows suitable for the fly—spinning for trout is a perfectly legitimate method of angling. Another consideration that justifies it is the fixed habits of fish of a certain age and size. They display distinct apathy to all surface food; a lobworm, a piece of bread, a minnow they will take, but flies natural and artificial they seem to have openly abjured. If they are to be caught at all, their destruction can only be encompassed by using some of these lures. Spinning is the most commendable way of angling for them. A strong case can be made out against this “cannibal,”

as he is called. He is indeed a disagreeable fellow that declines to conform to the usages of an orthodox trout, and throw away his life on an olive dun or red quill. Heavy charges are levelled against him for other vices, real or imaginary. In his defence, though I hold no brief for him, let it be said that once a year he is disposed to make an exception in the case of the May-fly, and one cherishes the fond hope of getting on fighting terms with him when he emerges from his hiding-place, throws off the usual reserve, and begins to feed on it. When one meets him, then, in an unguarded hour, and lands him after a fight that sets every nerve on the tremble, one will be disposed to forgive him much and say a good word in his favour.

Spinning is by no means an easy branch of the art of angling. To throw a minnow 50 yards and land it lightly on the water stands for proficiency that can only be gained by long practice. A special rod, 9 to 10 ft. long, stiff in the action, is required. The rings should be large and upright, so that the line, a fine, soft, finished make, without any oil in it, can run freely. The method of manipulating the rod is similar to that practised for pike and perch. A reel of the “Silex” or Nottingham make is necessary. The best bait is undoubtedly the natural minnow mounted on a flight of hooks. The single hook is passed through the lips of the minnow, the under one first, the triangles fixed down the side, in-

clining the bait to a curve, so that it revolves in the water as if it were wounded or in difficulties (*vide* illustration). The trace to which the bait is attached consists of $1\frac{1}{2}$ yards of medium-sized gut of the best quality, and should have two swivels, to prevent the line from becoming twisted (the

them to any of the patent sinkers, as not so likely to attract attention. To attach the flight, pass the large loop of the trace through the small gut loop, and drop the minnow through the former; pull taut, and the figure 8 attachment is made. It may be laid down as a rule that the finer the



DRY-FLY FISHING.

An Underhand Cast.

lacquered pattern is less conspicuous than virgin brass), one at the top link, the other at the bottom. A loop large enough to allow the bait to pass through is formed at one end, a small ordinary loop for attaching the reel line at the other. A few shots are required to sink the bait in deep, sluggish water; I prefer

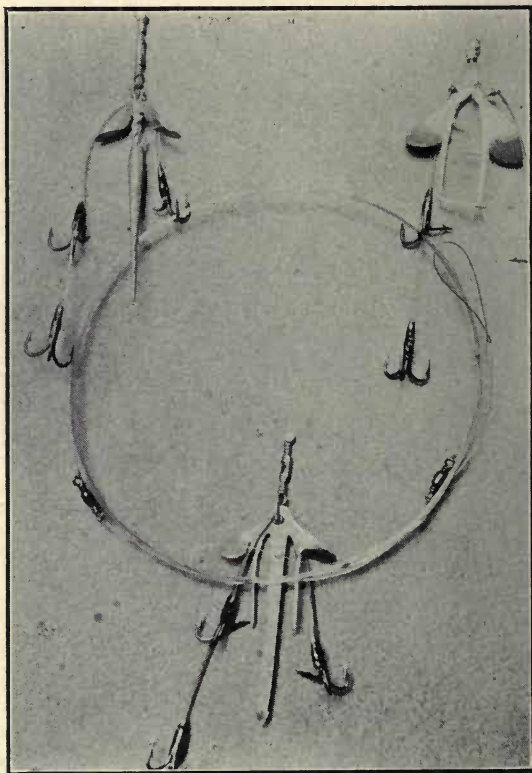
gut the greater is the chance of hooking fish, although it may reduce that of landing them. If the water is slightly discoloured, a favourable condition for tempting fish, a stouter trace may be used with advantage.

Success in spinning comes by industry, first in searching each part of the river where trout are

likely to lie, and secondly by neat casting and carefully working the bait. The latter must not be pulled through the water in a jerky fashion, but as smoothly as possible, the rate just sufficient to keep the minnow gently revolving.

runs you may be sure he is hooked, and then the reel is brought into play.

Spinning with artificial baits, devons, phantoms, and such like, the *modus operandi* is similar as far as casting and searching for fish



HARDY BROS.' SPINNERS FOR NATURAL BAIT.

Goodwin
Spinner.

Alnwick
Spinner.

Crocodile
Spinner.

When a trout takes it, a sharp pull will be felt, very different from the dead stoppage caused by a jack. Nothing in the way of a strike is really necessary; a quick tightening of the line should be the answering movement, keeping it tight until the hooks take firm hold. The moment the fish

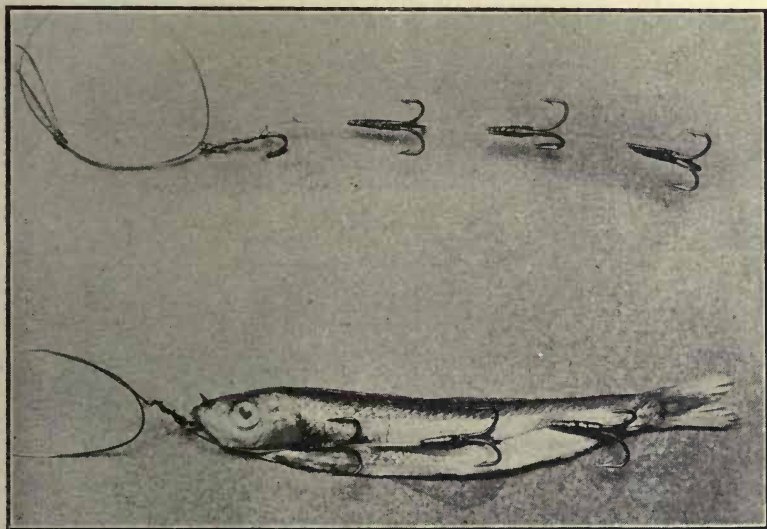
are concerned. When a fish is felt there should be a strike or tightening up of the line immediately. A trout will cling to a natural bait, but he discovers the artificial cheat and tries to drop it, and succeeds in doing so if he is not leant on quickly. There are numerous other artificial baits,

but it is well to bear in mind that there is nothing so natural as the natural, and one only falls back on anything else through necessity or for the sake of variety.

If trolling needed justification, one has only to point to the Irish loughs. There great lake trout are caught in very deep water, where it would be useless to fish with the fly. It is doubtful if these monsters ever leave the depths even in the May-fly season.

these haunts. One might troll for a week in the deep water without stirring a fish, but the man who makes it his business to study the ways of these big fellows is generally successful in catching them.

The trolling rod should be sufficiently stiff to hook a fish by its own resistance, *plus* the motion of the boat. A heavy sinker must be used to get the bait well down into the deep; a reel easy



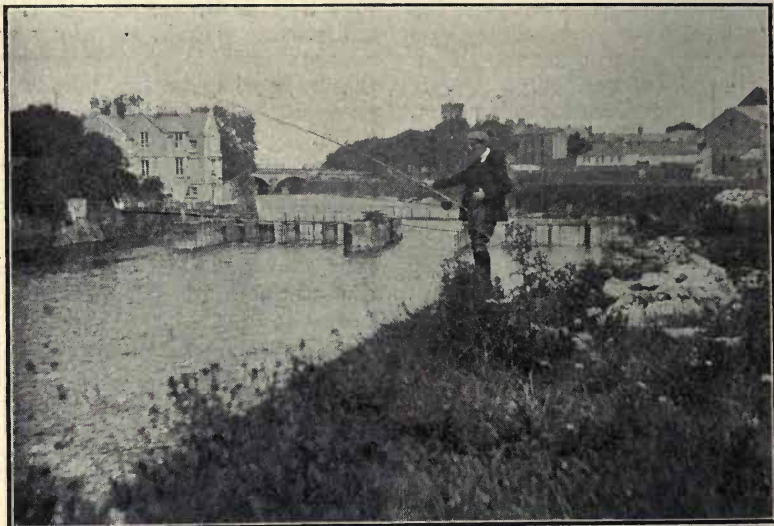
THAMES FLIGHT FOR NATURAL BAIT.

Top—Unmounted.

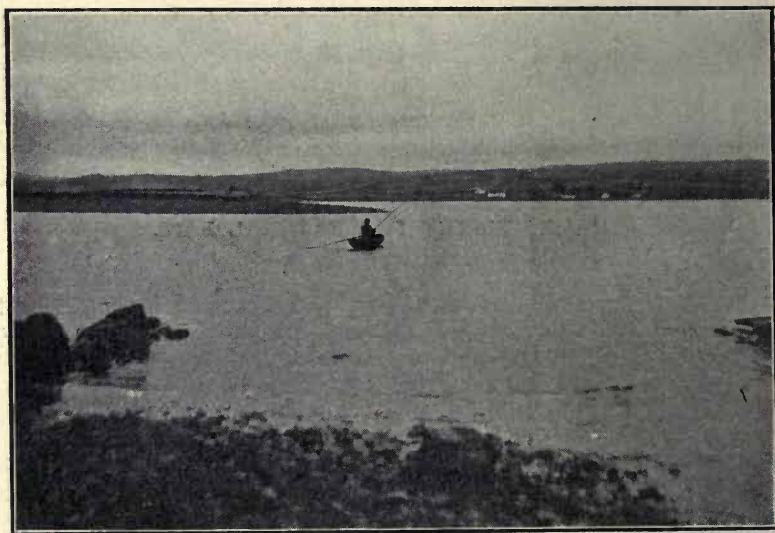
Bottom—Mounted.

Eight to ten pound specimens have been taken on the dap, but twelve to sixteen pounders have only been caught trolling. The method differs from spinning in using a boat and a much longer line; bait and tackle are similar. The deep parts of the lake are the places where the big trout lie. They are usually deeps, however, with sloping banks leading to shallows, which the fish frequent in search of food. A gillie must be secured who is familiar with

in the action, and large enough to take 100 yards of line—40 to 50 will be let out in trolling, the rest may be needed for a long run made by a heavy fish. Two rods are generally used, one with a very small trout or a stone loach mounted on a Thames flight of hooks. The other is best equipped with a natural bait mounted on a small crocodile or an Archer spinner. Thus equipped, the trout has a choice of dishes, one a wobbling bait, the other



GALWAY RIVER.
The Crib White Trout Pool.



LOUGH CORRIB.
A Trolling and Dapping Lough.

a rapid spinner. It would be difficult to predict which would prove to be the favourite—probably the one that first comes in sight of a hungry fish. In trolling there is no need for striking; the movement of the boat will be quite sufficient to effect the preliminaries in that operation, the trout will do the rest. It is best to set the rods athwart in the boat, taking care that the reel is in running order when a fish does come. The rod should be carefully lifted to play him, any jamming of the line with the fingers will probably mean the snapping of the gut like packthread and the perishing of a great hope. Be calm and collected, and he will be yours in all probability. If you do lose him, the sense of loss will not be intensified by the knowledge of your own bungling.

Worming for trout is only justifiable where neither fly-fishing nor spinning is possible. In a mountain burn in spate one may

have a good time among the four-to-a-pound speckled beauties. They are usually plentiful, and in no other way can they be caught. Worming with Stewart tackle is a more difficult branch of the art, and needs a good deal of practice. The tackle can be easily procured, which consists of three hooks tied one above the other on a gut link. The worm is impaled in such a way as to hang in loops, and in this extended fashion proves particularly attractive to fario. Low, clear water, and a hot day are the favourable conditions to use it effectively. Waders must be donned and the angler proceed up stream, casting as long a line as he can and drawing the worm through the water in a sunken fly fashion. The moment he feels a fish or sees a break he strikes, and seldom misses hooking his quarry, although a good many stones and weeds are likely to be hooked in mistake for him.

CHAPTER XII.

RAINBOW TROUT, BULL TROUT, AND GRAYLING.

RAINBOW trout (*Salmo iridens*) have been imported from America and have found their way to England. They are hardy fish, which propagate freely and flourish in lakes and sluggish water, where brown trout would not thrive. In shape they are similar to fario, differing in colour and the fineness of the spots, which are thickly dotted over the sides and fins. An iridescent hue runs down each side, which gives the fish a rich and beautiful colour. It is an extremely game fish, playing harder than a brown trout, and in many respects equal to a white one. They feed ravenously, and take the fly under water. They run to a large size, particularly in New Zealand, but five and six pounders are common in England. They will take a larger fly than farios, especially if well sunk in the water. Trolling the fly is a favourite method of catching them. They are restless fish, hard to harbour, often running down stream for miles and disappearing in the sea.

BULL TROUT (*Salmo Eriox*).

The bull trout is less known to anglers than other *Salmonidæ* species. They are similar in habits to salmon, and are only found in rivers which the latter frequent. Their sporting qualities are different, as they do not take the fly when they return from the sea, and are in the best fighting condition. They rarely fall victims to any lure, except a bait such as a lob-worm. After a short sojourn in the river they will rise to the

fly, and patronize a phantom or Devon minnow. I have caught them in the Tees while spinning for salmon, and although it was well within the season, they had grown coarse and unshapely, and black as shoe-leather underneath, evidently from lying and routing in the gravel. In perfect condition they resemble *Salmo salar* in shape and appearance. Their scales are smaller, and they are thicker in the neck and shoulders, and shorter in the lower jaw than salmon. After remaining in the river some time, the head changes to an olive-brown colour, and the body red or yellowish brown; they run from a couple of pounds weight up to twenty.

They are dogged fighters, their thick-set shape giving them exceptional staying power. One generally finds them when in quest of nobler game, which possibly discounts their value from an angling point of view.

THE GRAYLING.

Everything that has been said of the modes of wet and dry fly-fishing equally applies to the capture of grayling (*Thymallus vulgaris*). A good deal, however, can be said of the fish itself. Although they occupy the same streams and feed on similar food, they differ materially from trout. The grayling's back is greenish-brown, and shading off into grey on the sides. Underneath it is a silvery hue. The head is yellow on the sides, and spotted black. The pelvic and anal fins are tinted violet, pec-

torals yellow, changing to red in the breeding season. The dorsal and caudal fins are generally red, although sometimes blue, with longitudinal bands or spots. The cleft of the grayling's mouth is small, with teeth in the jaw-bones, palatines and vomer, but none in the tongue. It is the absence of bones in certain parts of the mouth that causes these fish to break away so frequently; unless the hook penetrates a bony part, it is impossible to hold them. The dorsal fin is a conspicuous part of its structure. It extends far down the back, and has from thirteen to twenty-three rays.

The grayling is widely distributed over Europe, North and South America. It multiplies with great rapidity, growing to a large size, in south country chalk streams four pound specimens being by no means uncommon. The rivers in limestone districts in the North, and the red sandstone areas in Central England, hold them. Like the roach, they are unknown in Ireland. The angling season opens and closes with the coarse fish generally, as grayling corresponds with them in breeding habits. It has rapid recuperative powers, however, and recovers more quickly after spawning than the majority of fish. Two-yearlings or shetts that have not spawned are in good condition as early as June, both in sporting quality and as a comestible. The best time to go in quest of them is when the trout-fishing has closed. Then they are at their best, wearing their scale-coated armour in unsullied brilliance, and redolent of the fragrance of the wild thyme, from which their name is derived. The rod, line, and many of the flies used for trout constitute the angling equipment. It seems a strange thing to expect flies on the water when the frost hangs thick on

the boughs and snow is sprinkled over the landscape. But flies there are for a certainty, and grayling rise to them. It is not always necessary or practicable to offer exact imitations, size being really more important than colour. There are a few stock patterns that the angler should be provided with, such as red tag, Wickham fancy, red ant, and alder. A score of others could be enumerated, and every experienced angler has his own favourite list.

Grayling frequent the deeper parts of the river, or a shallow close by, on which they come out to feed. They will take the wet fly as freely as the dry. Casting straight across and working round and down stream is the favourite method of enticing them. On a rough day, when alders are blown on to the river, a big grayling frequently rewards careful fishing, and will be found close in to the bank. Wading up stream and fishing with a dry fly is a preferable method. The best sport that grayling give is obtained that way. The taking power of the fish must not be judged by the brown trout standard. The latter rarely miss the fly when they wish to take it. Grayling miss with tantalizing monotony. To the tyro this may seem trifling, but acquaintance with the anatomy of the fish explains the reason. The trout poises near the surface of the water in quest of fly, and has only to raise its head to secure the ephemera. The grayling rises from the bottom, and the wonder is that it manages to secure the fly as often as it does. It is provided with a very large air-bladder, connected with the dorsal fin, which inflates by erection and empties by depression. In playing a grayling the fin can be seen falling over like a mane as the fish bores down. When it comes towards

the surface the dorsal assumes the upright position. In swift water the grayling's chances of securing the fly are naturally less. One must offer it again and again, as sooner or later it will be taken. If the hook penetrates a bony part of the mouth, the fish will soon plunge into the depths and begin "boring." This is his favourite method of defence, frequently chafing the huge dorsal

fin against the gut, and at times managing to break it. One must not lean too hard, but firm tension keeps his head up and is the best method of managing him. He makes no sudden leaps out of the water like the trout, but fights doggedly to the end, varying the boring method with an occasional and unexpected dash, not unaccompanied by danger to the light tackle.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHITE TROUT (*S. trutta*).

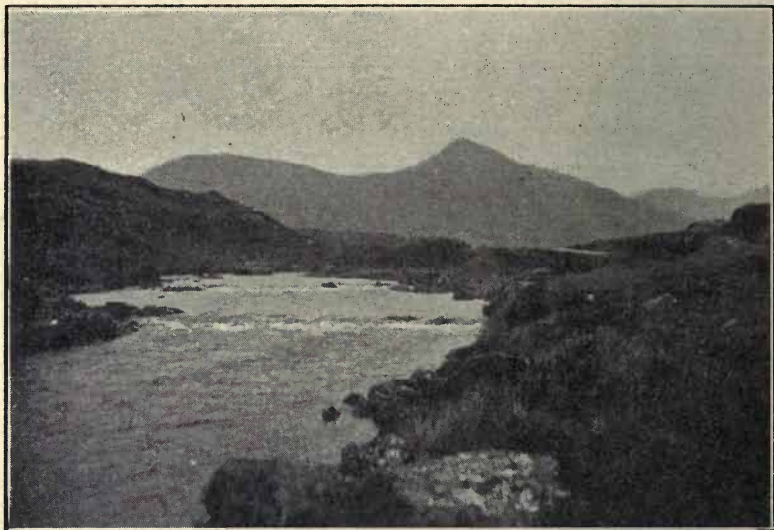
WHITE, or sea, trout are the gamiest of their kind. To encounter a three- or four-pounder is a delight that it would be difficult to beat in the whole range of angling experience.

The habits of the sea trout are similar to salmon. It belongs to the migratory family of the *Salmonidæ*, choosing to spawn in rivers and lakes, and returning to the sea, from which it derives the silvery coat that distinguishes it from the *fario* tribe. Confinement in rivers and lakes, however, alters its appearance in this particular. I have caught them in August with the fly in Irish rivers and loughs almost as red as lake trout. There are other points of differentiation important to know in order to distinguish them from other species. *Fario* has two rows of teeth in the middle bone on the roof of the mouth, whilst *trutta* has only one. The teeth in this row exceed in number those of the salmon and the bull trout, which only have a few on the end of the central bone. There are also differences in the fins and shape of the tail, easily noticed on comparison. White trout are known under different names. On the banks of the Tweed they are called whitling. In Gaelic nomenclature finnock, meaning white; herling is another familiar Scotch title. They are dubbed sewin in Wales, and in the South, peel—the most misleading title of all—as the term generally applies to salmon before reaching the spawning age. It is just as well to know what our friends mean when they use

one of these provincialisms, lest we go armed with a hand-line and mussels for some species of sea-fish, or a heavy salmon-rod and tackle when peel fishing is the flattering form of the invitation.

Sea trout run up most tidal rivers along the Scotch and Irish coast. They are found in some English rivers, but not to the same extent. They show a preference for light spate rivers, of which purity is an indispensable condition. They differ from salmon in this particular, whilst the latter keep to the main river, and travel up stream for miles, white trout are disposed to leave the deep water for any side stream or lake where there is a freshet. They hang about the mouth of rivers and in estuaries until a flood comes, when they run freely.

In heavy water, too dirty for fly-fishing, a worm is the best bait to mount. Under the circumstances, it is a perfectly legitimate lure. The run of fish is very numerous, and there is not the least fear of exhausting the supply. They keep moving up whilst the flood lasts, and if they are not tempted with a worm in the pea-soup condition, they will be miles away by the time the water clears. Some fine fish are taken in this way, and the play given on a single hook and link of gut is very exciting. A stiff fly rod is the best weapon to use for this kind of work, and a trout reel and line. The fish hug the bank in a heavy flood, and within a yard of it is the most likely spot to find them. Small red worms, scoured for a



BALLYNAHINCH SALMON AND WHITE TROUT RIVER.



SALMON FISHING IN THE SHANNON AT CASTLECONNELL.

few days in moss, are the most attractive. The worm is floated down stream, tripping on or near the bottom. A float is not necessary and impracticable, as the depth varies almost every yard. The current itself is quite swift enough to keep the bait floating.

ravenously. Spate rivers clear rapidly, and whilst still unsuited to the fly, a blue or brown Devon minnow or small spoon may be used to advantage. These baits are spun in swift rapids, and in heavier water cast straight across stream, and worked first down,



CASTLECONNELL SALMON FLIES.

MESSRS. ENRIGHT AND SON'S PATTERNS.

Yellow and Black.	Silver Parrot.	
Orange Guinea Hen.	Black and Orange Goldfinch.	Blue Jay.
Purple Goldfinch.	Black Goldfinch.	

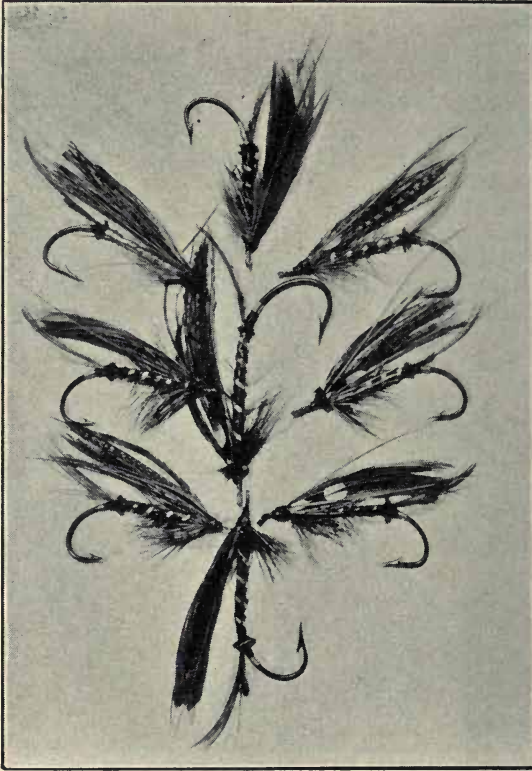
A moment or two should be allowed to the fish when it is felt, and the short sharp pull it gives repeated before striking. It is very rare to miss a white trout if it is given time, as they feed

then up, against the current. A trout trolling-rod is the best to use with reel and trace already described under spinning.

In tidal water, too deep for flies, trolling from a boat may be

resorted to for white trout. The best times are the last ebb and the first flow of the tide. The boat should be rowed very slowly, and a line 30 or 40 yards long let out. A Devon, spoon, or phantom, are the stock artificial baits, but natural minnows,

and are good substitutes. The brightest kind are the most attractive. In some estuaries, herring-fry are abundant in the autumn. They can be seen breaking the surface of the water and attracting the gulls. White trout feed on them liberally. The



GALWAY SALMON FLIES.

MR. JOHN LYDON'S PATTERNS.

	Yellow Goldfinch.	
	Silver Doctor.	Puce and Orange.
Black Goshawk.	Green and Orange.	Black and Orange.
Black and Yellow.	Thunder and Lightning.	
	Yellow Goshawk.	

mounted on a Thames flight of hooks, are preferable. Fresh minnows are best, but it is not always possible to procure them; preserved can be generally had,

first fish caught will probably disgorge half a dozen. They are as bright as silver, but too soft for spinning purposes. They give a hint to the angler in regard to the

bright baits he should mount. An eel tail makes an excellent spinner, and is mounted in the following manner: File in half, horizontally, a good-sized Devon minnow, and having procured a small sand eel, about the thickness of the body of the minnow, cut off 2 in. from the tail; peel the skin down about half-way. Cut off the portion of the vertebra that has been stripped, and slip the piece of loose skin, with the remainder of the tail attached, on to the Devon and draw it up to the fin flanges. Tie the skin tightly with waxed silk. By means of a long needle, a piece of gut with a triangle hook attached may be threaded through the tail, and brought out through the mouth of a Devon; the hooks are fastened half-way up the tail. Mounted in this way, the tail spins neatly in the water. I have taken large white trout on this bait, and found it deadly when other lures failed.

Fly-fishing for sea trout is the most delightful method of capturing them. Some anglers use long rods, and proportionately heavy. This is a mistake in more ways than one. It adds to the day's labour, and the stiffness leads to a larger number of fish breaking away. This is a common experience. A pliable rod, 10 ft. 6 in. or 11 ft., is the most suitable. I use a split cane "Houghton," and find it admirable in every way. A reel with 60 yards of line is necessary, and a gut cast of medium size and the best procurable quality. White trout flies are of many patterns. In a rapid stream a small silver doctor or an orange grouse is very killing, and blue floss bodies with hackle

to match. Claret bodies, with golden olive hackles, and golden pheasant frill wings are favourites. Other good patterns are black bodies, claret hackle, ribbed with silver twist, and mallard wings. On loughs plainer flies do better, such as rough bodies, claret and golden olive, with hackles to match, and mallard wings. Dyed seal fur is the best material for these flies. What is known as old leather, with mallard wings, is very good in low, clear water. The size of the flies must be regulated by the height of the river or lake. When slightly discoloured, they may be bigger and brighter. A golden pheasant crest for the tail, and jay shoulder hackle, show up well in such conditions.

White trout angling is downstream, and does not give much opportunity for the application of the dry fly art, although I have seen the fish freely taking the May-fly in a river when I was salmon-fishing, and unfortunately had no artificial patterns to tempt them with. When the fish are on the rise they are not above taking it wet, or I believe any other way in which it may be preferred. The rise of a white trout is easily distinguished from a brown. It is much more aggressive, and leaves a bigger break on the surface. Three flies are used, and mounted in the way already described for brown trout. If the trout is hooked on the dropper in lake fishing, the water is generally sufficiently deep to prevent the leader from fouling. In rivers the rapids in which white trout are found are usually swift enough to keep the casting-line well stretched and the flies afloat.

CHAPTER XIV.

SALMON (*Salmo salar*), RODS AND TACKLE.

WE now come to the king of fresh-water rivers—the salmon. Caught in any legitimate way, he is the angler's greatest prize. The size to which he grows and corresponding strength, the mad rushes and exciting springs he gives from the water in the fight for life and liberty, make him *facile princeps* as a sporting entity. Salmon spawn in the gravelly beds of rivers, the fry remaining from one to three years in the fresh water before going to the sea. Previous to migrating they are called parr, and are marked with faint blue bars. After this, they become silvery, the change being effected by the growth of scales which marks the smolt stage. The scales are supposed to be a protection against the injurious effects of salt water. Corroboration of this is found in the fact that the young fish do not migrate until they obtain them. They return from the sea to the river as grilse. This period of their home-coming differs, some during the first year, others after a longer period, and in greater maturity. The spawning season is during the months of November and December, after which they leave the river as kelts or "spent" fish. Five or six months in the salt water restore them to full vigour, and with an increase of several pounds weight, constituting them spring and summer "clean" fish, which become the coveted object of the angler's quest.

Of the various modes of angling for salmon, fly-fishing is the chief.

The outfit consists of a rod varying from 15 ft. in length, according to the size of the salmon and the conditions under which one fishes. As compared with earlier times, the modern salmon rod is a much lighter weapon. In the older books on the subject, 19 ft. and 20 ft. rods are prescribed. Seldom, nowadays, is a make longer than 18-ft. recommended. I am a strong advocate of further reform in this direction. A long experience has convinced me that the average salmon rod is too heavy. It may be laid down as a first principle that the lighter the rod the better—other things being equal. An 18-ft. split cane rod, for example, of the best quality weighs about 44 oz., the reel and line 20 oz. more—total, 4 lb. This weight has to be swung backwards and forwards, often against a stiff wind, three or four times per minute. Few men of ordinary build and physique can do it for half an hour without getting tired. To continue for a day, with the usual intervals of rest, means a backache at the close. The usual result with the owners of these big rods is to resign them for the greater part of the day to the gillie—patient beast of burden that he is—and to take over the weapon to play the fish when hooked. This means forfeiting the pleasure—to say nothing of the credit—of hooking one's own salmon. The necessity for using such long, heavy rods does not arise in nine out of every ten cases. On broad rivers, when

bank-fishing, an 18-ft. rod gives an advantage over a 16-ft. In very swift rivers, such as the Shannon at Castleconnell, where big salmon have to be held up to prevent them rushing down-stream and cutting the gut on the rocks, a heavy build is necessary. But such places are the exception. In the great majority of rivers, boats are used or the angler wades, and a light rod is more serviceable. Assuming that it is desirable to kill a fish as soon as possible, it is a mistake to think a heavy rod will be more expeditious—the contrary has been my experience. The longer the rod the thicker must be the butt, therefore the less the action of that part. A light rod, working well down to the hand, tells far more quickly on a salmon than a heavy rod, where only the top and middle joints are brought into play.

The demand is for lighter weapons, and rod makers will be well advised in responding to it. Messrs. Hardy Bros., of Alnwick, has done so by making a split cane rod, steel centre, which fulfils admirably the conditions of lightness with efficiency. It is 16 ft., and weighs only 28 oz. The weight of a rod of this size and make is generally 33 oz. Fitted with a 4-in. "Perfect" reel and No. 5 "Corona" line, 16 oz. 6 drms. must be added. But the whole weight is only 43 oz., as against 50 oz.—the average weight of a 16 ft. outfit. The action of this rod throws the play on the butt. At the same time it is by no means whippy, the middle and top joints having a power that makes the line cut through a stiff wind. It is possible to fish all day long with such a weapon without turning pleasure into toil. It is called the "Connemara," and is well adapted to the rivers and loughs

in that district. Of greenheart makes of salmon rod there is a variety to choose from. The Castleconnell build is well known, of which Messrs. Enright and Son are the principal makers. These rods dispense with ferrules. A splice in the centre of the rod, whipped together, unites the butt and top. Greater unity is claimed for a rod which dispenses with brasses. Be this as it may, they are excellent weapons, much thinner in the butt than the general run of ferrule rods, and consequently lighter and more pliable.

Of jointed greenheart rods there are many reliable makers. The important thing is to get good material—greenheart has a way of breaking in unexpected places. There is only one reason for this—defective grained wood. It is most important to procure a rod of carefully selected timber. Many a good day's fishing has been spoiled by an irreparable accident to the middle joint, when twenty miles from a possible remedy. A reel proportionate in size to the rod, and 100 to 120 yards of line are required for salmon fishing. A commoner line may be used for backing. Tanned flax line is very light, takes up little room, and is reliable. Next comes the casting-line, which consists of the best gut, 3 yards long. In grist it varies according to circumstances. For heavy spring fish it cannot be too stout; for grilse in low summer water it can scarcely be too fine.

Flies vary in size from 8/0 Redditch standard, which are 4 in. long, down to No. 8, $\frac{3}{4}$ in. long (*vide* illustration). Most rivers have favourite local patterns, which it is advisable to procure when one visits them. Smaller sizes should be mounted as the water falls—larger as it rises. Some patterns are uni-

versally good, *e.g.*, the Jock Scot; silver doctor, and orange grouse. A landing-net or, when the rules of the river permit it, a gaff must be added to the outfit.

The attendance of a gillie must be written down among the essentials. If the fishing is not from a boat, his assistance is needed in pointing out the pools, gaffing a fish, shouldering the impediments of the angler's outfit, and taking his turn with the

rod in the course of a hard day's fishing. So much depends upon this item in the programme, that one must be pretty sure he has got the right article. An ill-informed or inefficient attendant is worse than none; whereas a really competent man adds considerably to the pleasures of sport, and to the weight of the creel at the close of the day. Hints on salmon fishing are reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

SALMON FLY-FISHING.

HAVING described the equipment for salmon angling, we now approach a pool. Two flies may be mounted if the river is fairly rapid and clear of weeds; one is better if there is danger of fouling. Beginning at the top, the fishing is pursued down stream. A few yards of line are drawn from the reel, and the first cast made close into the near bank, standing well back, so that no shadow is thrown on the river. The top of the rod is raised when the flies touch the water, the current catches them, and they are carried down stream. A slight movement of the hand and wrist sways the top of the rod, causing the flies to swim in short, sharp jerks. This makes the wings open and close in a life-like movement. The action is accelerated when the line is carried to its full extent, and the flies begin to work up against the current. In swift rapids the force of the water imparts sufficient life to the flies, and very little wrist movement, if any, is required. There is something more than fancy in this action of the rod. The number of times one hooks a salmon as the flies are being lifted for a fresh cast show that fish snap at a moving object.

In deep, sluggish water, the flies are allowed to sink and rise more deliberately. The arm in that case moves from the elbow—a plan that is very effectual in enticing salmon. In this fashion, yard by yard, the line is drawn from the reel until the whole pool is carefully fished. It is a mistake

to hurry over reaches where the salmon are known to lie. They should be rested now and again, and the flies changed. In this, as in most cases, familiarity breeds contempt. Salmon, like trout, have their moods, and the rise may come on any moment. If a fish breaks the water, but does not take the fly, one has to judge whether he refused it purposely or not. If it has been missed by accident, such as in pulling away the fly as he was about to take it, it should be offered again without a moment's delay. The salmon is probably looking about, and speculating on its sudden disappearance. Cast it on the spot where he rose, and in all likelihood he will not miss it the second time. If the rise is a shy one, wait a few minutes. He may come a second or third time, in which case a change to a smaller fly or a different pattern may bring him up to the scratch. It frequently happens that a shy fish that rises and misses in the morning will take for a certainty towards evening the moment he is covered.

The tail fly or leader is, as a rule, taken under water. There is no break, but a pull is felt. Unless it is a short rise, such an intimation shows that the fish has gripped the hook. If it happens in a strong current, where one generally fishes with a short line, the strike should be a gentle one, letting the reel run immediately. If a long line is out, and the water sluggish, the strike should be much harder, followed by tighten-

ing up the slack as quickly as possible. A salmon needs careful playing, the first principle of which is to keep an even pressure on the fish. The reel does most of the work, and should be left free to yield to all the movements of the captive. In this way the strain is relieved. Similarly, all slack line must be winched in, and the requisite pressure maintained. Too tight a line courts a break; too slack, the ejection of the hook from its hold; keeping the top of

obedience! If not, you may part company with fish and gut and, possibly, a sound rod. After relaxing the strain in this way, the slack must be recovered by hand if necessary, and the rod raised again to the former position. Such incidents are tests. If the fish is lightly hooked, there is a danger of the slack serving his purpose, and enabling him to rid himself of the fly. If the line becomes taut again, it is presumptive evidence of firm hooking, and stimulates



THE MOY SALMON RIVER, BALLINA.

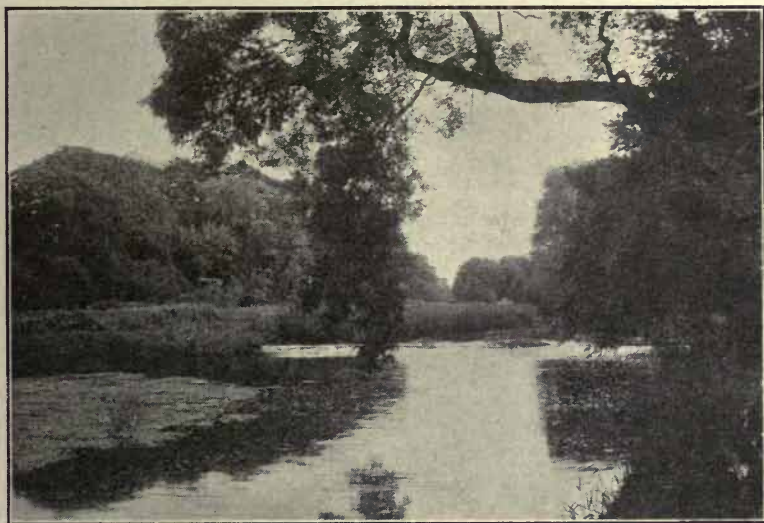
The Scariff Pool.

the rod over the fish, wherever he goes, is a good rule, to which there is no exception. Side strains are dangerous, and many fish gain their liberty that way. At the end of a run, a salmon generally throws himself out of the water. This is a critical moment, as the sudden jerk may break the tackle. Such lordly springs are worthy of deference; bow to them by rapidly lowering the top of the rod. It will be coupling discretion with

the hope of landing the quarry. After the lordly spring, the fish takes it "aisy" for a time. The most should be made out of this momentary suspension of hostilities, and the salmon winched in close to the rod. Firm hooking having been proved, it is advisable to lean on him, which is technically described as "giving the butt." His object is to rest after the recent activity, possibly in preparation for another run. Ap-

plication of the butt soon tells on his strength, and keeps him well in hand. There is quite sufficient excitement in the play generally without encouraging these long excursions, which serve the salmon's purpose more than the angler's. The first intimation of being played out shows itself in a golden flash in the water. It is an unfailling signal of distress, caused by the fish turning on his side from exhaustion. At this stage he will generally submit to

fly is very likely to fasten in the mesh. Let him alone till he comes to the top and puts up his head. In this position a salmon generally allows himself to be dragged along the surface some distance. It is a chance that should be seized as a favourable opportunity of landing him. A mouthful of fresh air seems to act like a drug, and for the moment paralyses his energies. Another way of exhausting him is to turn his head and bring him



A SALMON POOL IN THE RIVER MAIGUE, ADAIR.

being winched in. If he does not come to the surface, no attempt should be made to land him. He is not ready yet, and plunging the net under the water is worse than folly. A clever gillie sometimes *gaffs* a salmon in such a position, and there may be special reasons for doing so. All the same, it is risky, as the casting line is in danger of being *gaffed* instead of the fish, and with fatal results. But no one should attempt to *net* a fish under water. The spare

straight down stream. This movement acts upon the gills, and sets up a process of drowning.

It often falls to the angler's lot to have to land his fish unaided. A gaff in this case is the handiest weapon. It should be held firmly with the point turned down. The fish should be guided up stream so as to drift back with the current close to hand. When the salmon comes within reach the gaff is passed over, and as near to the back without touching it as

possible. A sharp stroke will easily transfix the fish in that position. If a net is used, it should be first dipped in the river so as to straighten out the meshes. The hoop is slightly sunk in the water and at right angles, instead of being laid flat on the surface. Keeping the salmon's head well raised, the net is sharply slipped under it, and then over the body. One precaution is very necessary, viz., to have more than a rod's length of line out, including the gut cast. With less there is almost a certainty of breaking the top of the rod in the process of landing the fish.

Salmon have many moods for which the angler must be prepared. One is sulking. Heavy fish have a way of becoming stationary after a little play, and refusing to budge, however much one leans upon them. Fishing from a boat, it is easy to get close to them, and stimulate their energies by means of the pole. A sharp knock on the bottom will generally set them on the run. From the bank or wading this is not so easy. Stone-throwing is tried with doubtful effect. A split ring slipped on the line and rattled down to the fish's nose is disconcerting, and may be tried provided one does not put too much store on the value of the ring. Some anglers drop the rod and hand-play the fish. This gives a side pull which cannot be long resisted. When he does move he should be well held up in the water, and gaffed at the first chance he gives.

Jiggering is another trick of which some salmon are past-

masters. When hooked, instead of making a run, as all right-minded fish should do, they hold up and tug at the line as a terrier at a root when scraping a rabbit burrow. The largest fly will be torn from its hold if jiggering is persisted in. It is difficult to check a fish that adopts this form of resistance. Some anglers lean as hard as they dare, others pursue the opposite course and give a slack line. The latter method I prefer, as the tugging cannot be kept up without resistance on the part of the rod. I have put a stop to it for a moment or two by the policy of the slack line, but the moment the rod was tightened the fish resumed his old tactics. If a fish is well hooked in a bony part of the mouth, one can afford to lean on him. In slacking off, the danger of running foul of rocks and weeds in the pool has to be encountered. A salmon with his head free does not take long to get into mischief.

These and other pretty ways of *Salmo salar* have to be encountered. The loss of many a good fish is sure to follow. Such adversity is likely to try the temper. I have known it to affect an angler's speech, and prompt to utterances outside the category of polite language. But a sporting stoicism is the best to display in such circumstances. If a fish is lost through one's own fault, self-castigation may be salutary; but if it is a matter of outwitting his would-be captor by strength or cunning, it is only, after all, the fortune of sport in which the victor deserves congratulation.

CHAPTER XVI.

SALMON BAIT-FISHING AND SPINNING.

ANOTHER method of capturing salmon may be classified under the head of bait-fishing. The prawn and worm are the chief lures. The latter is not to be encouraged, save under exceptional circumstances. When it is used the lobworm is the best bait, mounted on a single hook, and attached to a gut trace. There is no particular art in this form of angling, and nothing to learn beyond what a trout worm-fisher already knows.

Prawn fishing is a higher art, and has this to commend it, that on a very hot day, when salmon do not rise to the fly, they will take the prawn. The method of mounting it on a needle and flight of hooks, is anything but commendable. In the Shannon and other Irish rivers, where a large proportion of fish are caught with the prawn, no such device is used. Where salmon are plentiful, a prawn bristling over with hooks becomes mischievous in more senses than one. A large proportion of the fish will be hooked outside, however careful one may be, which raises a suspicion of snatching. Where the river is rocky the bait will be stuck half its time in the bottom. A 1/0 single hook tied on a link of gut is all that is required. The point is inserted at the tail of the prawn, and the crustacean is threaded on as far as it will go, like a worm. In this way the hook is completely embedded. It is then wrapped round with prawn-coloured cotton from the head to the tail. This plan prevents it

from being torn off in casting, or by the strength of the current. The point of the hook does not protrude, and a salmon may be touched many times without being hooked foul (*vide* illustration). A gut trace two yards long, leaded according to the swiftness of the water, completes this part of the outfit.

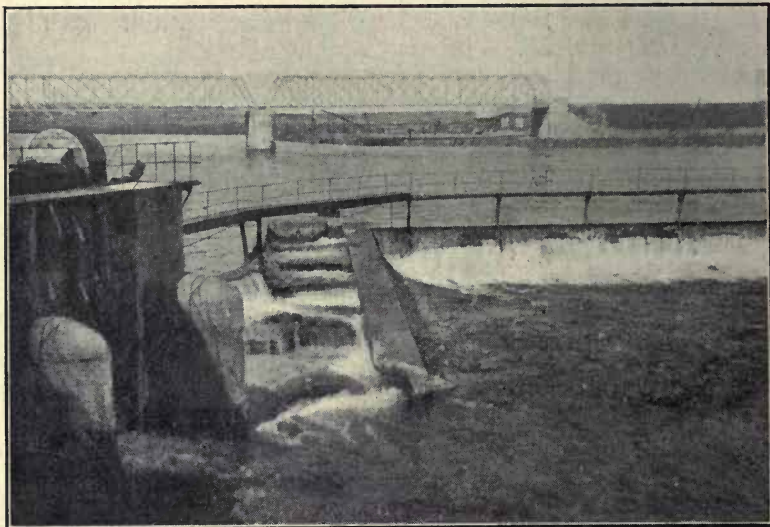
The way to fish is to cast across stream and let the prawn drift down, raising the rod high enough to keep the bait from touching the bottom. As the prawn works round, a jerky motion is given to it by gently pulling the line with the left hand to and fro through the rings. A salmon approaches the bait in different ways, which have to be studied. At one time the prawn is pulled so vigorously that there is no doubt about the fish having taken a firm hold. In such a case there is a double tug, one caused by the sudden stoppage of the drifting bait, the other by the movement of the fish's head after securing it. When this is felt the fish must be struck as rapidly as possible, and there will be little doubt about hooking him. Another fish snaps at the prawn, and removes the middle cut as neatly as with a sharp instrument. Striking means scaring under such circumstances. It is better to mount a fresh bait and offer it again; the salmon will probably like the sample, and take a more liberal helping. Frequently the prawn is treated like a worm, and time should be given to the fish. Two or three slight pulls will be felt, then the crustacean will be

broken up, and a strike is sure to affix the hook.

Salmon taken in this way are not encumbered with a mouthful of hooks and give the very best play, a result that cannot be expected with more complicated tackle. Besides, less fish are lost by this method; that, at least, has been my experience.

Spinning for salmon is a method much practised on some rivers. Most of the spring fishing is done in that way; the river in many

and working the lure. The essential condition to spinning is heavy or discoloured water. This is likely to occur frequently during the season, and if one is not prepared for it much precious time is lost, and no fish are caught. There are stages in the coming and clearing of a flood when particular baits may be used to advantage. The first effect of a spate is the condition known as rising water. During this stage the river does not become dis-



GALWAY SALMON RIVER.

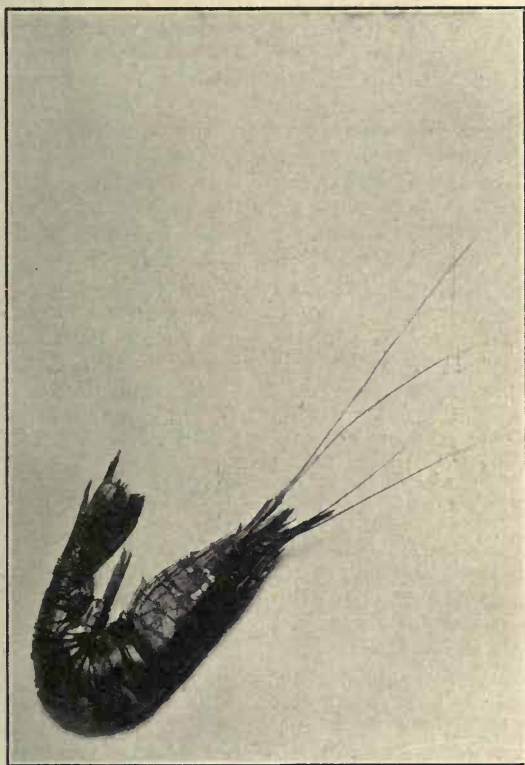
Horseshoe Pool and Salmon Ladder.

places being too heavy for the fly. Large Devon minnows are generally used, and trolled behind a boat. This sort of angling requires little skill, as the motion of the boat keeps the bait spinning. The trace, a couple of yards long, must be very strong, consisting of double and sometimes treble twisted gut, swivelled in two places. Spinning from the bank or from a boat is different, and needs considerable skill in casting

coloured; although its depth increases from 6 in. to a foot, it remains perfectly clear. Assuming that the angler is using the fly, he will have to mount larger sizes, and possibly different patterns to suit the changed condition of things. The rise in the water may be so great that pools are put out of order for the fly, and a minnow may be mounted, a brown or golden rather than a silver pattern. Later in the day the

first signs of flood colour begin to show. This is a more favourable condition for getting fish, and the Devon should be spun in the deep pools. As the water becomes dirtier, a silver pattern should be substituted for the golden. The reason for the change will be obvious.

the silver minnow, the rapids will be clear enough for the glint of the bait to be seen by *Salmo salar*, now diligently on the look-out for novelties in his new environment. When the pea-soup stage of the spate is reached, and Egyptian darkness encompasses the fish, there is still a lure that proves



THE PRAWN—MOUNTED AND THREADED.

Too much time should not be spent in fishing the deep pools; salmon will be on the move at the first taste of the freshet, and the lighter water, between the deep pools, is sure to become resting-places. They will repay careful attention. Long after the heavy water is too dirty even for

very deadly; this is a large spoon bait. I have heard anglers, in their eagerness to be emphatic, recommend one as big as a soup plate! I draw the line at one about 3 in. long, and broad in proportion. The best make is golden on the outside and silver on the inside. Nothing of the

tassel or other appendages which flatter the taste of a pike should embellish it. This bait is excellent in deep water. I have proved its efficiency so often that I strongly recommend it. There is one advantage of highly-discoloured water: it stops salmon from running. They will therefore be more disposed to take a bait, a thing they will not do when intent on pushing their way up stream. A big spoon flashing gold and silver will be seen, and will tempt them in the muddiest water. Angling with the minnow and spoon, one must use a suitable trolling rod. It is destructive of a fly-rod to use it for casting a heavy leaded bait, and it is not the right weapon. I have lost a great many salmon with a spoon bait, and attributed the misfortune to the lack of quick and firm hooking. The stiffness of a trolling rod expedites this operation. One has to strike fairly hard, and the gut trace must be strong enough to allow this to be done with impunity. I have found a very efficient rod for this branch of salmon angling in Messrs. Hardy Brothers' "*Salmo esox*." It is 10 ft. 9 in. long, and weighs only 17½ oz. It has a specially long spare top for salmon, and, mounted with a "Silex" reel, casts a very long line. I have obtained a complete mastery over a heavy salmon, hooked on a prawn with this weapon, in a swift and difficult river.

On the clearing of a spate one

gets back to the flies as soon as possible. Fresh fish will have moved up, and old stagers will be stimulated into a more taking mood. The heavy pools will still be unsuitable for anything but a spinning bait. The lighter water, however, will be in order for the fly. A good deal will depend on the patterns mounted. Bright colours will do best. Contrasts such as a black body ribbed with broad silver twist show well in discoloured water. Jungle cock, close to the head on the outside of the wings, and plenty of golden pheasant crests are the dressings that will give the best account of themselves as the river falls. I have a favourite fly, which has invariably attracted a fish or two under such conditions, called the dyed guinea-hen. Tag: blue silk floss, and two rolls fine silver twist. Tail: g.p. crest, jungle cock, and black ostrich herl. Body: orange floss ribbed with broad silver twist. Hackle: dyed guinea-hen. Shoulder: blue jay. Wings: a mixture of bronze mallard, golden pheasant, teal, jungle cock, and macaw. Head: black ostrich. The guinea-fowl hackle is dyed in a cupful of turmeric, to which a small quantity of saffron is added. A preference should be given to the feathers with small spots. Fishing with this I have rarely had to wait long for a tight line, an enjoyment I heartily wish to all my readers.

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