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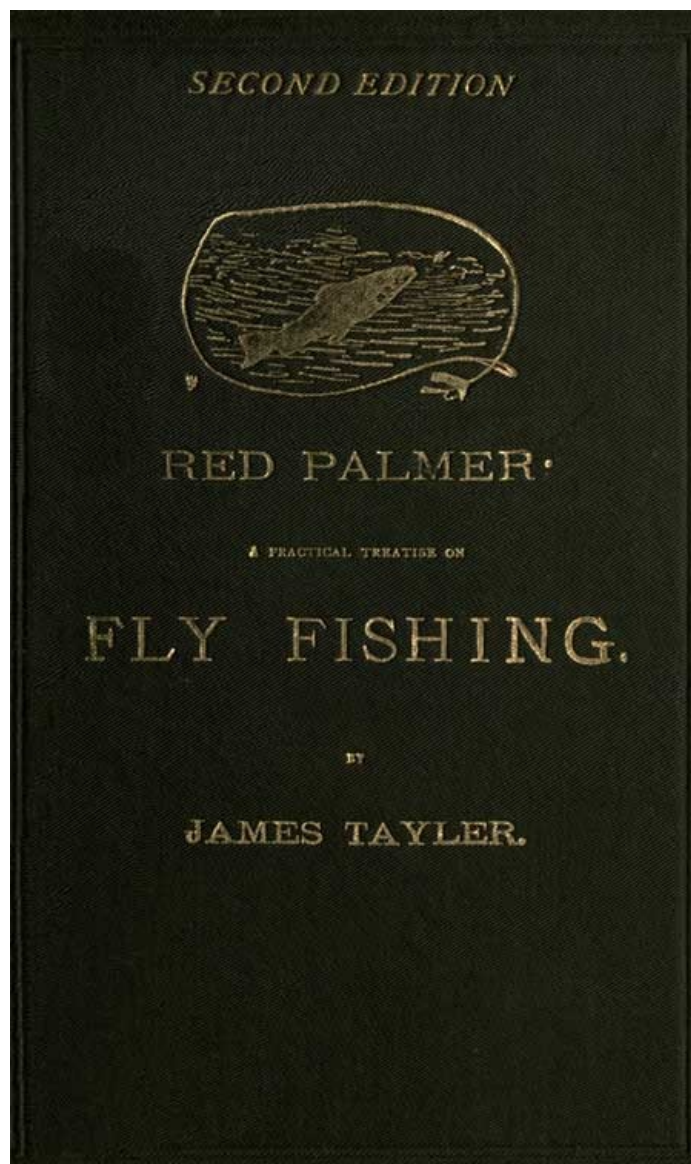
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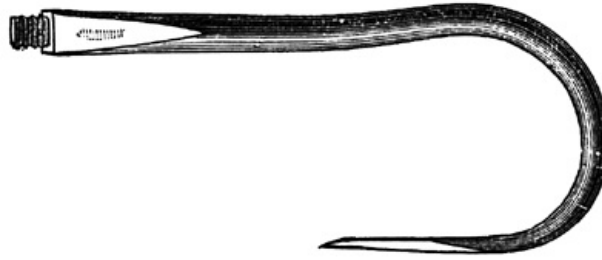
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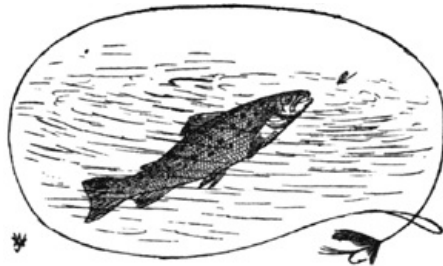
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**RED PALMER:**

A PRACTICAL TREATISE ON

**FLY  
FISHING.**

BY

**JAMES TAYLER.**

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LONDON:

LONDON:  
EMPIRE PRINTING AND PUBLISHING COMPANY, LIMITED,  
2 AND 3, SALISBURY COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.

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DEAR DR. BRUNTON,

I dedicate this little book to you, knowing that you have proved yourself to be one of the most skilful anglers of the present day; while all anglers who have the pleasure of your acquaintance know you to be a most genial and intelligent member of the craft, always ready to promote its interest, and to communicate the result of your great researches and experience to your fellow-fishermen.

Yours faithfully and respectfully,

JAMES TAYLER.

To J. BRUNTON, ESQ., M.A., M.D.

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# FLY-FISHING.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

Having read papers on Fly-fishing before the Gresham and Islington Angling Societies, and contributed occasional articles to the fishing periodicals, I have been persuaded by some of the members of those societies to publish my ideas on the subject, and I now submit them to the public, premising that the following treatise is neither historic nor scientific, but simply an endeavour to communicate what nearly fifty years of practice and careful observation have taught me to consider as correct principles in a concise and practical form. Trusting that it will be received as such, and will be of some assistance to young anglers in cultivating that, which, we are assured by the highest authority on angling, is "an art worth learning."

In preparing this short treatise I have assumed, what is generally admitted by fishermen, that catching trout with an artificial fly is the highest branch of the piscatorial art; for, although some bottom-fishers and spinners claim that as much skill is required in their branch as is in fly-fishing, yet I think the palm must be yielded to the fly-fisher. It differs in many respect from all other kinds. The greatest care must be taken not to scare the fish, either by the sight of the angler or his shadow, or by awkwardness in managing the rod, line, and flies. You have only to watch a fly-fisher and a bottom-fisher a short time to decide where the greatest skill is required and attained.

I recollect, when a very little boy, having a book, in which there was a coloured print of a trout, and underneath were these lines—

"Angler, mind well what you're about,  
If you would catch the cunning trout,"

and I suppose I must have profited by the advice, for in an old diary, kept by me in 1839, there is a record of my having caught four trout weighing 7¼lbs. when I was thirteen years of age. But those were not caught with a fly.

The late Mr. Francis Francis, than whom there is no higher authority, says in one of his books, "There is far greater skill, caution, patience, and cunning required to delude a brook trout than is thought of in landing the noblest twenty-pound salmon that ever sailed up Tweed or Tay." And in further proof of this I will give an extract from that excellent little book, "Stewart's Practical Angler." The author says: "Everything combines to render fly-fishing the most attractive of all branches of the angler's art. The attempt to capture trout, which are seen to rise at natural flies, is in itself an excitement which no other method possesses. Then the smallness of the hook and the fineness of the tackle necessary for success increases the danger of escape, and consequently the excitement and the pleasure of the capture; and, for our own part, we would rather hook, play, and capture a trout of a pound weight with fly, than one of a pound and a half with minnow or worm, where, the hooks being larger, there is less chance of their losing their hold, and, the gut being stronger, there is less risk of its breaking. Artificial fly-fishing is also the cleanest and most gentlemanly of all the methods of capturing trout. The angler who practises it is saved the trouble of working with worms, of catching, keeping alive, or salting minnows, or searching the river's bank for the natural insect. Armed with a light single-handed rod and a few flies, he may wander from county to county and kill trout wherever they are to be found."

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In addition to the pleasure and satisfaction experienced in exerting the faculties necessary to capture the most cunning and cautious of fish, what can be more delightful in the sweet spring-time than to take one's rod and stroll away into the green meadows, by the side of the rippling brook, where the eye is gratified by the trees and hedge-rows which are putting forth their young leaves; where the sense of smell is refreshed by innumerable wild flowers and herbs, and where the ear is charmed by the soft "coo" of the wood pigeon, the tinkling of a distant sheep-bell, the cry of a partridge to its mate, or the occasional splash of a trout in the stream, which sounds alone disturb the silence? Well may Walton exclaim:—

"I was for that time lifted above earth,  
Possessed of joys not promised in my birth."

An all-wise Creator gave man dominion "over the fish of the sea, over the fowls of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth;" and a very large proportion of the human race, either from motives of necessity or recreation, exercise the powers thus given them either in killing or subjugating the lower branches of the animal creation.

[8]

Without wishing to detract from other sports, I think Walton was quite right in claiming for angling a decided preference. In the present day it is followed by men of all classes, from the nobleman who owns miles of salmon river to the East-end mechanic or apprentice, who trudges off to the Lea river on a Sunday morning with his eighteenpenny roach-rod, and many of whom, but for this angling opportunity, would have no relaxation from the dull, mill-horse round of their daily lives, save some kind, perhaps, far more demoralising; but who, by its judicious indulgence, by breathing the pure air of the country, and by being brought into contact with beautiful river scenery and animal and vegetable life, re-invigorate their bodies, exalt their minds, and beget a state of quiet contentment, patience, and perseverance exceedingly useful in these days of high-pressure wear-and-tear. Sir Henry Wotton says of angling, he found it "a cheerer of the spirits, a tranquillizer of the mind, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a diverter of sadness." Ladies, too, ever since the time of Cleopatra, have liked to "betray tawny-finn'd fishes," and Dame Juliana Berners has shown by her "Boke of St. Albans" that she had a minute and practical knowledge of "fysynge with an angle" far beyond the previous writers on the art; and with the present rage for out-of-door amusements among the fair sex, fishing has its votaries, notwithstanding the attractions of croquet and lawn-tennis.

[9]

Having been a fly-fisher many years, I venture to offer a few ideas on the subject, not with a view to instruct my elder brethren in the art, but merely to explain some principles that my experience has proved to be correct, and thereby to save, perhaps, some trouble and loss of time to young beginners. I am fully aware that no amount of theory without practice will ever make a fly-fisher, but I am also aware that practice will become much easier, and be far more likely to prove successful, if based on a correct theory, than if left to itself.

Various opinions prevail as to wet and dry fishing, and I think in this matter, if we want to deceive trout, we should follow Nature as closely as possible. On a dry, quiet day the wings of the natural fly are dry, and when it falls on the water it takes some time before they become saturated, and until then it floats on the surface. Imitate this by giving your artificial fly two or three flicks backwards and forwards before you finally throw it. You thus shake the water out of it, and it floats. But on wet or very windy days the natural fly soon becomes wet with rain, or from the broken surface of the water, and at such times let the artificial lure sink a few inches beneath the surface, and if the trout are feeding, fishing in this manner is most deadly. At night I have generally found wet fly-fishing to answer best, even when there has been no rain, and I attribute this to the natural flies becoming damp with dew and thereby sinking. For dry fly-fishing floating flies are now much used. The great objection to them appears to be the hardness of their bodies, which is no sooner found by trout to be different to the natural fly than they blow it out without giving time to strike. I have found this particularly with cork-bodied May-flies, and prefer the ordinary body in consequence.

Mr. G. Holland, of Salisbury, makes a speciality of floating flies on eyed hooks and cobweb gut, which bear an excellent reputation; and my friend, Mr. R. B. Lodge, has lately invented a floating fly with an air-tight body, which floats well and does not get water-logged. If he can make it of a soft material, not liable to be punctured by the trout's teeth, I think there will be no doubt of its being a great improvement.

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## CHAPTER III.

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### TACKLE.

An important point is to commence with proper tackle, for it is of no use to attempt to catch trout with a cart-rope tied to a hedge-stake. First, then, with regard to the Rod. A good rod is the angler's chief requisite, and extraordinary progress has been made in the art of manufacturing rods within the last few years.

There are so many excellent makers that it is only necessary to visit one of them and select a rod suitable to your height, strength, and fancy, and in this, as in many other respects, fancy goes a long way. For all ordinary purposes, a rod from ten to twelve feet in length will be sufficient, and I have generally used those made in four pieces, the lower three of greenheart, or hickory, and the top of bamboo. It should be tolerably stiff, for in windy weather it is impossible with a light whippy-rod to throw against or across the wind and attain any degree of accuracy. It should be double-brazed, so that the joints may not become fixed by the swelling of the wood when wet, and the brass joints should be made slightly tapering, and the whole, when put together, should taper regularly from butt to point, and when held horizontally should be stiff enough to lie almost level. It should, of course, be fitted with small brass rings for the line to run through, which, if placed at proper distances, divide the strain equally, keep the line snug, and prevent entanglements.

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Another matter of apparently trifling importance, but really very essential, is, that near the ends of each length of the rod, and being parallel with it, should be a small brass loop or hitcher, tied on with fine binding wire. Before commencing to fish, pass a piece of thread or twist round each two of these loops, and tie the joints firmly together; this will prevent them from slipping, which is often the cause of losing a good fish or breaking the rod. After the season is over, clean the rod with very fine emery powder, then let it lie in a trough filled with oil for a day or two, and after it has been out of the oil long enough for the surface to get dry, give it a couple of coats of clear carriage varnish, and put it away for the winter.

Split-cane rods appear to be much on the increase, but they are rather expensive. It may be, perhaps, from having been accustomed for many years to greenheart that I do not take readily to the light, springing motion of cane. This lightness is somewhat modified by the use of steel centres, but unless they can be made much cheaper than at present, which I think doubtful, the price will be a great hindrance to their coming into general use.

There were some splendid rods in the last Sportsmen's Exhibition, and the man must be very hard to please who could not find one to his taste there. Among them all, the best I could see for usefulness, at a moderate price, was a little rod called the "Hotspur," built by Messrs. Hardy, of Alnwick. It is made of greenheart, in two lengths, and only ten feet long, but wonderfully powerful as well as pliant, and is fitted with a spiral joint fastening, which renders the tying above recommended unnecessary.

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## THE WINCH LINE AND GUT.

Now, as to the reel. Notwithstanding that some of the books on fishing call the multiplying reel an abomination, I always prefer one; finding that when you hook a fish it is very desirable to have the means of winding in the slack line quickly should he come towards you. I have used a two-inch brass multiplier some years, and never, to my knowledge, lost a fish by its inaction. The revolving plate is a great improvement on the old windlass.

Messrs. Foster, of Ashbourne, are making an improved winch with a male screw to fit into the female thread at the butt of the rod, where the spear is usually fixed. This is a great advantage, as the liability to get the line entangled is not so great as with a side winch, and it also enables the angler to make more of the length of his rod by grasping it lower down.

The best line I know of is the "Acme," also made by Messrs. Foster. It is constructed of plaited silk, with a very fine strand of annealed copper wire running through it. The wire gives a little weight and stiffness to the line, so that it does not kink or knot up so readily as one made of all silk, while it is about half the size of the old-fashioned line made of mixed silk and hair. With this line much more accurate casting can be made than with one of all silk; and the late David Foster, the inventor of it, says that by using it he increased the length of his throw from 29½yds. to 32½yds. with a single-handed fly rod. But this is extraordinary casting, such as few can accomplish. At the Casting Tournament, held at Hendon five years ago, I saw 30yds. 6in. thrown. Anyone who can throw a fly 25yds., clean and straight, and pitch it within a yard of the object aimed at, may consider himself a pretty good hand. Where one can do it, ninety-nine cannot.

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The gut or casting line should be moderately stout at the upper part, and tapered down to the point, and if stained of a dull blue or green colour is less likely to be seen than when quite white.

I always make up my own casts by picking out suitable lengths of gut and tying them together by a fisherman's knot, and if anything gives way I have no one but myself to blame. In cutting off the ends of the gut do not cut them quite close to the knot, but leave just sufficient to take hold of with a pair of tweezers. Flatten out the ends by pinching them; you thus prevent the knot from drawing, and it need not be clumsy. It is far more economical to use the best gut that can be obtained than to whip off your flies, or lose a fish, by having a cheaper article.

The whole—rod, running line and casting line, wholly and separately—should taper from one end to the other, and should be in thorough proportion to each other, and nothing but experience will enable one how to ascertain when this is so. If the rod is too stiff for the line you cannot deliver the latter properly, and if the line is too heavy for the rod you run the risk of breaking the rod's back; while, if the gut is too heavy for the line, it will pitch all in a heap, and, of course, scare the fish.

[17]

Flies are commonly made with a loop at the end of the gut, to be passed through a corresponding loop at the end of the casting line. A much neater plan is to cut off the loops, or buy your flies without them, and tie the two ends together as above described.

Flies tied on eyed hooks are a great improvement on the old style. They are more easily packed, not having that awkward coil of gut attached to them, which is always so difficult to manage in a book, and which is almost certain to result in the loss of some flies on a windy day. They can be readily attached and detached when necessary, and are lighter and float better, and there is not that friction of the gut at the most important point, as with flies tied on gut. I have frequently found when fishing that the fly I particularly wished to use on clear water was tied on stout gut for rough water, and was larger than my gut cast above it. This is wrong in principle, but with eyed hooks gut to suit the water could easily be tied on.

Never go out without a landing-net. The most convenient is that with a telescopic handle and folding ring. Near the upper end of the outside part of the handle should be a brass spring hook, to slip over the strap which crosses your chest towards the left side. When you hook a fish, you can, without moving the right hand from the rod, lift the landing-net off with the left hand and throw out the handle ready for use. A pair of waterproof wading-boots or stockings, a good pocket-knife, a piece of india-rubber, with which to straighten the gut, a wicker creel, and something to eat, drink, and smoke, and you are equipped for a day's sport, with the exception of flies, of which I shall next treat.

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There is no subject on which anglers differ so much as to what assortment of flies is necessary. Some will carry as many as a hundred sorts in their book, while a few, following Mr. Cholmondely Pennell, are content with three nondescripts of quite an unnatural appearance, and pretend they can catch as many fish as the man who goes prepared with a larger quantity. Walton names *nine*, beside caterpillars; and Cotton mentions *sixty-nine*; while Ronald, in his splendid work, describes very many more to choose from. David Foster speaks of *thirty-one*. My experience has taught me that about *twenty* are necessary and sufficient for all ordinary purposes. In calm weather and smooth water one fly at a time is enough; but in rain, wind, or broken water, two, three, or even four flies may be used with advantage, as you give the fish a variety to choose from, and can thereby find out which kind they are taking, and adapt your cast to their taste.

The fly nearest the rod is called the "first drop," the next the "second drop," and so on, and the farthest from the rod the "stretcher." The last drop should be about 20in. from the stretcher, and the other drops 12in. or 14in. apart. When it is thought desirable to use more than one fly, bend the loop of your drop fly round one of the knots in the casting-line, and pass the drop through the loop thus bent and draw it tight. The drop fly will thus stand at right angles with the casting-line, and should be about 3in. from it, and the trout will not be likely to come in contact with the line when seizing the fly.

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It does not very often happen that you hook two trout at a time, and after you have hooked them, the difficulty is to get them both into the landing-net, as they dart about in divers directions; but I succeeded in hooking and landing two at a time on three occasions in the summer of 1881. In such cases get the fish on the stretcher into the net first. Two at a time necessitates good tackle and very careful handling. When one can accomplish this difficult feat, with two trout of a pound weight each, he may consider himself a fly-fisher.

Artificial flies should represent, in size, shape, and colour, as nearly as possible the natural flies which frequent the water you are fishing.

On examining the following selection it will be found that the natural flies are chiefly represented by three colours—green, yellow, and brown; and, although Mr. Pennell was so far right, the general appearance of natural flies must also be imitated, if you would achieve success. I do not hold it necessary to follow minutely every colour, or the exact shape of the natural fly, because nine out of every ten fish caught seize the fly immediately it alights on the water, and sometimes even before it touches; therefore they cannot have time to study very particularly every detail of the lure thus suddenly presented to them, but, seeing something apparently resembling what they are feeding on, dash at it instantaneously, and find out the mistake when it is too late. What is of far greater importance than the exact representation of the natural fly is, that when the artificial falls on the water there should be nothing else occurring at the same time to scare the fish. The motion of the arm, the flash of the rod, the bungling of the casting-line, or pitching the fly on the water in an unnatural manner, all tend to make trout rise short, or not rise at all.

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In determining what colours to use it is desirable to look at both natural and artificial specimens through water from underneath, as they then appear quite different to what they do when viewed out of water. The late John Hammond, of Winchester, designer of the Hammond's Adopted and Wickham's Fancy, once showed me this through a clear-bottomed decanter.

The following list of flies will be found in the greater part of the United Kingdom, although they may be called by different names in different localities, the chief variation being in size rather than colour or shape; and it is always desirable to use artificial flies of the size of the natural ones which are to be found in the locality you are fishing:—

*Red Spinner, March Brown, Blue Dun, Alder Fly, Hofland's Fancy, Stone Fly, Grannum, Wickham's Fancy, Oak Fly, Sedge, Green Drake, Grey Drake, Coachman, Black Palmer, Red Palmer, Coch-y-bonddhu, Red Ant, July Dun, Black Gnat, White Moth.*

I am convinced that, with the above assortment of flies, there are not many days in the season but that one or other of them will do execution, and there is seldom a day that trout do not rise at some time or other in it, unless the water be too thick for them to see the fly. As I am writing for the average fly-fisher, who need not waste the time or take the trouble to make his own flies, I will not attempt to describe the manner of making them, believing that it is much better to visit a good tackle shop and get what is required; yet I think it desirable to show of what materials they should be composed, in order that he may know what are the most killing sorts, and how to distinguish them in ordering.

[22]

1. *The Red Spinner*.—Body, brown silk, ribbed with fine gold twist; tail, two fibres of a red cock's hackle; wings, of some transparent brown feather.
  2. *March Brown, or Brown Drake*.—This, like the other drakes, is a great favourite with trout in its season, which is during March and April, and it may also be used in the autumn. Body, orange-coloured silk or deep straw colour, on which wind fur from a hare's poll; legs, a honey-dun hackle; wings, to stand erect, of the top of the light or inner fibres of the feather of the hen pheasant's wing; tail, two fibres of the same feather. Rib with gold twist for your tail fly, and let the droppers be without any twist.
- The above is "Ephemera's" way of making it, but Mr. Ronalds says: "Body, fur of the hare's face ribbed over with olive silk and tied with brown silk; tail, two strands of a partridge's feather; wings, feather of the pheasant's wing; legs, a feather from the back of a partridge." [23]
3. *Blue Dun*.—Body, of the hare's ear, dark and yellow part mixed with a little yellow mohair, the whole to be spun on yellow silk; wings, from a feather of the starling's wing stained in onion dye; tail, two whiskers of a rabbit; legs, to be picked out of the dubbing at the thick part near the wings.
  4. *Alder Fly*.—Body, dark claret-coloured fur; upper wings, red fibre of the landrail's wing, or red tail feather of the partridge; lower wings, of the starling's wing feather; legs, dark red hackle; horns and tail, of fibres the colour of the legs, the horns to be shorter than the body of the fly, but the tail a little longer.
  5. *Hofland's Fancy*.—Body, reddish dark brown silk; wings, woodcock's wing; legs, red hackle; tail, two strands of a red hackle.

#### APRIL.

6. *Stone Fly*.—Body, fur from hare's ear mixed with yellow worsted and spun on yellow silk; tail, two strands of partridge feather; wings, pheasant's quill feather from wings; legs, greenish brown hackle.
7. *Grannum, or Green-Tail*.—"Ephemera" says: "The grannum is a four-winged fly, and as it swims down the water its wings lie flat on the back. It has a small bunch of eggs of a green colour at the tail end of the body, which gives it the name of the green-tail fly. As soon as it alights on the water it drops its eggs." It is dressed as follows:—  
Body, fur of hare's face left rough and spun on brown silk. A little green floss silk may be worked in at the tail, to represent the bunch of eggs there. Wings, feather from that of the partridge, and made very full; legs, a pale ginger hen's hackle. Made buzz with a feather from the back of a partridge's neck, wound upon the above body. [24]
8. *Wickham's Fancy*.—Wings, light starling; body, flat gold ribbed with fine gold wire; hackle and whisk, bright red gamecock. This is one of the best general flies, and is a standing favourite in the south of England; and I have it on the authority of the late John Hammond that he made it under the direction of Dr. Wickham, of Winchester—hence its name.

#### MAY AND JUNE.

9. *Oak Fly, or Down-looker*.—It is generally found on the trunks of oak trees by the river-side, with its head pointing downwards, and is a very useful fly.  
"Ephemera" recommends it to be dressed as follows: "Body, yellow mohair, ribbed regularly with dark brown silk; legs, a honey dun hackle wound thrice under the wings, which are to lie flat and short, and to be made of the wing feather of a young partridge or hen pheasant. To be tipped with pale gold twist."
10. *Sedge*.—Wings, wing of landrail; body, white floss silk ribbed with silver wire; hackle, ginger cock's hackle down the body.
11. *The May-fly, or Green Drake*, is not only a very beautiful fly, but one of the most captivating that is used, and, as I have stated elsewhere, it requires special manipulation. On a windy dull day, in the middle of the May-fly season, when there are not many natural flies out, it will very soon fill the basket, particularly if the water is turbulent. "Ephemera" says: "This famous fly is the opprobrium of fly-makers. Try how they will they cannot, in my opinion, imitate it well. The wings are their greatest foil. In making the body they succeed tolerably well. Still, the best imitation is defective, and, except upon rare occasions, the artificial May-fly is not a deadly bait." My experience has been the very contrary of this. Whether it is from the fly-tiers having succeeded in imitating the natural fly since "Ephemera" wrote, or not, I do not know, but I have before me two specimens tied by Mrs. Ogden that I make no doubt would bring me ten or a dozen brace of trout on a good day in the season. May-flies are often made with cork bodies, but I am not partial to them, for the same objection which applies generally to floating flies, viz.: that trout find they have something hard and unnatural in their mouths, and immediately reject it. On a dry bright day use it as a dry fly, but on a very wet or windy day fish with it a few inches [25]

under the surface, and, as Walton says, you will have "store of trouts." On one occasion last season I caught ten brace of trout with one May-fly obtained of Messrs. Alfred and Son, and have it by me now, but there is not a vestige of wing left, all having been bitten off. Mr. Ronalds recommends it to be dressed as follows: "Body, the middle part of a pale straw-coloured floss silk, ribbed with silver twist; extremities (head and tail), brown peacock's harl, tied with light brown silk thread; tail, three rabbit's whiskers; wings and legs, made buzz with a mottled feather of the mallard, stained olive." Instead of the bodies being made of straw-coloured silk they are now frequently made of strips of wheat straw. [26]

12. *Grey Drake*.—This is said to be a metamorphosis of the green drake, or female changing to a male. Dress it thus: Body, the middle part of white floss silk, ribbed over neatly with silver twist; extremities, brown peacock's harl; wings and legs made buzz with a mottled feather of the mallard, stained a faint purple; legs, three rabbit's whiskers.

13. *The Coachman*.—Body, peacock's harl, full and short; wings, fibres of any small white feather; legs, a turn or two of a red hackle. Mr. Blaine remarks: "Throughout the summer months, as an early evening fly, and until twilight, it proves most valuable in the midland counties, and the bordering ones within eighty miles of London. On the Colne, and throughout its course, in the Hampshire, Dorsetshire, and Devonshire waters, where we have been for many years in the habit of using it, in our opinion there is no fly to at all equal it."

14. *Black Palmer*.—Body, black ostrich harl, ribbed with gold twist, black cock's hackle wound over the whole.

15. *Red Palmer*.—Body, dark red-coloured mohair, with a richly-tinted red fur intermixed, to be ribbed with gold or silver twist; legs, a blood-red cock's hackle. Or, body, a peacock harl with a red cock's hackle wrapped over it, and tied with dark brown silk thread.

I have used the Red Palmer in all weathers and seasons for nearly fifty years, and believe it to be the best general fly there is, although, strictly speaking, not a fly, but an imitation of the caterpillar, or larva of the tiger moth. Having had such success with it I have adopted its name as my *nom de plume*, and as the title of this little book. [27]

#### JULY.

16. *Coch-y-bonddhu*.—Body, black ostrich harl, twisted with peacock's harl, and made with red silk thread; the wings and legs made buzz with a dark furnace hackle.

17. *Red Ant*.—Body, copper coloured peacock's harl, full near the wings and tail; wings, a lark's wing feather; legs, red cock's hackle.

18. *July Dun*.—Body, mole's fur and pale yellow mohair mixed, and spun on yellow silk; wings, dark part of a feather from the starling's wing, stained dark in strong onion dye; legs, dark dun hackle; tail, the two flies of the hackle.

#### AUGUST.

19. *Black Gnat*.—Body, one of the smallest feathers of the green plover's top-knot, or of a black harl, to be dressed short; wings, the darkest fibres of an old starling's wing feather.

20. *White Moth*.—Wings, white pigeon's feather; body, white crewel; legs, white hen's hackle.

Although I have classified these flies under the different months, it does not follow by any means that they will kill only in the months named; on the contrary, some of them may be used month after month, particularly the hackle flies, which may be used almost through the season.

I exhibited samples of the above kinds in my lecture to the Gresham and Islington Angling Societies, showing the relative sizes and colours. These samples were selected from the stock of Messrs. Alfred and Son, of Moorgate Street, where I generally obtain what I require, and find their flies are to be depended on. As with gut, so with flies, it is false economy to buy the cheapest. It requires a deal of patience at times before you can hook a fish; and, after you have been so fortunate, it is terribly annoying to find the gut draw, and leave the fly in its mouth. To guard against this, *burn all your old flies at the end of the season*, except one or two of a sort for patterns, and this is another reason why you should not have a heavy stock; and take care, in buying your new stock at the spring of the year, that you get new, and not those of the previous year. [28]

In tying gut to the hook, a little varnish generally touches the gut, and at this most critical point the varnish hardens the gut and causes it to snap. This, of course, does not occur with eyed hooks, but even with them it is better to have new flies than old, as the colours are fresher and the tying more secure.

Messrs. Ogden and Scotford, the well-known firm of Cheltenham, have lately sent me

a few samples of their flies, tied by Mrs. Ogden, who has long enjoyed a very high reputation for her tying. They are beautifully made, and I have no doubt will prove good killers; but, as the season is now over, have had no opportunity of trying them.

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## CHAPTER VI.

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### UP OR DOWN STREAM.

So much for the tackle to be used in fly-fishing, and, being thus provided, in what way should the tyro go to work? The first point to be considered is, Should he fish up stream or down? Old Father Izaak says, "fish down stream," but he was not much of a fly-fisher, and I cannot help thinking that if he had lived in the present day he would have seen fit to alter his opinion in this respect. Fish, like human beings, have advanced in education since that time, and, if you want to catch a trout, get behind him. I caught a large trout about eight years ago in clear smooth water, where I did not much expect to catch one, and on examining him I found that he had only one eye, and I had got on the blind side and pitched over him. The advantages of fishing up stream appear to me so great that I can hardly believe any good fly-fisher can hold a contrary opinion; but, lest I should seem prejudiced, I will give some reasons for my faith. The trout always lies with its head up stream, waiting for the food to come down, and if you approach it from the rear you are not so likely to be seen as when approaching it face to face. Again, the natural fly floats down stream, and by throwing up and letting the artificial float down you imitate the motion of the natural fly, taking care to raise the point of the rod as the fly approaches you, so as not to have any slack line out, for if you have, you cannot strike properly. Another reason is, that if while fishing *up* a trout rises, when you strike you will in all probability hook it in the side of the mouth as it turns; but when fishing *down*, if you strike, the motion tends to draw the fly out of the fish's mouth, and he does not lose much time in getting rid of it if found not to his taste, and then

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"The trout within yon wimplin burn  
Glides swift, a silver dart,  
And, safe beneath the shady thorn,  
Defies the angler's art."

Another important matter to consider is the direction of the wind. Always, if you can, fish with the wind behind you, or, at all events, so that you can throw across it; but, if you must make a choice of evils, choose the lesser, and fish *up* stream and *against* the wind, rather than *down* stream and *with* the wind. In considering which side of the river to fish, do not, if you can help it, fish from that side whence the sun would cast your shadow on the water, as nothing is more alarming to trout. It is impossible, in a short treatise like the present, to give such instruction in throwing the fly as will make the tyro an adept. It is desirable to practise throwing with both the right and left sweep, as by changing from one to the other you avoid getting into the bad habit of twisting the rod, which would assuredly warp and spoil it; and by practising short throws with the left hand you will be able to give the right arm a few minutes' rest occasionally, a great relief in a long day's fishing.

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My advice is, to commence with a short line, and when you find that you can deliver the line so as to be prepared to hook a fish as soon as the fly touches the water, gradually increase the length, taking care never to attempt to throw more than you can send out clean and straight, without disturbing the water. But more can be learnt in this respect by an hour's practice with an old hand, than by any amount of theory. The great points are to keep well out of sight, and to imitate the descent of the natural fly on the water, which in the case of the smaller flies is as soft and gentle as a piece of thistle-down; but with the larger ones, such as the drakes and moths, whose bodies are heavy in proportion to the size of their wings, compared with other flies, let them fall with a slight spat on the water, causing a ring to take place on the surface, and letting the fish know it is there.

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## CHAPTER VII.

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### STRIKING AND PLAYING.

Considerable discussion has taken place in the angling papers from time to time as to the proper time for striking a fish; and three or four years since some extraordinary calculations were made with regard to the period that should elapse before striking, and for the motion from the arm to reach the hook. My opinion, as expressed in the "Angler's Journal" at that time, and lately repeated in "Fishing," is as follows: "As soon as you become aware, either by sight, sound, or feeling, that a fish has risen,

put the hook in him." But you must be careful not to strike too hard, or you will either tear the hook out, or snap the gut, and thus lose the fish. It should only be a slight twitch, given from the wrist, as quick as thought, just enough to drive the hook in beyond the barb, but not enough to tear the flesh out. I have often amused myself by feeding trout, and have noticed that, after they have taken several pieces, say of bread or paste, if I threw in something like it in appearance, such, for instance, as a small white stone, they would seize it, and, finding the substance different, instantly blow it out again. It is reasonable to assume that they would do the same with an artificial fly, particularly those having cork bodies; therefore you cannot strike too quickly. But, as this is a branch of the subject on which great differences of opinion exist, I will here quote some eminent angling authorities in support of my views.

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*Francis Francis* says: "If a fish rises, a slight upward turn of the wrist will be sufficient to fix the hook. As for giving any direct rules when to strike, they would be of little avail, as sometimes fish rise quickly, sometimes with more circumspection, and sometimes altogether falsely." Next, *Cummins*: "When a trout takes your fly do not strike too hard; more fish are lost by anglers striking when using small flies than are secured by such means. The line tightened is sufficient in most cases, particularly in fishing streams." In "Fishing" of March 31st last I say: "I agree that in rapid stream fishing there is no necessity for striking." *Ephemera* also advises that, "The moment you see, and then feel, a rise, strike gently from the wrist." *Blaine* also writes to the same effect. *Stewart*, in the "Practical Angler," has the following passage: "A difference of opinion exists as to whether trout should be struck on rising; but, in common with the majority of anglers, we advocate immediate striking. When a trout takes a fly it shuts its mouth, and if the angler strikes then he is almost sure to bring the hook into contact with the closed jaws. We have frequently watched the motions of trout on taking a fly, and when left to do with it as they chose, they very quickly expelled it from their mouths with considerable force; and we think that, if the angler strikes, even when the trout's mouth is open, he will have a much better chance than by leaving it to hook itself. A trout on seizing an artificial fly is almost instantaneously aware that it is a counterfeit, and never attempts to swallow it; very frequently letting it go before the angler has time to strike, so that it is of the utmost importance to strike immediately, and this is the reason why a quick eye and a ready hand are considered the most necessary qualifications for a fly-fisher." *Foster*, in the "Scientific Angler" says: "The action requisite is a short quick wrist-motion, commenced sharply but ended almost instantly and abruptly, like a quick movement of the hand in bringing a foil in fencing from *tierce* to *carte*." It is impossible to strike too quick, but it is quite possible to strike too hard.

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All the above opinions are based on the supposition that a fish *has risen*. It is not very often that a trout is seen in the act of rising, but should it be, of course sufficient time must be given for it to reach the fly, then strike at once. When you find that you have hooked your fish, be prepared for its rush, and then comes the time when all your patience, experience, and lightness of hand, are called into requisition. Let the fish have its head a little at first, taking care to steer it clear of weeds, bushes, and sunken obstacles in the water, and then give it a slight pressure from the rod, in addition to the friction of the line which it is dragging through the water; and if you can get it down stream, so as not to disturb the fish above, so much the better. When you have got it down stream, and under command, do not be in too great a hurry to land it, for sometimes when you think it is spent it will make a sudden dart, and you lose it. Give it plenty of time to tire itself out, then put the landing net quietly into the water, slip it under the fish, and lift it out. Then put the thumb of your right hand into its mouth, with the fingers at the back of its head, and press the upper jaw back until its spine is broken. This is far better than letting the fish flop about and discolour itself in the creel.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

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### WHEN TO GO FISHING.

Having explained the apparatus necessary for catching trout, the next part of my subject appears to be the time *when* to go fishing, and one important point is the weather. Notwithstanding what some writers have said about catching trout in an east wind, I do not believe in it. With a wind from the South, West, or South-west, and a dull or showery day, one may fairly expect success; but to go out on a bright clear day, with wind from the North or East, is, in my opinion, neither pleasant nor profitable. I have done it many times when I had less experience, though not more enthusiasm, than at present, but I seldom do it now. An old song says:

"A Southerly wind and a cloudy sky  
Proclaim a hunting morning;"

and they also tell the fly-fisher when to be off to the river. I should not be doing

justice to this part of my subject if I were not to allude to the fly-fisher's carnival, the May-fly season. From about the last week in May till the middle of June is the time above all others to catch trout. I have frequently caught five or six brace in a couple of hours during this short season; but as soon as it is over I put away the rod for a few days, for, the fish being fairly glutted with the natural fly, do not care much for the artificial after the former is gone, although it will sometimes happen that on a rough, dull day, you can have good sport for a week or ten days afterwards.

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The length of the May-fly season depends greatly on the weather. It generally lasts about three weeks; but the present season (1888) has been exceptionally wet and cold, and the flies were only hatched at long and irregular intervals, owing to the absence of sun. Consequently the season extended from the second or third day of June till the second week of July. On the 11th of June last I was fishing with a May-fly and a small Soldier-palmer for drop, my usual custom, and was struck by the difference of the manner in which fish rose at the two flies. The rise at the May-fly was bold and decisive, but without undue haste, whilst that at the Palmer was a sudden swish, without giving time to strike. I can only account for this by the circumstance that the natural May-fly is longer on the water than the Palmer before it gets water-logged and sinks, and the fish therefore know that they can take their time about it. The stream was very difficult to fish, and I lost a great many fish as well as flies from getting entangled in the bushes; nevertheless I succeeded in landing twelve brace of trout, besides some returned.

Next, as to the time of day. The most preferable times are from about 8 a.m. till noon, and after 4 p.m. till midnight. In many trout clubs there is a rule prohibiting fishing after half-past nine; but, if you are not restricted in that respect, you will find that the largest fish are taken from sunset till ten or eleven o'clock. The only justification for late fishing is that the very large trout, which often attain their great size from preying on their own species, then come out of their hiding-places and chase the small fry up and down the shallows. These cannibalistic old gentlemen, who do more harm than good in a trout stream, do not usually rise at a fly, and can only be caught with a live bait or worm, or by night fishing with a sunk fly, and the end justifies the means. White or brown moths are the favourites. I had some moths made specially large, on strong gut, for late fishing, but found it advisable to use a short line and only one fly, and to get the fish into the landing-net as soon as possible, for it is awkward work to land a big fish after dark, particularly if you are hampered with weeds or bushes.

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## CHAPTER IX.

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### HABITS OF TROUT.

A knowledge of the habits of trout is very essential, and this knowledge can only be acquired by careful observation. The largest fish are generally to be found where they can obtain the best supply of food—such points as just below sharp bends of the stream, behind large stones or other obstructions, at the head or tail of deep pools, and on the margin of swift currents, or under overhanging banks; and, if you take a good fish at any particular spot, you will probably find, a day or two afterwards, that the next best fish in that locality has taken the place of the one you captured. It has often occurred to me that there are several reasons why brook trout do not thrive in the lower part of rivers communicating with the sea. One thing is, to my mind, very certain—they do not feel at home in salt, or even brackish, water, and do not seek it of their own accord. Having lived many years within sight of a point where a fresh water stream flows into salt water, I have had perhaps exceptional opportunities of observing them, and forming an opinion on the subject; and, although I have lately seen an apparently well-supported contrary opinion strongly expressed, I am not yet convinced, thinking that probably some error may have crept in as to the kind of fish, or some disturbing cause taken place in the state of the water. Occasionally they get washed down by floods, or by the breaking away or uplifting of hatches or gates; but, as soon as the rush of water subsides, they begin to work their way up again, and if there is an obstacle to their ascending, such as a weir or mill, they are sure to be found close up to it, having got as far as they can. They always seem prompted by instinct to work upwards into shallow rapid water, where the bottom is gravelly, and, I believe, for the following reasons: They can there deposit and cover up their ova, and, when hatched, the young fry can get protection among it from their numerous enemies in their early days; and, although food may be plentiful in muddy sluggish streams near salt water, it is not of the kind that trout delight in. Larva, flies, and minnows abound in clear bright streams, and there the trout can clean themselves from their parasites, and, with healthy bodies and abundance of the food they enjoy, come into condition early, and become lusty and strong.

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In the breeding time they, like many other animals, lose their usual caution and shyness, and when performing their natural functions seem to take no notice of what

is passing around them; and thus very many of the best fish are captured in shallow water, and the streams almost depopulated. The greatest vigilance should be exercised in the spawning time to prevent poachers, both human and others, from preying upon them. In addition to men, swans, ducks, otters, herons, pike, perch, &c., &c., all prey on the luckless trout and its ova and fry, and the wonder is that the stock is so well maintained as it is. Otters and herons in particular appreciate this dainty, and either of them will travel across country many miles to get to a well-stocked trout stream. So strong is the instinct of the trout to get into shallow streams to deposit their spawn, that they will leap waterfalls several feet in height, or wriggle up over gravel where there is not half enough water to cover them, and where it is frequently impossible for them to get back again, and there they are often destroyed.

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## CHAPTER X.

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### WHERE TO GO FISHING.

Having spoken of the *how* and *when*, next comes the *where*; and under this head I feel bound, in the interests of friends, not to describe, other than in very general terms, the localities where good fishing is to be had. Walton, from frequently visiting Winchester, where his remains lie, and where a statue of him has lately been erected by anglers, (the movement for which I had the honour of starting), was doubtless well acquainted with Hampshire—or, as he quaintly calls it, "Hantshire,"—which, he says, "exceeds all England for its swift, shallow, clear, pleasant brooks, and store of trouts." In his will he mentions part of his books as being at Droxford (about eleven miles from Winchester), where it is presumed he resided occasionally. I know no better trout stream than that in this locality. Many a basket of goodly trout have I had from it in days gone by. It was near here that I caught the two large trout at one time, before alluded to.

I suppose at the present time the Avon, the Test, and the Itchen are unsurpassed in the United Kingdom. All the north, or what is commonly called the *upper*, part of Hampshire, forms part of the south-western edge of the basin of the Thames, and is drained into it by the Wey, the Enborn, and the Blackwater. The district east of Alton and north of the South Downs is drained by the Rother, which is a tributary of the river Arun, and discharges into the English Channel, near Arundel, in Sussex. In all these rivers, springing out of the chalk hills, there is good trout fishing, but not equal to that on the south side of the South Downs, where the country, sloping away to the southward and westward, either drains into the Solent or the river Avon; and it is to these southern rivers and streams that Walton more particularly alluded. The Test, or Anton, rises in the neighbourhood of Andover and Whitchurch, and falls into the Southampton Water to the westward of the town of Southampton, while the Itchen, rising near Alresford, and passing Winchester and Bishopstoke, discharges into Southampton Water to the eastward of the town. The Avon, entering Hampshire from Wiltshire, and passing Fordingbridge and Ringwood, discharges into Christchurch Bay, where the Stour also empties itself. There are also several smaller streams rising south of the hills which stretch from Winchester to Petersfield, and discharge themselves into the Solent. All these streams are well stocked with trout, and some of them contain roach, perch, pike, and grayling, and the larger ones also salmon. If greater facilities were given to salmon to ascend they would doubtless do so, as they are occasionally caught in stake nets while working their way along the south coast, evidently in search of rivers, up which to ascend for the purpose of spawning. But the river proprietors do not provide means for the salmon to go upwards, it being generally considered that salmon and trout do not thrive well together, and that if the breeding of salmon was encouraged it would be at the expense of the trout fisheries.

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Nearly all these Hampshire rivers are strictly preserved, and some of those in the vicinity of Andover, Stockbridge, Houghton, and Winchester are in the hands of first-class clubs, the subscriptions to which are high, and access difficult. Still, there are a few pieces of free water at Winchester, Bishopstoke, and Romsey; and Mr. Currell and Mr. Chalkley, both of Winchester, rent considerable portions of the river there, and issue season and day tickets. At Bishopstoke, where there is some splendid trout and grayling fishing, season and day tickets are now being issued by the proprietor of a large estate, who has hitherto preserved very highly, and would scarcely allow his own friends to fish; and several instances have come to my knowledge lately where landed proprietors, only able to obtain a reduced income from their farms, have been glad to supplement it by making a few pounds annually out of their fishing. So that, to the angler as well as the land owner, agricultural distress is not an unmitigated evil. And if more attention was paid to the stocking and preserving of rivers, the incomes of landed proprietors might be considerably increased, and a very important addition made to the food of the country. The Avon, at Ringwood, in the New Forest, about 100 miles S.W. of London, has some good salmon, trout and grayling fishing, and also very fine roach and perch. Day tickets can be obtained of



the hotel keepers. The Beaulieu river, the tidal portion of which is, of course, free, is noted, not only for its coarse fish, but also for quantities of sea-trout that frequent it in the autumn months.

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Fishermen have increased so rapidly in the last few years that those who have fishing rights take care of them, and where one could formerly go unchallenged, he now has to ask permission for a day, and very often may consider himself lucky if he gets it. There are now about 180 angling societies in and around London, consisting of nearly 5,000 members, besides a large number of anglers who do not belong to any society; consequently fish have been becoming more and more scarce year after year, and the increase of population and pollution of rivers have also tended to drive them away. But, in order to supply to some extent the deficiency, artificial breeding has become very general. The National Piscicultural Society breed and distribute immense numbers of young trout every year. Greater efforts are also being made than formerly to prevent poaching, the destruction of undersized fish, and taking them when out of season; therefore, the prospects of anglers are beginning to look brighter.

In describing the *where* to go fishing, I have alluded more particularly to Hampshire, not only because it is the best part of England for trout, but because it also happens to be the county with which I am best acquainted.

Throughout the whole of the county, fishing for trout with anything but an artificial fly is considered unsportsmanlike, and is strictly prohibited in all the clubs.

Still, there are many other localities where, if the angler does not mind going farther afield, good trout fishing can be obtained. For instance, Scotland and Wales, where, from the hilly conformation of the country, the streams are rapid and therefore suitable for trout; Devonshire, where the trout are small, but very numerous; the neighbourhood of the Peak, in Derbyshire, than which there is none much better; the upper portions of the Thames and Lea and their tributaries—all these are worth the fly-fisher's attention, and many of them will repay him for the time and trouble spent in visiting them.

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## CHAPTER XI.

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### CURIOUS CAPTURES.

When fishing in Hampshire some ten or twelve years ago, a moorhen came out of some bushes near me and rushed down the brook, with its feet just trailing along on the surface. As it was going over my line I gave a twitch and hooked it in the under part of the foot, where the skin is as tough as leather. Then I had a lively time for about twenty minutes, up and down, in and out; but my tackle was good, and I handled the rod carefully, till at length the bird was pretty well tired, and got in among some bushes, and a friend who was with me went into the water and got it into the landing-net. I preserved it and had it mounted.

On another occasion I saw a rat swimming across the stream, and pitched my fly just beyond him and hooked him firmly. Of course he dived, but could not get away from me, and at last came ashore into the long grass where I was standing. It was nearly dark and I could not see him, but presently found he had got the line entangled round my legs. I threw the rod down, and stamped about, thinking to tread on him, but suppose I trod on the gut, for he got away with it. When I picked up my rod I found I had stamped on it also and broken it; therefore I determined to let the next rat alone.

Another time I had been fishing late, with a white moth, and, on leaving off, twisted the gut and fly round my hat. Getting through a hedge the gut caught in a bramble, and the fly went into my scalp, and the more I pulled the worse it was. The same friend was with me, and helped me out of it. We then went to a doctor, who snipped away the hair and cut the hook out.

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It is not very often that an eel is taken with a fly, but I was once fishing with a Palmer, and, being tired, very carelessly laid my rod down with the fly in the water, which, of course, sank to the bottom. I strolled about, and coming back picked up the rod, and found an eel attached, which I landed.

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## CHAPTER XII.

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### CONCLUSION.

Finally, fly-fishing may be considered one of the best of sports, because it can be followed late in life. Most devotees of sport, when the nerves become shaky and the

eyes grow dim, must content themselves with thinking or talking of what they did in their youth. But it is not so with the fly-fisher. He can still throw a fly and play a trout, better perhaps than in his youth, because of his greater experience; and, when in the down-hill of life he looks back on the hopes and anticipations of his boyhood days, it must be gratifying to feel that the times spent among the beauties of nature in exercising the angler's art have been the most enjoyable parts of his life, and that he is none the worse man for having obeyed the precepts and followed the example of our grand old past master, Izaak Walton.

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## APPENDIX.

[51]

It is doubtful whether the gratification of taking fish is equal to that which results from the recital of the achievement, and describing to a sympathetic audience the method and tackle by which the prey has been ensnared. Walton and his friends, after a long day, loved to meet at some village alehouse, and fight their battles o'er again; and in the present day one of the most enjoyable parts of the evening spent at an Angling Society is when the chairman asks, "Has any one been fishing?" and the members recount their piscatorial experiences since the last meeting. Any one unaccustomed to such meetings would be surprised at the knowledge of rivers, the country, the habits, and the haunts of particular kinds of fish and insects, the various sorts of baits and tackle to be used, and all the technical information which the London angler displays on such occasions; and this broader view of nature and life is not the least of the benefits derived from following the piscatorial art.

The London clubs number about 200, with upwards of 5,000 members; and considering that a very large number of anglers do not belong to any club, it will be readily understood that the angling fraternity form a considerable part of the community, whose great aim is to enjoy themselves in a rational and innocent manner, away from the clank of machinery, the roar of street traffic, and the stifling atmosphere of a great city; and every assistance and encouragement should be given them to do so—and they are progressing. Many of them practice fly-fishing; and if trout are not to be got, there are chub, dace, and bleak, and occasionally a roach, to reward them for their skill. The one great difficulty is where to get good fishing, and this is to some extent overcome by the co-operation of anglers, through their clubs and associations, who not only rent waters for their members, but make arrangements with the railway companies to take them into the country and back at greatly reduced fares. The preserving and re-stocking of waters also form an important part of the business of angling clubs. Experience has taught them that it is of very little use to turn in fry before they are old enough to take care of themselves, but that it is more satisfactory, and ultimately more economical to purchase yearling fish in the first place. These various matters have been so well attended to, that, notwithstanding the great increase in the number of anglers, access to well-stocked rivers is more easy of attainment now than it was a few years ago.

[52]

Of course, every care should be taken to prevent poaching, to keep down predaceous fish, and prevent undersized and out-of-season fish from being taken; but with these precautions, if the river is naturally adapted for the kind of fish required, there should be no difficulty.

In the case of trout, the quantity, quality, and size will very much depend on the quantity and kind of food to be obtained. There should be plenty of weeds, sedge, flags, &c., not only for shelter, but they are the natural breeding places of insects and crustacea, in which trout delight, and if the river is overhung with trees and bushes it not only adds to the security of the fish, but harbours flies and other insects which drop off into the water.

### WET v. DRY.

The difference between wet and dry fly-fishing is this: the wet fly is worked gently along some few inches beneath the surface until a fish is found, which, when they are scarce, or not rising, may be a tedious process, and often the first intimation is a sudden tug without any rise, which should be immediately answered by as sudden a twitch from the wrist.

The dry-fly fisherman walks quietly along by the side of the stream, and if he sees a trout rising, drops his fly lightly a little above it, and preferably also a little on one side, and lets it float down stream on the surface to the fish, gently raising the point of his rod in the meantime. In case no fish are rising, he carefully casts to the most likely-looking spots, and particularly under the bank on which he is standing.

[53]

In nine cases out of ten, a trout, if it rises at all, takes the dry fly immediately it touches the water; therefore, one should learn to cast clean and straight, without any slack line.

### TACKLE.

There is a great difference of opinion among anglers as to the amount of pliancy a fly-rod ought to possess. From the old-fashioned, heavy, stiff rod, we have gone to the other extreme, and had cane rods so light and whippy as to be entirely useless on a windy day; and now we have what is, in my opinion, a somewhat sensible reaction, and are coming back to a greenheart from ten to twelve feet long, of medium substance and pliability.

Such a rod, with an Acme line suited to it, and the whole adapted to the height and strength of the angler, ought to make good casting. Long casting may be showy, but in practice it is far better to cast lightly and accurately, and this tends to fill the basket much more than being able to get out an extra length. One piece of advice may be relied on: never part with a good rod after you have become accustomed to it. It is not only the pleasurable associations connected with it, but the confidence you have in it, and, through it, in yourself, enables you to kill fish with it.

With care, it may be made to last a lifetime. I used, the other day, at the International

Tournament, a greenheart that I have used almost exclusively for about twelve years, and with which I have killed many hundred brace of trout. If, on the occasion referred to, I had used an Ogden and Scotford's *multum in parvo*, I believe I should have thrown two yards farther.

#### FLIES.

[54]

I see no reason to alter the list given in the first edition, indeed, subsequent experience has tended to confirm my opinion expressed therein.

Many old anglers say it is of no use in the May-fly season to try any other fly. I generally use a May-fly as stretcher, and a small Soldier-palmer as drop, and out of seventeen-and-a-half brace of trout caught last Whitsuntide in two half-days, one-third of them were caught on the Palmer. Others say it is useless to try a May-fly, except when the natural fly is out; but this is also subject to modification.

There have been two or three well-authenticated cases reported in the sporting journals lately, of fish having been killed some weeks before and after the season on *Ephemera vulgata*. Indeed, there has been seen in Ireland this autumn a *second* very strong rise of May-fly.

In the first edition I speak of the Grey-drake thus:—"This is said to be a metamorphosis of the green drake, or female, changing to a male." The passage should have read thus:—"This is *said by some writers* to be," &c.

I had not the slightest intention of giving that as a fact, or as my own opinion, knowing otherwise.

Flies tied on eyed hooks with cocked or upright wings, in imitation of the natural fly when floating down a stream, are coming into use more and more, and apparently will supersede those tied on gut, and with flat wings.

#### WHEN TO GO FISHING.

A century ago it was not possible to get forecasts of the weather from the daily papers, and the death of Admiral Fitzroy in middle life, and in the midst of his scientific discoveries, was a great blow to the advancement of this branch of science. But with greater facilities for conveying intelligence round the whole globe, it could not but happen that more accurate information of air currents should be sent forward to the countries likely to be affected by them.

[55]

The following is from the "Art of Angling," published in 1810:—"It is the best fishing in a river somewhat disturbed by rain, or on a cloudy day when the waters are moved with a gentle breeze; the south and west winds are the best, and if the wind blows high, yet not so but that you may conveniently guide your tackle, then fishes will rise in the still deeps; but if there is little wind stirring, the best angling is in swift streams.

"In casting your line, do it always before you, and in such a manner that the fly may fall first on the water. When you throw your line, wave the rod in a small circumference round your head, and never make a return of it before the line has had its full scope, or the fly will snap off.

"Although when you angle the day is cloudy and windy, and the water thick, you must keep the fly in continual motion, otherwise the fishes will discern the deceit.

"... Upon the curling surface let it glide  
With nat'ral motion from your hand suppli'd;  
Against the stream now let it gently play,  
Now in the rapid eddy float away.'

"When fishes rise at the fly very often, and yet never take it, you may conclude that it is not what they like, therefore change it for the one they do."

#### PLAYING A FISH.

"... Should you lure  
From his dark haunt, beneath the tangled roots  
Of pendent trees, the monarch of the brook,  
Behoves you then to ply your finest art;  
Long time he, following cautious, scans the fly,  
And oft attempts to seize it, but as oft  
The dimpled water speaks his jealous fear:  
At last, while haply o'er the shaded sun  
Passes a cloud, he desperate takes the death  
With sullen plunge: at once he darts along,  
Deep struck, and runs out all the lengthen'd line,  
Then seeks the farthest ooze, the sheltering weed,  
The cavern'd bank, his own secure abode;  
And flies aloft, and flounces round the pool,  
Indignant of the guile. With yielding hand,  
That feels him still, yet to his furious course  
Gives way, you, now retiring, following now  
Across the stream, exhaust his idle rage,  
Till floating broad upon his breathless side,  
And to his fate abandon'd, to the shore  
You gaily drag your unresisting prize."

[56]

#### CASTING.

There are several kinds of casts to be used, for the *ordinary* casts will be of little avail under some circumstances. To make the ordinary cast, begin with a short line, and by the action of the wrist and forearm propel it out in front of you, so that when it is extended to the full length, the fly will be two or three feet above the surface, on which it should fall by its own weight. In

repeating the cast raise the point of the rod slowly, and bring it back over your right shoulder, so that the line shall describe the shape of a horse-shoe behind you; then throw it forward again in the same manner as before; keep casting in this way until you can throw a tolerable length, say, twelve or fourteen yards, always striving more for accuracy and delicacy than length.

Sometimes a fish may be seen rising which is out of reach of the ordinary cast. In such case it will be necessary to adopt what is called the *augmented* cast.

Throw out as much line as you can in the ordinary way, then with the forefinger of the right-hand press the line against the rod, draw two or three yards off the reel with the left hand; bring back the line and throw it forward again, and just before it reaches its fullest extent remove your finger, and the impetus of the line will carry out the two or three yards taken off the reel.

[57]

The *spey* throw is used for a similar purpose. If you are fishing a large river or lake with a strong wind behind you, when the line is extended to its utmost limit by the ordinary cast, whisk the fly off the water by an upward and backward movement of the hand; but deliver it forward again, just as the last of the reel line is leaving the surface, by a rapid downward cut with the upper portion of the rod. It is possible in this way to get out four or five yards more line than by the ordinary cast.

When trees or bushes overhang the water the *side* cast is sometimes useful. Let out a short line, and wave the rod from side to side horizontally, until the line follows the motion of the rod, then pull a yard or two off the reel and swish it on to the water. The best way to get it off again is to reel in.

It will occasionally happen that when trees are overhanging there is not room on either side to use the side cast. The *underhand* cast here comes in.

Take the fly between the finger and thumb of the left hand, and by giving the rod a forward and upward motion, drop the fly on to the water in front of you.

When high bushes stand between you and the river the *steeple* cast is handy. By the action of the rod work the line up perpendicularly above your head, then pitch it down over the bushes on to the water.

These special casts are only used in special circumstances requiring them, but they are often instrumental in producing big fish from otherwise inaccessible spots, and it is in such spots that the big fish generally lie.

#### ANGLING CLUBS.

In conclusion, I would recommend all anglers, whether living in London or the provinces, to join a good club: they there meet kindred spirits, and form friendships and connections, that make life pleasant.

[58]

Many of these clubs rent waters for the use of their members, which would not be within the reach of individuals.

Scientific papers on the art are occasionally read, and discussions based on them; lectures and smoking concerts are often added to the programme; some of them possess extensive circulating libraries accessible to their members only, while most of their rooms are hung with specimen fish, portraits of prominent anglers, aquatic birds, flies, &c. In winter evenings, when angling is out of the question, the interest in the sport is thus kept up, and plans for the coming season formed, tackle compared, and various other matters arranged.

Most of the London clubs admit country members at a lower rate of subscription than ordinary members, and thus benefits accrue on both sides. Country members, when in town, can obtain all the advantages enumerated, and they have occasionally the opportunity of procuring the town member a day's fishing "far from the madding crowd."

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Contribution to a controversy *re* Lines, in the *Fishing Gazette*, March 27th, 1886.

See also recommendations of the ACME in *Land and Water*, August 28th, 1888; *Bell's Life*, September 18th, 1885; *Fishing Gazette*, September 19th, 1885; *Field*, August 16th, 1884; and the leading journals of Russia, Austria, the U.S.A., Finland, &c.

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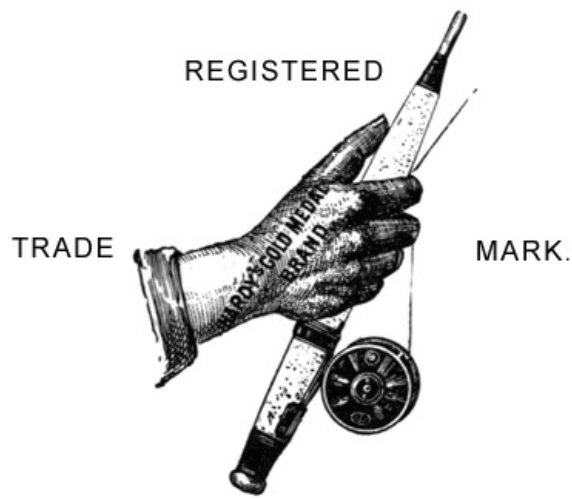
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---

Dear Sir,—I promised to let you know how those small eyed snecks did among heavy fish. I am glad to find them exceeding good; so far I have had no accidents with them, and I had some very heavy fish. Amongst others, I have killed during the last four days six grayling weighing 15lb., the heaviest brace going a trifle over 5¾lb. All these fish have been killed on your cobweb gut, which is the best I ever had—a perfect marvel of strength and fineness combined. Most of my fish have succumbed to the tiny Orange Tags I had from you a fortnight ago, though the largest fish, a three-pounder, came home on a light Olive. The Orange Tag is, however, about the best grayling fly it is possible to use on a sunny day, and it will, in bright weather, frequently do execution with trout. I hooked three good fish with it in less than ten minutes one day last week.

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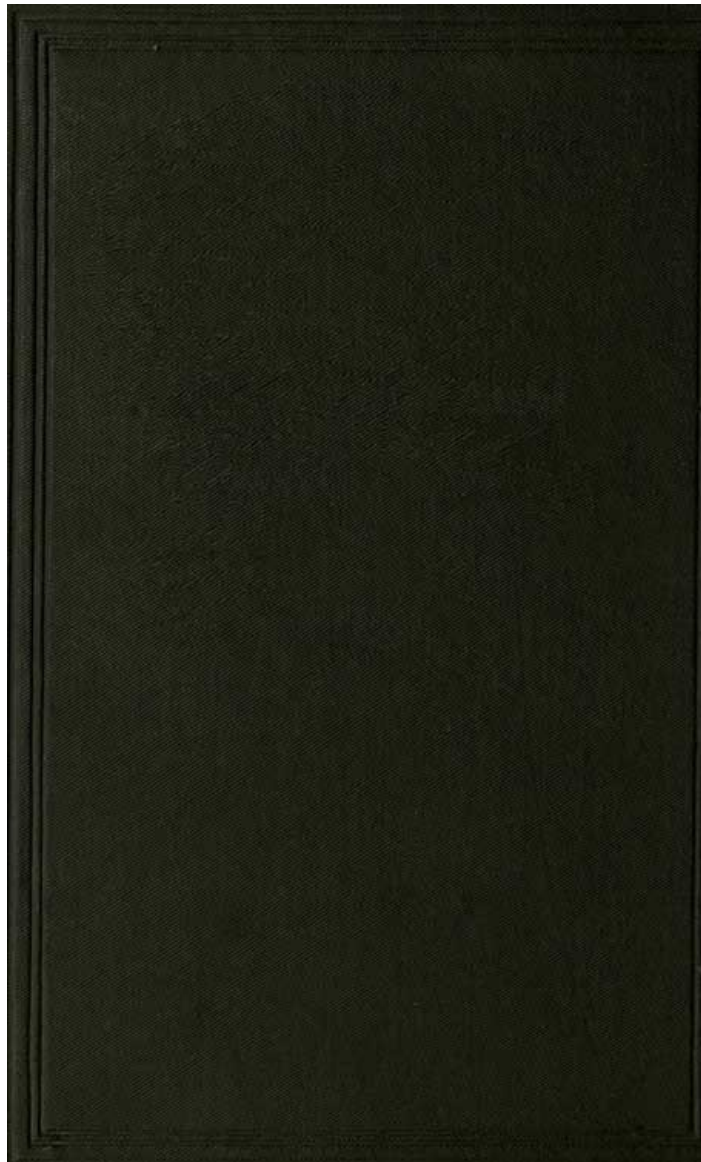
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**Transcriber's notes:**

Archaic spelling retained. The following corrections have been made:

p. 25: "opprobium" corrected to "opprobrium"

p. 43: "Southampton" corrected to "Southampton"

Advertisement "Holland's Floating Flies": "miscroscope" corrected to "microscope".

Obvious punctuation errors repaired (e.g. added period after No "No. 0").

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK RED PALMER: A PRACTICAL  
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