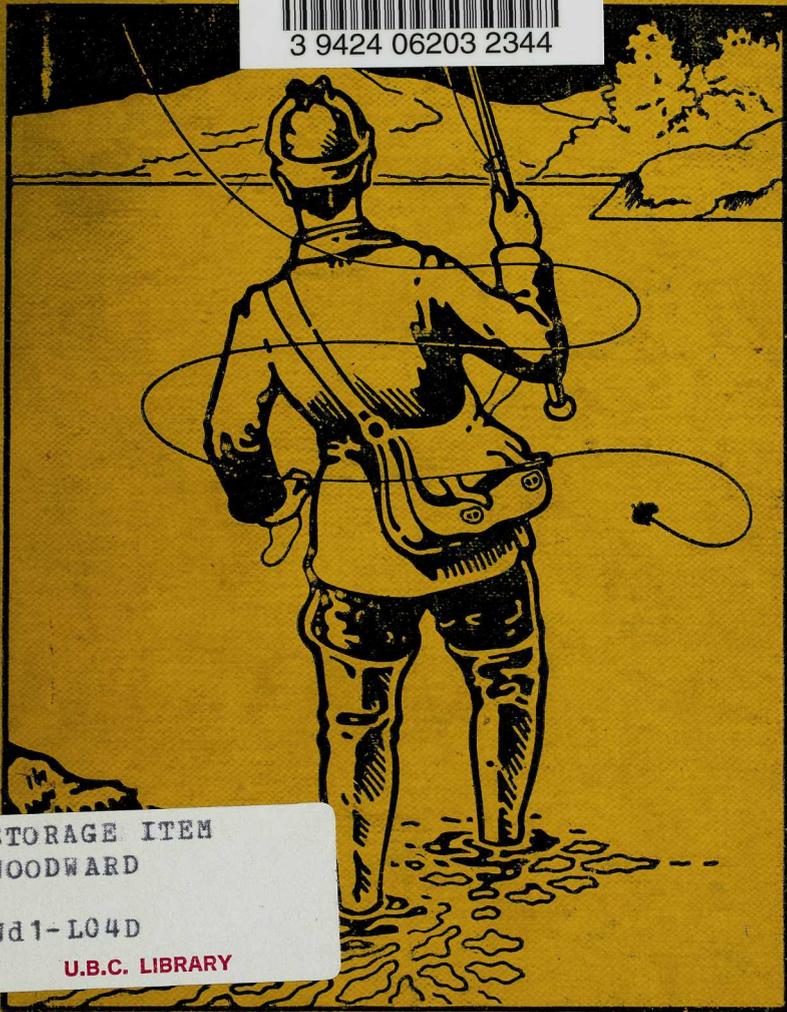


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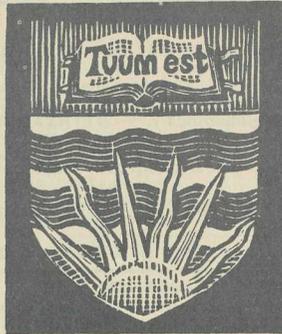
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PRACTICAL HINTS

ON

ANGLING

IN RIVERS, LAKES, AND SEA

BY

WALTER M. GALLICHAN

("GEOFFREY MORTIMER")

AUTHOR OF "FISHING IN WALES," ETC., AND CONTRIBUTOR TO
"THE FIELD," "LAND AND WATER," AND "ANGLER'S NEWS"

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Preface

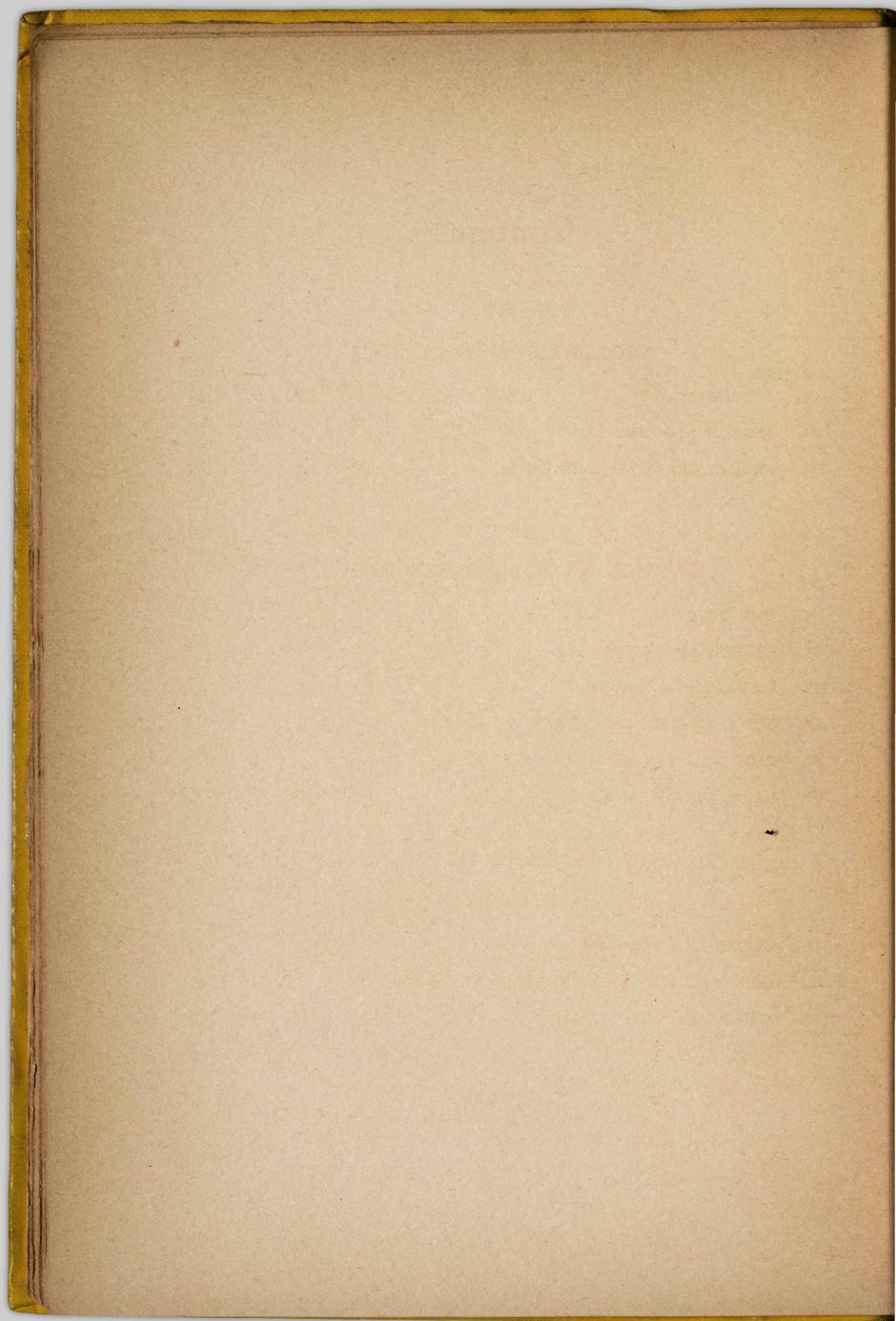
THESE "Practical Hints" have been written for the guidance of the young fisherman and for the novice. I shall be gratified if the experienced angler is able to learn something new from my pages. The last word on the enticing theme of fishing will never be said; but there are counsels worth repeating, and opinions that must needs change with the times. Authoritative dissertations upon angling must savour perhaps of dogmatism. I disclaim any pretension to unique and occult piscatorial lore.

Fishing has been my recreation during the leisure hours of over twenty years. I have learned and unlearned, and at all times I have kept an open mind, and welcomed instruction from other fishermen. It has been one of the pleasures of my life to infect my friends with a love of fishing. Perchance these chapters may excite an interest in the sport in some of those readers who have not yet thrilled at the rise of a trout or the plunge of a pike. I hope so. For I have never known a man to be made less fitted for the more serious business of life by due devotion to the recreation, which Hood calls "the wisest, virtuous, discreetest, best." May happy days by stream and mere reward my readers!

The sketches of fishing tackle in this book were drawn from articles kindly supplied by Mr. W. J. Cummins, an experienced angler and tackle maker, of the North of England Rod Works, Bishop Auckland, Durham.

WALTER M. GALLICHAN.

THE CRIMBLES, YOULGREAVE, BAKEWELL.



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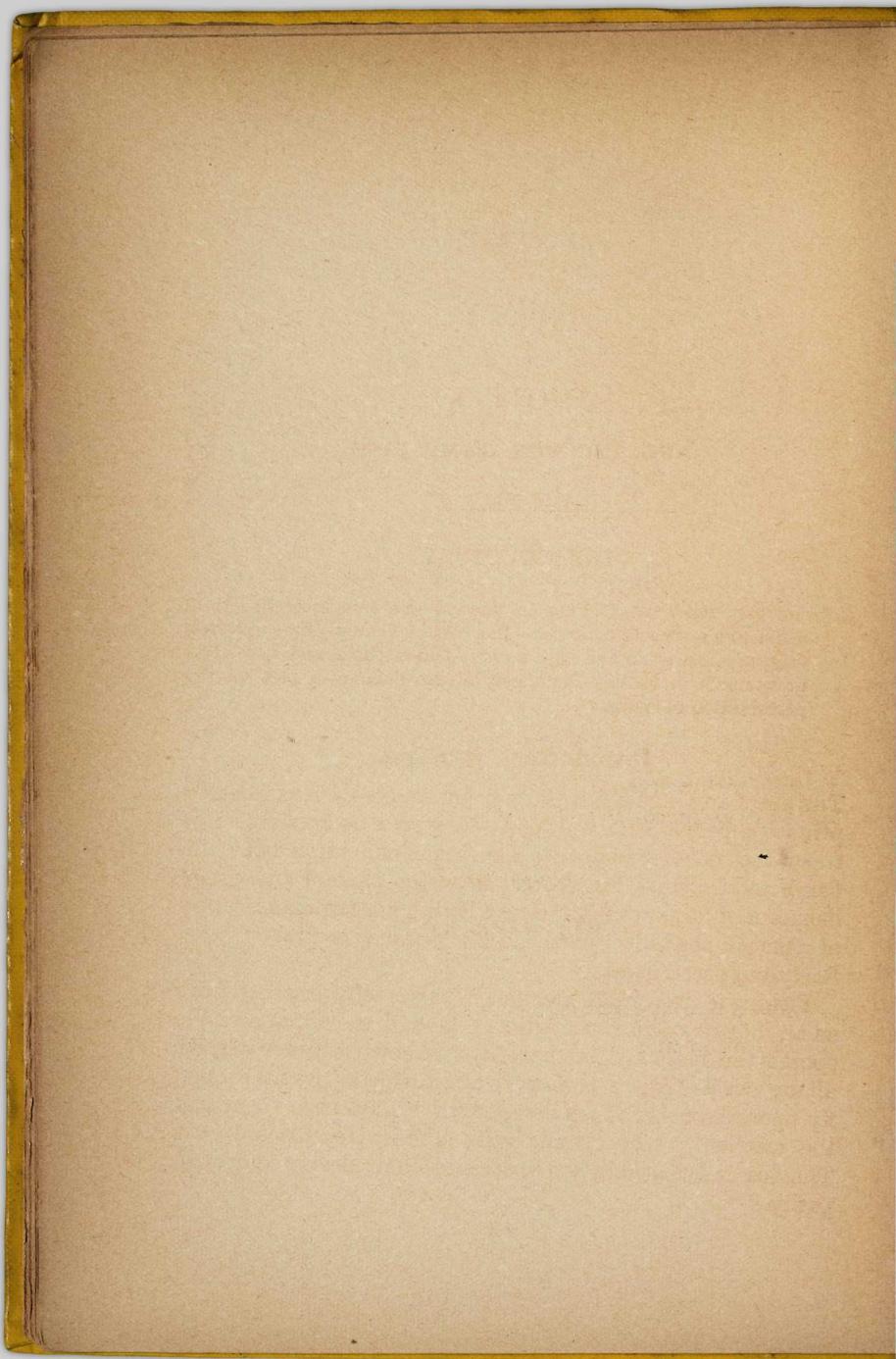
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PART I

ANGLING FOR GAME FISH

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Introductory remarks—Fishing in general—Various methods—How to become a successful angler—The cost of fishing—Free waters—Angling association and club waters—Old methods and new—Improvements in tackle—Popularity of sea fishing—A plea for the preservation of rivers.

Introductory Remarks.

THE art of angling for fish is one of the earliest means whereby primitive people obtained food. It would be interesting to trace the development of that ingenious implement the fish-hook from its rude form up to the time of the establishment of large works in Great Britain for the manufacture of "sneck-bends," "eyed hooks," and "crystals" from finely-tempered steel.

Fishing is now, more than ever, universally practised both as an industry and a recreation. One of the charms of the sport is the species of freemasonry that exists between anglers all the world over. Between the duke, who throws his salmon fly upon the pools of his own length of a Scottish river, and the mechanic, who ground-baits a swim for roach in the Thames or Lea, there is a species of comradeship and sympathy.

Angling

Fishing in General.

Fishing is one of the most democratic of British sports. Scarcely any man is too poor to spare a few shillings for a bottom-fishing outfit, and beyond this outlay he is at hardly any further expense in the pursuit of a wholesome and highly interesting pastime.

The Thames and some other big rivers of the United Kingdom are free to one and all who observe the regulations for the preservation of fish, and for a trifling subscription one may join an angling club and gain access to reserved waters. Undoubtedly one may expend a considerable amount of money upon certain kinds of angling; but I doubt whether the millionaire, who pays a heavy rent for a river length, and provides himself with the most costly tackle, derives higher pleasure from his sport than the City clerk who spends his half-holidays at Kingston or Hendon, and an annual fortnight on the Norfolk Broads.

Various Methods.

Before proceeding to practical instruction upon this fascinating pursuit, we may broadly classify the different methods of taking fish with the rod, line, and hook. First in order of esteem is fishing with the fly for "game fish," *i.e.*, salmon, sea trout, brown trout, and grayling. Fish of the salmon family are also caught by spinning natural and artificial baits, and by using various other lures, such as prawns, worms of several kinds, live flies, and other insects, either in the grub or *larva* stage, or in the *imago* or winged form.

Fishing for "coarse fish"—a term used to denote fish that do not belong to the *salmonidæ* group—is of several kinds. At the head of the questionably named "coarse" fish we must place the pike, which is to the coarse fisherman what the salmon is to the angler for game fish. The most modern means of catching pike will be described further on in this manual.

How to become a Successful Angler

The perch should, I think, rank high in the fisherman's esteem, while he is a good fish for the table. Perch are enticed by angling on the bottom, or in mid-water, with several kinds of worms, by spinning natural and artificial baits, and by fishing with live gudgeon or minnows.

Bream, barbel, chub, rudd, roach, carp, tench, dace, and other fish of the "coarse" category are chiefly caught by a method loosely described as "bottom fishing," that is to say, with baits used near the beds of streams, and sometimes upon them. Several of these fish can, however, be taken with artificial or natural baits upon the surface of the water. Chub, rudd, dace, and sometimes roach, may be captured with artificial flies in many streams, and this method of fishing often gives better results than angling with the float or leger.

Sea-fishing also presents an infinite variety of modes, such as fly-fishing for bass, reeling for mackerel with artificial lures, bait-fishing for conger, cod, whiting, and flat fish of numerous sorts, spinning with the rod and line, hand-lining, long-lining, &c.

How to become a Successful Angler.

It should be understood clearly by the novice that he cannot become a "complete" angler in a week. He may be very keen, and that is an excellent virtue in a fisherman; but he must also possess powers of observation, intelligence, deftness, and a good store of patience. Remember that every "old hand" was once a raw and untutored tyro. We all have to pass through an apprenticeship to the art, and the length of this training depends upon our concentration and perseverance. I do not mean to say that the true angler ever ceases to learn. He acquires fresh knowledge every time that he takes a rod in his hand. But it is "the first step that costs" in fishing as in everything else, and until the beginner knows how to handle his tackle, where to cast his bait, and how "strike," "play," and "land" his fish, he will be more or less impressed by his awkwardness.

Angling

The easiest kind of fishing is not always so easy as it appears to a casual spectator. There will always be times when fish are sulky, scarce, gorged with food, or difficult to find. It is then that a man proves whether he is a good or a bad fisherman. To employ a paradox—the expert angler is one who can take fish when they are “not taking.”

You will soon learn during your novitiate that it is often more difficult to catch a brace of fish, under certain conditions of weather and water, than it is to capture ten brace when the influences are favourable. There must be blank days in every fisherman's life. But the number of disappointing days will be reduced as the learner grows in cunning and experience. One of the keenest of human exultations is perhaps that felt by the angler who overcomes difficulties, and learns how to catch fish when the conditions are most discouraging.

I would advise the novice to watch capable fishermen, and to learn all that he can from their lore. He must never be too proud to take a hint, even from Hodge, who goes fishing with a bean stake, a piece of whipcord, and an eel-hook. If Hodge cannot instruct you in “fishing fine,” he can often relate a thing or two of interest concerning the habits and the haunts of fish; and what is more, he can frequently succeed with his coarse tackle while the stranger from London with an elaborate apparatus fails signally. The rustic knows all about the river, and that is the main cause of his “luck.” He has a map in his brain of every hole and corner, bend, eddy, and deep. In winter he will not waste his time by fishing in certain spots that give him sport in June. He has his winter and his summer swims, and he can see fish when you can discern only a rippled stretch of water and a few patches of weed.

When visiting a river or mere for the first time endeavour to make the acquaintance of a generous local angler, who will direct you to a good stand. Of course there are fishermen who regard particular lengths of rivers as their own, and display jealousy of brothers of the rod. But, as a rule,

How to become a Successful Angler

the visiting fisherman will find a native who likes to assist strangers, provided that they are fair fishermen.

If, however, you have to rely entirely upon your own wits in dealing with a new water you may, by studying the character of the stream and the habits of the fish in it, soon discover the best places for live-baiting for pike, paternoster-ing for perch, or legering for barbel. It is my hope that the record of my own experiences in angling, during nearly thirty years, may be of service to you in acquiring observation, skill, and keenness of perception.

You should be something of a meteorologist, a naturalist, and withal a philosopher if you would become a successful fisherman. Do not pin your faith too firmly to theories, rules, and opinions advanced by other men. But, on the other hand, be content to remain a learner all your life. Cultivate the habit of close attention when you are by the riverside. Watch the flies over the water, and the insects beneath it, and note the haunts of fish in floods and in low, clear water. If possible, join a fishing club, read the angling journals, and converse with experienced anglers.

Supposing that you aspire to excel as a fly-fisherman, I would counsel you to master the use of the fly-rod upon a stream where the trout are not highly-educated and extremely wary. Hill brooks and certain lakes are excellent schools for the young fisherman, who cannot be expected to capture many fish, during his first season, from such rivers as the Test, Kennet, and Mimram.

It is advisable to understand the rudiments of an art before one engages in its more difficult and scientific methods, therefore I would suggest that you should learn to throw the wet-fly before attempting the delicate mode of dry-fly fishing on clear streams. I know that there are anglers who began their career with the dry-fly, and I would not discourage the beginner if he is bent upon making his first essay in what may be called the higher stage of fly-fishing; but the manipulation of the rod and line is not altogether simple, apart from catching fish; and

Angling

every candid angler will tell you how awkward he felt when he threw his first fly.

As an "all-round" fisherman you will be able to vary your sport according to the seasons and the locality. Bottom-fishing, as it is called, requires skill and knowledge, and there is no reason why you should despise it because you can take game-fish with the fly. Increase the range of your fishing, and you will enhance the pleasure to be gained from the sport.

In some parts of the kingdom trout fishing is not easily obtained. Yet you may still enjoy very pleasant recreation, and gain stirring experiences, in the pursuit of pike, perch, roach, and chub. There are, indeed, very few districts where there are no streams or ponds open to the fisherman, and in these days of cheap railway fares and bicycles it is an easy and inexpensive undertaking to journey twenty or fifty miles in quest of angling waters.

The Cost of Fishing.

We now come to the cost of fishing. If you are fortunate enough to be able to make a trial for salmon, you need not, to begin with, spend a small fortune upon your paraphernalia. Write to one of the numerous rod makers for a list, and select a weapon at a moderate price. You can buy a sixteen-foot greenheart salmon rod for sixteen shillings, or an eighteen-foot rod for a sovereign. A Castle Connell rod, from sixteen to twenty feet, can be purchased for twenty or twenty-five shillings. A steel gaff and a handle will cost you from one shilling to seventeen shillings and sixpence. You can pay as much as you choose for your apparatus, but as good salmon have been brought to hand with a plain cheap greenheart rod as with one of built-cane costing six guineas.

Wading trousers of twill cost a sovereign, and may be obtained of better quality for a couple of guineas. Canvas brogues are to be bought at any price from seventeen shillings and sixpence to thirty shillings. For many seasons I used a pair of stout leather boots, with holes bored in the

The Cost of Fishing

soles to let out the water. Ask your bootmaker for a pair of infantry boots, which can often be bought for seven-and-sixpence. Dress them inside and out with castor oil, and they will serve you as well as an expensive pair of brogues. Cheaper still are clogs, with wooden soles, which cost three shillings and sixpence. They are heavy, but for slippery wading they cannot be beaten.

A first-class salmon-reel costs about two guineas. By all means buy one if you think it necessary to possess the best of everything. My own salmon-reel cost less than half of that sum; and I have found that a wooden Nottingham check-reel works well, unless an unusually long line is required. Your line should be stout and well dressed. It need not cost more than twelve or fifteen shillings; and you may obtain a serviceable line by buying about forty yards, or less, of dressed silk, and splicing it to brown water-cord. Casts cost from two to ten shillings. You can buy gut in lengths and make your own casts at less cost. Salmon flies can be purchased for a shilling each and upwards. Spoons and traces for spinning cost about three shillings complete.

In the chapter on the Salmon I will tell you of rivers where the fishing is free, or available for short-period tickets at a small charge. Where salmon are heavy and abundant the cost of fishing is high, and for the mass of fishermen quite prohibitive. But there are streams in Wales and Ireland where the impecunious may enjoy very fair sport with the King of Fish.

The outfit for trout fishing for the beginner need not cost more than thirty shillings, and it is possible to buy a very modest outfit for less than that. Three of the most useful trout rods that I have handled cost under a dozen shillings apiece. I have killed trout with them up to 2 lbs. in weight, and on one of them I caught a 5-lb. salmon. A reel, with check action, can be bought for seven shillings and sixpence, and less than that; but the most inexpensive reel is not the cheapest in the long run. Forty yards of waterproof line will cost about half-a-crown. Landing net and handle, one

Angling

shilling and threepence. Three casts, two shillings, and two dozen flies, three shillings. Fly book, one shilling. Artificial minnow, from one shilling. Six Stewart hooks and shot, sevenpence. Basket, three shillings and sixpence. Wading stockings are sometimes required for trout fishing. They cost from twelve shillings and sixpence upwards.

The tackle for coarse fishing may be obtained at a very moderate cost. If you want to pay a good price for an up-to-date and capital pike rod, you can buy the "Bickerdyke" at thirty shillings. Cheap and useful rods can be bought for half a guinea. Wooden optional check reels cost from four shillings. A pike line need not run to more than two shillings, and gut bottoms and traces cost a few pence each. The bamboo rods used for roach and bream cost from three shillings and sixpence to a sovereign.

Reel and line for coarse fish, other than pike and big barbel, need not be more than three or four shillings, and gut bottoms of good quality now cost only sixpence each. Floats can be bought for a few pence each, and hooks for ninepence a dozen. Fishing bags of jean or canvas cost from a shilling to fifteen shillings.

A rod and tackle which will serve for perch, roach, chub, dace, and eel fishing can be obtained for about twelve shillings, while for thirty shillings one may become the possessor of a really serviceable bottom-fishing outfit. Boys who are not over-supplied with pocket money can, of course, buy a still cheaper set of tackle, and catch good fish with it too.

Sea rods can be purchased at prices from half a crown to eighteen shillings, or more. Reels from three shillings and sixpence to half a guinea, and lines from one to five shillings. Hooks for sea fishing cost about twopence a dozen, and gut can be bought in hanks at a shilling and two shillings.

Free Waters.

Before bringing my introductory chapter to a conclusion, I will write a few words upon free waters for fishermen.

Old Methods and New

There are still many open lakes and rivers for the wielders of the fly-rod which I shall refer to more especially in succeeding chapters. By consulting "The Angler's Diary," issued every year, you will find information upon many rivers and pools in Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and the North of England where the waters are free for trout fishing. For coarse fishermen there is almost the entire length of the Thames, parts of the Lea, stretches of the Trent, the Severn, the Derwent, and the fine rivers of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Sussex. Sea fishing is everywhere free from Anglesey to Land's End, and, in fact, all around the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland.

Angling Associations and Clubs.

By becoming a member of an angling association the fisherman gains many advantages. He has the society of brothers of the angle at the riverside and in the clubroom. He can fish in club waters, and compete in matches; and the railway companies grant him tickets at a reduced rate. In London there are numerous flourishing fishing clubs, and some of these rent excellent lengths of rivers for the exclusive use of members. Sheffield has an exceptionally strong association of anglers, and so has Birmingham. Through the efforts of these organisations more attention has been paid during recent years to the preservation of rivers, the prevention of pollution, and the suppression of illicit fishing.

Old Methods and New.

Since the day when Izaak Walton roved his beloved Lea, and threw his flies upon the rippling Dove, the sport of fishing has seen many changes. One can no longer fill a creel by pursuing old rough-and-ready modes of angling. Every year fish of all kinds appear to develop increased intelligence and wariness, and to cope with this development it behoves the fishermen to "fish fine," and to use all his powers in order to outwit his educated prey.

Angling

Improvements in Tackle.

Almost every week sees the announcement of a new notion in fishing or the advertisement of a novel kind of tackle. The appliances for fishing have wonderfully improved during the past fifty years, and the angler who would keep abreast of his time must employ those means which growing experience has proved to be most successful. When hooks are mentioned in these pages, reference should be made to the illustration of hooks as made by Messrs. Allcock & Co., see p. 65.

Popularity of Sea Fishing.

During recent years sea fishing with the rod has become an extremely popular form of pastime. The possibilities of angling in the sea were not properly appreciated until a few years ago.

Now we find numbers of keen sea fishermen, who speak with enthusiasm of the sport of bass fishing with the fly-rod, and the attractions of grey mullet and pollack fishing. Big books have been published on sea fishing, and devotees of the pursuit have banded themselves into associations.

A Plea for the Preservation of Rivers.

Before proceeding to the technicalities of the several kinds of angling, let me beg my readers to assist in every possible manner in the preservation of our sport-yielding rivers, brooks, and meres. The best way to put down poaching is to encourage a spirit of fair angling, and to interest all classes in the protection of the rivers for the general good. Subscribe as liberally as your means will allow to local preservation societies, and by your example as a sportsman-like angler, discourage the taking of immature fish and all modes of nefarious angling. Always comply strictly with the rules as to the seasons for fishing for various kinds of fish, and never retain undersized specimens.

“Fishing competitions for weight” are very well in their

A Plea for the Preservation of Rivers

way; but do not become a "pot-hunter," with no ambition beyond making big catches of fish. A few fish, caught fairly under adverse conditions, testify more to your skill than a hundredweight taken in a heavily-baited swim when fish are feeding greedily.

Let me end this chapter with a few words of good advice from honest John Lauson's "Secrets of Angling," written in 1613:—

"Enterprise no man's ground without leave. Break no man's hedge to his loss."

CHAPTER II

SALMON AND SEA TROUT

Angling for salmon—Fly-fishing, trolling, and bait-fishing—Hints as to tackle—How to fish for salmon in streams and lakes—Sea trout, peal, and sewin—How to fish for them with fly, spinning-bait, and worm—Where to go, and the seasons for angling for migratory fish—Habits of salmon and sea trout—Fishing in low water—Night fishing—Counsels for salmon and sea-trout anglers.

Angling for Salmon.

LORD of all fish that swim in fresh water is the salmon. To the student of evolution, the naturalist, and the fisherman *Salmo Salar* is a fish of bewildering interest. Salmon fishing is often coupled with deer stalking as a very costly kind of sport. You cannot expect to capture a brace of heavy salmon every time that you fish a length of free water, or a stretch of a river belonging to an hotel. Indeed, there are occasions when salmon refuse to take the fly or spinning-bait in the best of Scotch rivers. I shall show that salmon fishing is not entirely beyond the reach of the sportsman of modest means.

Fly Fishing.

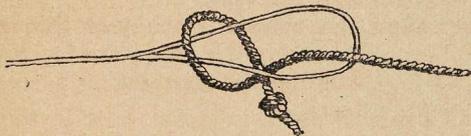
The most artistic, and in the long run most effective, method of salmon fishing is with the artificial fly. Let it be understood that a salmon fly is not an imitation of any insect known to entomologists. A gaudy lure of feathers and tinsel proves an attraction to salmon in fresh water ;

Fly Fishing

but what the fish suppose the "fly" to be is more than any living angler can tell you.

I will imagine that the pupil is by the side of a salmon river, just as the stream is running down and clearing after a flood. He has put his rod together, and attached his cast of good gut to the reel line as in the illustration. Probably he has seen a flash of silver in the air, as a salmon hurled himself out of the tail of a pool, and he is in a tremor of excitement to catch that fish.

Make certain first that the tackle is in order, and do not forget that dry gut is apt to snap at a sharp jerk or heavy strain. Wait until you have soaked your cast, if you have not already damped it between two leaves of wet flannel. It is a good plan to keep your casts soft by soaking them



How to Join Cast to Line.

for about fifteen minutes in tepid water, and carrying them in an indiarubber bag-pouch with a snap opening. We will suppose that a fly known as the Jock Scott is esteemed as a killing lure on this particular river.

Now you are ready. Grasp the butt of your rod with both hands, after paying out more than a rod's length of line, and throw your fly in the swirl of the water where it enters the pool. You will find that the line is too short, and by running out a big loop with your left hand, and giving the fly a sharp jerk in the water, you will get out a longer line. Great delicacy of casting is not essential in salmon fishing in heavy waters; but this does not mean that there is nothing to learn in regard to the handling of the rod and the "working" of your fly.

To excite the attention of a lurking salmon, allow your Jock Scott to sink a few inches under the water, after

Angling

casting across or down stream, and bring it back towards you by a series of slow jerks. This is one form of working a salmon fly, and the method may be compared to trolling with a minnow or a spoon. You will note that the tinsel of your fly glitters in the water, and that the feathers lie close to the shank of the hook. Your Jock Scott, under the water, is not altogether unlike a tiny fish.

In half an hour or less your arms will begin to ache. Take a rest, and keep your eyes on the pool for moving fish. There was a boil on the far side of the river! Wade in and cast over the spot where the water was agitated. If you feel a tug, raise the point of your rod quickly, but beware of striking too hard or your cast will return minus the fly. Experience will teach you *how* hard to strike in order to drive the hook in below the barb.

But very often the salmon saves you the trouble of "hitting" him. He seizes the fly, swerves aside, hooks himself, and begins to fight almost before you are aware that anything has happened.

At the sixth cast over the moving salmon you feel an electric shock up your arm, and the line begins to shriek as it tears out from the reel. I advise you to keep cool, though such advice savours of irony. It is not easy to keep the nerves quite under control when a huge fish breaks the surface of the water, and shoots away twenty yards in a few seconds. Keep your rod up, and do not check the line during this first rush. If the salmon hesitates before his next manœuvre, cautiously wind in a few yards, or perhaps feet, of line.

Now he is off again! Let the line run, but do not give him any slack or all is lost. Feel him all the time, always avoiding rough usage, which will further arouse his anger and cause the salmon to leap or to try one of those desperate head shakings that often result in liberty. Humour a fish when he stays for a few seconds in one place, and begins to tug viciously and to shake his head. If he runs away down the stream, pursue him, winding in line as you go.

Fly Fishing

Remember that you must often be content to recover line inch by inch.

Sometimes a salmon will swim sulkily and slowly round and round a pool. He is not apparently exciting himself, nor wasting his strength, and you may have to play him for a long time before he is spent. I remember a salmon in the Glaslyn, in North Wales, who practised these tactics for twenty minutes in a small pool. I had hooked him on a small Devon minnow while fishing for trout with rather fine tackle. Twice he came within gaffing reach, and kept almost still. But my gaff was twenty yards away on the bank, and when I moved so did the salmon. Finally, the fish broke free with one of the small triangle hooks in his lip. The gut had severed through sawing against the sharp edge of the wretched slit down the middle of the minnow.

If your hooked salmon begins to show signs of flagging strength, look out for a place to lead him into where there is not much current. Try all the time to force your salmon's head *down stream*, and endeavour to keep *below* him. At last you notice that the fish is rolling from side to side, and slowly opening his jaw. Draw him to that shallow, stand still as a stone, and change your rod from the right to the left hand. Take your gaff in the right hand, reach out quietly, and getting the hook over the broadside of your fish, pull it into him sharply. I am supposing that your salmon is "done"; but often a tired fish seems to recover energy when you have him within reach of the gaff. Be ready at all times for another rush of an apparently beaten salmon.

During your early trials in salmon fishing it will be of advantage to have an attendant with you, or some one who knows how to gaff a fish. But if you are alone and playing a big salmon, do not be in a hurry to use the gaff.

Sometimes it is easier to "ground" a salmon on a sandy spit or pebble beach than to secure him with the gaff. To do this lower your rod to within a foot of the water, draw the salmon down stream, and bring him smartly on the

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land without any lifting movement. Seize him at once by the tail, and throw him as far from the water as you can before attempting to remove the hook. A sharp blow on the back of the head will kill your fish, or at least stun him while you extract the hook.

In rivers where salmon are moderately plentiful they lie in all manner of places, though they congregate chiefly in the pools until spawning time. A narrow gut at the outlet of a big still is a favourite lurking corner for a good salmon, especially when the channel leading from the pool is the only deep part of the tail. I know one such run on the Usk, where, during low water in the autumn, there are always three or four salmon lying.

Deep eddies, and close to sunken rocks, are haunts of salmon, and they may often be seen near to bridges and under hollow banks. Pool-locked salmon—that is, fish who are detained from proceeding farther up a stream in time of low water—are often very wary, and until a spate comes it is difficult to induce them to look at a fly. In fact, when rivers are low, salmon fishing is anything but a lively recreation, though the patient angler will be now and then rewarded for his persistence.

In lake fishing for salmon from a boat, a short rod is convenient. Drift before the wind, having a weight slung from amidships to check the boat, and cast and work your fly as in river fishing. Try the shallow outlets and inlets of lochs, and if there are only a couple of feet of water do not disturb the place with the sculls. Wading is better in such water than fishing from a boat. If you can discern a current in the lake, fish it carefully, as travelling salmon usually keep to a stream. Watch for playing fish, and direct the boat towards them without noise or splash of oars.

Trolling.

In some rivers and lochs trolling is a successful means of catching salmon. You can spin or troll from the reel in

Bait Fishing

river fishing, or allow your bait to trail under water in a lake, about sixty yards away from the boat, while your attendant handles the sculls. Reels with a very light running action are made for trolling, and to cast from them you must acquire the knack of swinging out your bait. Let your trace of gut be about two yards in length, with three or four swivels. A good artificial bait is the phantom minnow, made of silk or moleskin; and a fair-sized spoon-bait is also attractive to salmon. A silver or a gold Devon minnow, from three to four inches in length, is preferred by some fishermen above every other spinning bait for salmon. A natural spinning bait, such as a four- or six-inch dace or gudgeon, will often tempt a salmon when other devices fail. Let your baits be fresh, and attach them to a Coxon spinner, which may be bought for one shilling and ninepence. In strong waters a lead is necessary. It should be attached to the trace about three feet from the hook. The Archer-Jardine lead is an excellent one.

Wind your line up to within six or eight feet of the rod top, hold the butt of the rod firmly, and, turning slightly sideways from the stream, swing out your bait, allowing it to fall, with as little splash as possible, across or down the stream. Then turn the reel handle somewhat slowly, give an occasional wave or jerk to your rod, and bring the bait up to the bank.

Bait Fishing.

The prawn is sometimes used as a bait for salmon. I have not a liking for bait-fishing for salmon, and it is certainly the least sportsmanlike mode of angling for this noble fish. However, if you have set yourself to catch a salmon by some means or another, after a disappointing experience with the fly, you can try the prawn on a specially prepared tackle, which can be obtained at most dealers.

Hints as to Tackle.

Salmon will occasionally take the worm readily. One of the handiest worm tackles is that which I have seen in use

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on the Usk. It consists of a yard or so of stout gut, and a hook upon which a lead is mounted along the shank. The hook is baited with a big lobworm, which is drawn up over the lead to conceal it. Drop this bait into holes, eddies, and the sides of sharp runs, and slowly work it with a "sink-and-draw" movement.

A leger may also be used in worm fishing for salmon. The gut should be a yard long, and at the junction of the gut and the reel line you must have a rather heavy bullet or a leger lead. The line is passed through the bored bullet, and the weight is kept in its place by the knot in the line, or by means of a little piece of stick fastened across the line below the bullet by a single knot. The line must be allowed to run freely through the bullet.

Sea Trout, Peal, and Sewin.

Salmon-trout, sea-trout, white trout, and peal are the names by which a migratory fish of our rivers is known to fishermen. There are other local names for sea-trout; and in Wales we find the sewin, which is said to be a distinct species of the *salmonidæ*. The salmon-trout may be said to give quite as interesting sport as the salmon, and I have met anglers who would leave the salmon alone when shoals of sea trout were ascending the river.

In sea-trout fishing there is less uncertainty than in salmon angling. Moreover, there are more open waters for sea-trout than for the aristocratic salmon. Often when big salmon are afraid to travel up shallow streams, in time of low water, sea-trout are not so deterred, and you may find the fish in the higher pools of rivers, unless the season is one of unusually prolonged drought.

How to fish for them.

The style of fishing for sea-trout with the fly resembles that of salmon fishing. But you need not use a heavy double-handed rod, extra strong gut, and big flies. I have

Sea Trout, Peal, and Sewin

taken sea-trout of two pounds in weight on light trout rods and fine casts. For general purposes an eleven or twelve-foot rod will answer very well, and with such a weapon you may take sea-trout up to three or four pounds in weight. A medium trout line will be strong enough, and you ought to have at least sixty yards of it on the reel. If the water is clear use fine gut, but not of the finest "drawn" sort, for these fish fight very hard.

As for the best flies, I know of none that can be described as "best." In some rivers sea-trout appear to favour bright flies of the loch size, while in other waters small, sober-coloured trout flies attract the most fish.

In fishing for sewin in Wales I have found the following patterns of flies useful: March Brown, with gold twist to body, Grey Drake, Olive Dun, Black Gnat, Teal and orange body, and a bright yellow fly called the Canary. When the water is discoloured by a spate you may use brighter coloured flies with tinsel bodies.

While fishing for sea-trout you may at any time hook a salmon, therefore be prepared for careful handling of your fish with the light tackle. Work your fly as in salmon fishing. Some anglers use a couple of flies, one "at point," or the end of the cast, and the other as "a dropper," attached to the gut about three feet from the tail or point fly.

When there is a fair "push" of water in the river you may fish for sea-trout with a two-inch gilt or silver minnow. I have found the silver Devon a very killing bait in discoloured rivers. But even when the stream is deeply stained with peat, you can catch sea-trout with the fly, and that of all methods is the most interesting. Try the slow pools in flood time, or in dry weather when the water is ruffled by a breeze. The biggest shoals of sea-trout are often to be found in such parts of the river.

In bright, calm weather it will be better to restrict yourself to the runs and the tail ends of large, deep pools; but, whenever conditions are favourable, do not neglect the

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“flat water.” If you catch one sea-trout in a pool or run, you may be nearly certain that there are more fish in that spot, for sea-trout are very sociable, and usually travel in company.

The Worm as Bait.

As a last remedy, when sport is poor, the worm may be tried for sea-trout. Use a No. 1 or 2 hook, and bait with a clean lobworm or brandling. Pinch two or three shot on to the cast, eight inches from the hook, and cast your bait into runs, allowing it to travel down with the stream. Try beneath trees, at the inlets of pools, and in deep eddies. An expert sea-trout fisherman can catch fish with the worm when rivers are low, but to do this you need light tackle, a long, whippy rod that will throw a worm like a fly, and you must possess a knowledge of the water.

Where to go for Migratory Fish.

I will now direct the salmon and sea-trout fisherman to certain rivers where he may enjoy pleasant sport. In England we must journey to the west or north to find open and subscription waters for game fish of the migratory order. The Dart, the Tavy, the Teign, and almost all of the chief rivers of Devon and Cornwall contain peal or sea-trout, and a fair number of salmon. Most of these rivers are preserved in certain parts by associations, and day and weekly tickets can be purchased for a few shillings. Totnes on the Dart, Tavistock on the Tavy, and Newton Abbot on the Teign, are convenient centres for the fisherman. In Cumberland, at Ravenglass, the Irt, Esk, and Mite can be fished by payment of a small fee. Scotland abounds in salmon and sea trout rivers, and some of the minor streams and a few lochs are free, while there are hotel waters almost without number. I have only space to mention Loch Ness and parts of the River Ness, a stretch of the Deveron, near Huntley, Loch Awe, and some streams near Stonehaven, as open waters containing salmon and sea-trout.

Night Fishing

In Ireland there are many good sea-trout rivers that can be fished free, or by a small payment, and some fairly-stocked salmon waters, where the fishing is inexpensive.

Wales has some moderately productive salmon rivers, such as the Conway and Dee, where the fishing is open to purchasers of weekly tickets. For sewin the angler should visit Beddgelert, Criccieth, Tyn-y-Croes, near Dolgelly, and Towyn. Full information upon the angling at these stations will be found in my guide book, "Fishing in Wales." These rivers are best from the end of June till the end of October.

Habits of Salmon and Sea Trout.

Salmon are bolder, and not so easily scared, or "put down," as trout. But the salmon and the sea-trout are not wholly ingenuous fish, and in these days of constant fishing they are developing greater wariness. When fresh run from the sea, both salmon and sea-trout are more off their guard than they are found to be after a sojourn of several weeks in fresh water. It is therefore best to choose a rainy season for salmon and sea-trout fishing, and to seize the opportunity when fish are travelling up the river.

Fishing in Low Water.

In a drought it is almost useless for the beginner to venture out after migratory fish. But if necessity compels the angler to take his holiday at such a time, let him exercise patience and perseverance. Adapt your tackle and your methods to the low state of the water, and fish only late at night and at daybreak.

Night Fishing.

If these tactics are unavailing, wait for a cloudy night, and take your stand by a pool frequented by salmon and sea-trout. In a short time you are almost certain to hear the splashing of fish. The game is there, and the chances are that you will not quit the bank without an adventure.

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Sea-trout often rise audaciously in the dark, and many a handsome, plucky fish has fallen to my rod during the "wee sma' hours" of a summer morning before the rising sun sent me home to bed.

Counsel for Anglers.

I will conclude this chapter with a few counsels for salmon and sea-trout anglers. Always endeavour to learn the state of a river before starting on a salmon-fishing journey. Rely chiefly upon the fly for salmon, first and last. Do not spin or fish with bait for sea-trout until you have made a fair trial with the fly. After spates, try everywhere in the river; there are no unlikely places at such times. Watch for windy days to fish the flats for sea-trout.

CHAPTER III

TROUT, GRAYLING, AND CHAR

The trout—Fly-fishing—Notes on rods—Flies—Personal experiences—Wet-fly fishing in rapid rivers—Dry-fly fishing—The Mayfly—Midsummer trout fishing—Dapping—The author's mode of catching trout in still waters—Spinning for trout—Worm fishing—Thames trout fishing—Lake fishing—Trout tackle—Golden rules for trout anglers—Grayling fishing—Dry-fly for grayling—Wet-fly—Maggot fishing with a float—Winter angling for grayling—The char of Wales and Cumberland—Modes of angling—Where to go for trout and grayling.

The Trout.

"I SHALL range the trout under the consideration of the first classes of fish," writes Franck, an old angling authority who lived in 1656. A host of fishermen have praised the trout, and extolled the delights of fly fishing in verse and prose. If the salmon is the King of Fish, the trout certainly deserves the title of Prince. He is beautiful to look upon in his golden mail, with blotches of red, and glorious sheen; and in intelligence and alertness he excels every other fish that swims in fresh water. When hooked the trout fights desperately for freedom, and exhibits more pluck and strength than any other fish of equal weight and size.

Trout are very prolific, and distributed in all parts of Europe, from semi-tropical Southern Spain to Finland and Norway, and from Brittany to the Black Forest. They are the prize of the wealthy and the needy, the boy angler and the veteran of eighty. Trout vary in average weight accord-

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ing to the supply of food in the waters that they frequent. In a copy of the *Field* that lies before me, I read that on July 2, 1903, an angler in Loch Rannoch caught a trout of fourteen pounds weight, which was brought to the net after a fight which lasted for one hour and a half. This is a grand fish, but trout of even greater weight have been captured from the Thames, in Scotch lakes, and from Irish loughs.

Contrast this lordly trout of Rannoch with those of certain mountain llyns in Wales, where the under-fed fish average no more than six or eight to the pound, and you will be able to judge how a generous diet influences the growth of trout.

Fly Fishing.

Fly-fishing for trout is of three kinds. (1) Fishing with the wet or sunk fly in quickly flowing streams, or working the fly under water in lakes; (2) dry-fly fishing with an artificial fly dressed with oil to cause it to float naturally; (3) dapping or dibbing a natural live fly upon the surface of the water. Although the method of the dry-fly is the acme of trout fishing, I will discourse first upon the older style of the wet-fly. I advise the novice to master thoroughly the use of the rod, line, and fly, in the sunk fashion of fishing, before he practises the more intricate art of presenting the dry-fly to the fish of clear and slowly-flowing rivers.

How to Cast.

There is a good old plan for beginning to learn how to cast. Go on to a lawn, place a sheet of notepaper on the grass, stand about two to three rods' length away, and try to drop your fly on to the paper. Learn to use the wrist and the forearm in casting, and do not incline your body forward at each throw. Let the fly fall lightly, just as the natural fly drops on the water, and try by every means to make your gut cast touch the water before the reel line.

When you can get your line out fairly straight, and

At a Burn Side

without an ugly splash on the water, exert all your will in casting so that the fly shall drop prettily and softly. This counsel may read easy enough, but unless you are one of those rather rare mortals with what may be called a natural aptitude in throwing a fly, you will need to persevere and to practise much before you can cast even a wet-fly with deftness and grace.

I well remember my own early efforts in fly-fishing on the banks of a clear stream in Berkshire. The river was full of fish, and they were rising in a very entertaining fashion. Yet not a single trout came to my fly, and I went home with a broken top-joint, an aching arm, and a sense of my extreme awkwardness.

I suppose that most beginners have a fair number of mishaps, and make many mistakes, before they experience mastery over the rod. But proficiency will succeed clumsiness if you will but fix your mind upon attaining skill. During your novitiate you will pop off flies by bringing back your line with a jerk, and you will frequently hook thistle-heads and alder boughs instead of trout. But to use an expressive, if inelegant, phrase, "stick to it," and in a few days you will note a great progress in your casting.

At a Burn Side.

I will place you by the side of a burn, a merry little stream flowing down from the mountains amongst ling and fern. The day is one of half-sunshine, with some heavy clouds sailing over the hills, and the wind blows from the north-west. It is the month of April, the latter end, and the trout are beginning to rise hungrily to surface insects. At the point of your cast fasten a blue dun, and for a dropper you may use a Greenwell's Glory. I think that two flies are quite enough, as a rule, for wet-fly fishing in small rivers, and even in bigger waters. But I am not disposed to argue the point with those Yorkshire anglers who choose to fish with three or four small hackle flies on a hair

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cast, or with the Scotchmen who whip the big rivers with a cast upon which are mounted from six to eight flies. But if the water is "fine," *i.e.*, low and clear, I think you will be more likely to woo fortune if one fly only is upon your cast.

Having soaked your cast while you sit down and watch the brownish water of the "wee burnie," proceed to cast up-stream with a fairly short line. Your fly will sink just beneath the surface. The stream will bring it towards you, and as it comes down, raise your rod so that you neither check nor hasten the movement of your fly. Mr. E. M. Tod, a fisherman of fifty years' experience, advises quick and frequent casting up-stream. Follow this advice from the beginning of your apprenticeship. But to-day the wind is blowing almost directly down the stream, and you find it exceedingly difficult to cast neatly against the breeze. Well, if the wind will not give you a chance, you must cast *across* it. That is not so easy as casting with the wind, but you must learn the trick, as you will often require to fish in that way.

Fishing Down-stream.

Some fishermen say that you should never fish down-stream with a fly. "Never" is rather arbitrary. I know that up-stream casting is, without doubt, the most certain method of trout fishing. Occasionally, however, it is not feasible. For instance, when fishing for trout in the strong, rough rivers of Northern Spain, and in Welsh streams in time of high water, I have found it a task beyond my strength to wade all day against the current, and to cast continually up the stream. In up-stream casting, you make at least twice the number of casts as in fishing across the river, and three times the number as compared with down-stream fishing.

I certainly prefer at all times to fish up-stream; but one need not make it an inviolable rule *never* to cast across and let the current carry the fly down-stream. "Down-stream fishing" is really an incorrect phrase, for scarcely any one

How to Strike

but the beginner ever dreams of throwing the fly *directly* down the stream. Such a proceeding would cause a drag on the fly every time, and the method would rarely succeed in any water.

In the burn that you are fishing to-day, you will not see many rises. The water is swift and broken, and trout are sucking under the flies without causing any break upon the surface. Fish on despite this apparent indifference of trout to the host of flies that have suddenly appeared on the stream. If you do not see the fish rise to your flies, you will feel them. Should the line tighten suddenly, or a swirl agitate the water in the neighbourhood of your two flies, give a quick upward movement to your rod and strike the fish.

How to Strike.

I have nothing to say about that marvellous "turn of the wrist" advocated as the proper method of striking. I can only tell you to strike—that is, to drive in the hook, if the trout has not done it in a rush—and not to strike *too hard*. If you have a long line out, you must use rather more force to counteract the effect of your sunk "slack."

Bring your trout down stream, play him from your check reel, and net him as soon as you can. Never drag your fish hard against the stream, nor lift his head out of the water. You need not play quarter-pound trout like pounders. Work them to the bank, and twitch them out with a sideways throw. Don't try this plan with a bigger fish. If he runs out your line, you must follow him, winding in as you go, and continually contrive to keep his head either across or, better still, down the stream.

In wider rivers, you may try the pools wherever they are ruffled by a wind or discoloured after rain. Late in the evening you may often get a brace or two of heavy fish from an almost still pool by watching for rises, throwing near to the rings on the water, and letting your fly sink an inch or two. When it is under the water, give the fly a

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few little jerks, and then cast again. Always give the pools a fair trial, even in hot, bright weather. Big trout, standing by boughs on the look-out for insects, will sometimes take a sunk artificial fly, if you do not allow your shadow to fall on the water. When the river is high, cast in the bays and close to the banks, and remember that trout are then in all manner of usually unfrequented corners.

It is almost useless to fish heavy runs with the fly; but just off the edge of these sharps, where there is oily-looking water, is the spot to cast your lure. When the river is very low, you may throw into the big rapids, because, under certain states of weather and water, trout resort to the swiftest runs. Early in the season you will not find many trout in the more broken streams.

Whether you employ a rod of hickory, greenheart, or spliced cane matters little, so long as you learn how to use it, and keep your flies on the water. I have used a twelve-foot greenheart rod for several years when fishing in big rivers. It is rather heavy used single-handed for fly fishing; but such a rod is very useful for casting a worm in wide rivers, when one wishes to "fish fine and far off" in bright weather. A ten-foot rod is long enough for ordinary usage, and it should be adapted to the fisherman's strength, not too stiff and not too whippy, yet with plenty of spring and life in it.

To return to our pupil by the burn. He has found the fish "coming short," or just plucking at his flies, and leaving them unswallowed. Some anglers will tell you that trout "never come short," and that the plea of short rising, as an explanation for missing fish, is the witness of an inexperienced or unskilful fisherman. Personally, I believe that trout often rise very lazily to artificial flies, and scarcely take hold of them. They undoubtedly rise in the same listless fashion to natural flies, and for evidence of this one had only to watch the trout of the Derwent during the mayfly season of 1903. If trout are not keenly hungry,

The Best Flies

they do not snap eagerly at a fly, either sunk or floating. We need not contend, therefore, about the phrase "coming short." It is of more importance to learn how to tempt trout when they are feeding indifferently. Our novice must be especially cunning and ready at such times, and the more alert he is, the fewer fish will he miss.

At last the pupil has hooked a fish. It is a small trout, but a pretty one, and it fought well for its five ounces. The angler finds that the trout has taken the dropper fly, the Greenwell's Glory, although there are hundreds of blue duns on the stream. This may prove that there is a glut of duns, and that the fish are ready for a change of diet. If the Greenwell takes another brace of fish, you may conclude that this is the case, and it will be well to change your blue dun and to have a second Greenwell on the point of your cast.

The Best Flies.

We now arrive at the much-discussed question of flies. What is the best fly to use? My answer is the most accurate imitation of the natural insect which happens to tickle the fastidious palate of trout at a particular season, or at a certain hour of the day. Your general rule should be to watch for the natural fly which is being taken by the trout, and to use its counterfeit on your cast. In wet-fly fishing in rapid streams, you will sometimes notice but few flies on the water, or you may not see any. At such times consider the season of the year, and employ the fly that is most likely to be upon the river.

Do not pin your faith to any specific pattern, to the exclusion of others, because the originals of your imitation are not visible. The orange dun and olive dun, for instance, will attract on some rivers during April, though, generally speaking, these are regarded as summer flies. I am well aware that the taste of trout varies widely in different rivers and at different seasons, and a fly which has brought many fish to my landing-net on some streams is almost useless on

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another water. These contradictions render angling for trout exceedingly interesting.

If I were asked, "What is the most killing fly that you have used?" I would answer, "The olive dun." But my success may be due to the fact that I have persistently fished with that fly on the cast, and usually on point—in the rivers of Wales, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and Spain—rather than to the inherent virtue of the lure. Whether the olive dun is dressed with a quill or wool body makes no great difference to me in wet-fly fishing; but for dry-fly work I like a smaller fly with a quill body and cocked wings. For sunk-fly fishing in quickly-flowing northern streams, I have found the March Brown, blue dun, orange dun, partridge and orange, Wickham's Fancy, and olive dun good all-round patterns.

My experience is that of the angler who said: "It is not the fly, but the man who drives it." And by this I mean that, broadly speaking, the man who is not over-finical about his fly, but fishes persistently and in the right places, and up-stream, will catch more fish than the indifferent performer who is very orthodox in the selection of his flies.

A Useful List.

In his capital book on "The Trout," the Marquess of Granby names twelve flies in a "general utility" list. Three of my favourite flies are among the twelve. I do not think that the beginner can improve upon the stock-flies mentioned by the Marquess, which are as follows: March Brown, redspinner, alder, olive dun, red-quill gnat, olive-quill gnat governor, Wickham's Fancy, black gnat, yellow dun, hare's-ear dun, with gold-ribbed body, and iron-blue dun.

There are few waters indeed where one or another of these flies, used either wet or dry, will fail to take trout when properly presented to rising and standing fish. I refrain from laying down a hard-and-fast rule as to "the right fly" for certain seasons, because experience has taught

Wet-Fly Fishing

me that the appearance of a particular kind of fly on a river is determined by other matters than the date on the calendar. We may say pretty safely, however, that, as a rule, blue duns and March Browns will be accepted by trout early in the season, and that in the summer, the choice of



Male Winged.

Hackled.
March Brown Flies.

Female Winged.

flies is much wider. If the alder will kill in the height of summer, I have learned also that trout in certain Welsh lakes will take that fly in February; while, as most fishermen testify, the March Brown is an attractive fly at most seasons in many rivers.

Personal Experiences. Wet-Fly Fishing.

Early in this season of 1903, I fished a length of the Derwent, in Derbyshire, for the first time. The river was high and rather discoloured. I fished up-stream with a hair cast and three small hackle flies, tied by an expert Yorkshire angler, and took five trout. Later on in the day, I met a dry-fly devotee and an excellent fisherman, who declared his surprise that I had even ventured to fish with the fly in such high and stained water. My friend was more astonished that I had caught any fish. I told him that my best days in other parts of the kingdom had been precisely under the conditions that he regarded as quite unpropitious for fishing with the floating fly.

One more illustration to prove that we should not assert too strongly that one method of fly fishing is *always* to be rated much superior to another. In June of the same year, a clergyman, who had graduated in dry-fly fishing in Derby-

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shire, went, at my suggestion, to Talyllyn, in Wales. On a rough day, when the *habitués* were driven from the lake by the storm, this gentleman fished a quiet bay with the dry fly, and caught nine trout.

We may infer, then, from these illustrations that a hard-and-fast rule is not always the best in trout fishing. On a dry-fly river I managed to get a few fish by fishing the wet fly when the "regular" anglers stayed at home, and on a lake where every one uses a *sunk* fly, my clerical friend beat the day's record by fishing with a *floating* fly. Cultivate, therefore, a measure of individuality in angling, but avoid dogmatism, and be ever ready to learn from others.

The Dry Fly.

To fish with a small, delicately-tied midge fly in the "dry" method is perhaps the most difficult angling of all others. But this form of fly-fishing is an indispensable attainment, if you would capture the big, educated trout of the Southern rivers and the clear streams of the Midlands, while it is also the most "artistic" method of using the artificial fly. There is not a more fascinating moment for the trout fisherman than when he gently throws his dressed floating fly just above the snout of a rising trout, and sees it taken by the wary prey. In order to fish in the dry method, you must anoint your fly with a drop of paraffin, which, if you think it needful, may be obtained without odour.

Practise this delightful art by all means, and you will soon esteem it as the acme of trout fishing in rivers. I cannot make you proficient by directions, but I will try in a few words to assist you in learning how to use the dry-fly.

Approach the river bank cautiously, without letting your shadow fall on the water, and watch for a rise. There was a "dimple" close to the bank. You are below that fish, and that is right. Crawl up to within casting distance, draw out your line from the reel, and measure the distance

The Mayfly

to a couple of feet or so above the fish by making a few false casts in the air. When you have calculated in this manner, cast with the utmost delicacy, and let your fly float down to the trout. Bring up your rod as the fly comes down with the current, and avoid any drag on the line, which will cause an ugly and startling agitation of the water.

For a time you will probably "put down," or scare, more trout than you induce to rise. However, you must not be discouraged, for your reward will come, and there is a real sense of triumph in hooking a goodly and astute trout on a floating fly.

As you may not be able always to cast above a fish upstream, learn to fish *across*, but remember that a drag of the cast on the water is fatal. Let your fly float down to a rising fish. Long casts in dry-fly fishing are somewhat difficult, and you are apt to merely prick your fish when he rises. Still, you should learn to make long casts, and to strike promptly and firmly when you see the surface broken by the rise of a trout.

I have not the space to enter into the discussion as to the superiority of dry-fly fishing over the wet-fly. Both methods are good in due season, and in certain waters one mode is better than another. Early in the spring, when rivers are usually high, the wet fly will often prove more alluring than the floating fly, as it is taken by trout for a larva rising from the bed of the river. Later on, in some clear streams, the wet fly will be refused with scorn by cunning and educated trout, who are then fastidious in their choice of the many tender morsels of fly-life that abound on the surface.

The Mayfly.

In the mayfly season, which varies on different rivers and is unknown on others, do not adhere slavishly to the use of the artificial insect, unless the trout are refusing every other fly. Very often the green drake is contemptuously

Angling

rejected by trout in the height of its season. At such times try a dun or a redspinner in the evening. On the other hand, trout frequently feed with avidity on the drakes, and when every pool is ringed with rises, you may enjoy memorable sport for several hours. Mayflies should be dressed with dull, rather than bright, yellow wings, and should not be used in large sizes on clear rivers. Some of the green drakes of the tackle shops are calculated to frighten any fairly intelligent fish out of a run.

Midsummer Trout Fishing.

In July, when the rivers are at their summer level, and often very limpid, you will need to fish cunningly if you wish to catch trout in the daytime. When the sky is intensely blue, and the sun is shedding its full noontide glare upon the low water, only the cleverest angler can outwit trout with the fly. But at midsummer there is often a lively rise of trout from eight until half-past nine in the evening, and during this time you will often enjoy excellent sport.

Dapping.

During hot weather trout of a larger growth often "stand" near the surface of the water under trees with overhanging branches. In these spots the fish obtain a good supply of flies and caterpillars which drop from the boughs. To catch a brace or two of these big fish, you must learn how to "dap," or "dape," a living insect in front of their noses without showing yourself to their vigilant eyes. Use a short, rather stiff rod, an ordinary line, to which you should attach about a yard of fairly strong gut and a number one hook. With a butterfly net, catch a buzzing green fly or a bluebottle, which you will find on walls, and impale your bait carefully through the thorax. It will be well to have a fair-sized bullet on your line, just above the cast, to facilitate dropping your fly upon the water. If you prefer it, you may attach the bullet two

Spinning for Trout

feet above the hook. But the weight must not be allowed to touch the water, or you will terrify every trout under the tree. Wind your bullet almost up to the ring of your top-joint, push the rod through the boughs quietly, and let the fly drop on the water. This is a troublesome mode of fishing, but it is one that accounts for many big trout in midsummer. You must land your fish as best you can, and the process will often result in the loss of a fish.

A Novel Method.

I have devised a way of fishing the natural fly on a floating *line* and cast, which has proved highly successful on still pools in bright weather. Grease about fifteen yards of your reel line and your cast with vaseline. Let your cast be of fine drawn 3x or 4x gut, and your hook a number 15 or smaller. Bait with any live fly that you can obtain, and place it on the hook, so that it will float and flutter in a natural manner. If your line and cast are not greased, you will find that their weight in sinking will drag under and drown the fly almost at once. Therefore, always rub vaseline on your line to make it float.

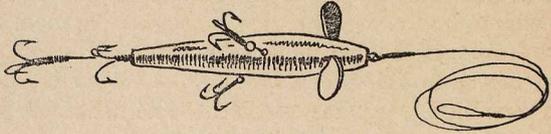
When you see a trout rise, stalk up as near to him as possible, and gently flick or throw the fly over his head. The chances are ten to one on the fish taking the bait, always provided that he has not seen you, that you make no drag, and that the fly is lively. This is not an easy style of fishing, but it is very profitable in some still waters, and I advise you to learn the method. You must use biggish flies such as the alder, stonefly, and bluebottle. I have caught some shy trout in this way, in a shallow pool, on the brightest days. A cloudy day, if warm, is, however, preferable.

Spinning for Trout.

Trout may be taken with various spinning baits. The most deadly is the natural minnow, used upon a trace with triangle hooks. Ask your tackle-maker for a lip hook flight.

Angling

Fish with this bait in the sharp runs, in eddies, and at the tails of the pools when the water is high, and you will not fail to catch trout. In low water a small gilt or silver Devon minnow will often attract trout when they are indifferent to the fly. Spin slowly by making jerks with your rod top, and draw your minnow up or across the stream. You may also fish up-stream with the minnow in bright sunshine, and by this means I have often caught a few good trout in very



Silver Devon Minnow.

low water. In very heavy water use a small bullet on the flight to sink the minnow.

A Nottingham optional check reel and an undressed line are useful in spinning for trout. If you use an ordinary metal reel, and wish to make long casts, you must draw out some yards of line from the reel with your left hand. See that your line is not entangled with grass or plants on the bank, and in recovering, learn to coil the line neatly in the palm of your left hand, in the Devonshire fashion.

Worm Fishing.

Fishing for trout in clear water up-stream or "t' worm up t' hill," as they say in the North of England, is an art that you should strive to acquire. Most men who know how to handle a rod can catch plenty of trout with a worm when the river is deeply coloured. I have no enthusiasm for this kind of fishing. But a good clear water worm fisher is an artist, and our Yorkshire friends expatiate upon this method with the zest of the South Country dry-fly angler.

Use a fine cast and a Stewart hook, and bait with a red worm or brandling. Fair-sized worms kill the most fish. Wade quietly, cast your worm like a fly, and without splash,

Thames Trout

into the edges of runs, between rocks, and into the tails of shallow pools. Let the worm come down with the stream, and do not check it till it is almost at your feet. If the cast stops, strike at once, and whenever the line tightens be prepared to "hit" a trout. Sometimes a trout will take the worm with a dash, and there will be no need to strike. Play your fish down-stream.

Another mode of worm fishing for trout, which I learned in the Welsh Dee, is swimming the bait down-stream. A long, whippy rod is used for this purpose. My own rod is twelve feet long; but professional anglers at Llangollen use a rod fourteen or fifteen feet in length. Wide rivers can be fished thoroughly by this method. The fisherman wades,



Stewart Worm Tackle.

and throws his worm like a fly across and rather up the stream, allowing it to swim down, and keeping the point of the rod well up.

Experts make very long casts, and contrive to keep a tight line. The finer your tackle and the longer the rod, the better will be your fortune in this style of fishing. You will require from three to four shot on the cast, which should be fastened about six inches above the hook. Use a single hook, and the best quality fine-drawn gut.

Thames Trout.

I will now speak of the Thames trout and how to angle for these much-prized fish. The trout of the Thames frequent the deep weir-pools, the scours, and the sharp, deep water at the bends of the stream such as may be found above Shiplake. April and May are favourite months for Thames trouting. It is advisable to make a study of the

Angling

length of the river which you intend to fish, and to discover the feeding-places of trout. You may often see the fish at play on fine evenings.

Spin the weir streams with a bright dace or gudgeon on a Chapman spinning tackle, with a lead attached, and cast from a Nottingham reel. Your tackle must not be coarse, but the gut should be of the finest quality.

Another method of Thames fishing is with live-bait. A lively bleak is hooked on a single hook, through both lips, and allowed to swim near the surface of the water. Use about four feet of well-tested gut, and have a long reel line and a pliant and powerful rod. A piece of cork, with a nick in it to hold the line, will serve well as a float.

Lake Fishing.

Lake fishing is another branch of the science of angling for game fish. The trout of lochs often take a bright fly under the water, or an artificial spinning bait trolled behind a boat, or cast from the shore. Choose a dull windy day in summer time for this sport. If you fish with the fly from a boat, cast cross-wise from the bow or stern of the skiff rather than in the direction in which the boat is moving. Work the windy side of the lake even if you have to cast against the breeze, and pay attention to water in the vicinity of weed-beds and patches of reeds.

Give the appearance of life to your flies by working them as in sea-trout fishing. You may use big flies, and have three on the cast, when fishing in some of the bigger lakes of Scotland and Ireland during dark, rough weather. But in a slight breeze use only one fly on a finer cast, and let the fly be of ordinary trout size.

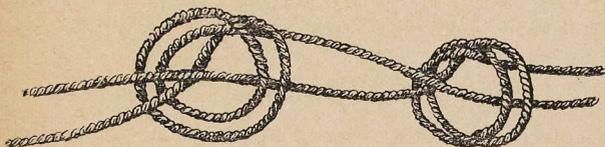
In shallow lakes, wade, and cast over rising fish in the bays, and at the mouths of brooks. Blow-line fishing on lakes is a popular sport in Ireland, and a means of capturing very fine trout. A live fly is used on a fine cast, and the blow-line is made of floss silk and attached to the reel line

Trout Tackle

by splicing with waxed silk. The biggest lake trout are caught by trolling a natural bait.

Trout Tackle.

Your trout rod should be springy and light, but there must be a certain stiffness about it for dry-fly fishing. A tapered line is not indispensable, but it is useful and an aid to success in fishing with the dry fly. Look well to your casts, and reject frayed and weak pieces. In joining gut use this knot, which is reliable if you first soak the gut for



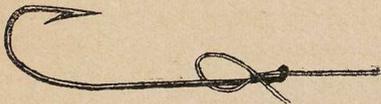
Knot for Joining Gut.

half an hour to soften it. Lay the two ends together, make a double loop in each, as in the illustration, and then draw tightly together. Clip off loose ends with small scissors. This is the double fisherman's knot.

To attach an eyed hook to your cast, use this knot and draw the gut tight (see illustration below).

Your line should be fastened to your cast in the hitch as in the illustration on page 23.

Carry your net through a big curtain ring attached to the



How to attach Eyed Hook to Cast.

creel, or you may thrust it through a belt around your body. Some anglers prefer to hold the net in the left hand, and a long-handled landing-net, with a spike on the bottom, is useful to steady oneself while wading in swift rivers.

Angling

Some Golden Rules.

Study the flies on the water, and learn their habits and the season of their appearance. Keep out of sight of your game, and cultivate stealthy motion. Fish late in the evening in warm, bright weather. In the spring, look for trout in the slow shallows rather than in the big runs. After a spate, fish near the banks and in bays, and not in rough, tumbling water.

The Grayling.

Angling for grayling is in many respects like trout fishing. The best season for grayling fishing with the fly is from July to the end of October; but sometimes the fish take the fly readily in frosty weather during the winter. Most trout flies will attract grayling, but there are special patterns for grayling, such as the red tag and the apple-green dun. You will note that grayling do not lie so near the surface as trout, and that they will often take a sunk fly.

In summer you may get handsome grayling with the dry fly. These fish are not so easily scared as trout, but they are by no means devoid of cautiousness.

Maggot Fishing.

In the winter, if the fly fails, use the maggot and have a tiny float and a few shot to "cock" it. Dock grubs are very good bait in cold weather, and so are red worms. After snow or hail in the winter, grayling will often rise to the artificial fly, especially in a burst of sunshine.

The Char.

Char are found in some of the English lakes, and in certain llyns in Wales. They are caught in large quantities in Llyn Padarn, at Llanberis, during October. The local anglers use a shotted line, and fish with the worm deep down. Char will sometimes feed on the surface, and they may then be caught with the fly. In Wales char are known by the name of *torgoch* or "red-belly."

Haunts of Trout and Grayling

Haunts of Trout and Grayling.

I have not sufficient space in this handbook to write a comprehensive list of open and ticket waters for trout and grayling fishing. There are free lochs and rivers in Scotland and Ireland, and many hotel waters. For Irish rivers consult "Where to Fish in Ireland," by Hi Regan, and a number of waters in all parts of the kingdom are briefly described in the "Angler's Guide."

At Towyn, Dolgelley, Bala and Festiniog, in Wales, there are rivers and lakes within reach, some free and others fishable at a cost of boat hire or by payment of a few shillings for a weekly ticket.

There are plenty of trout and grayling in the Upper Yore, in Yorkshire, where visitors may fish a club water for five shillings a week. Hawes is on this stretch of the Yore.

In Derbyshire, there is the Derwent at Darley Dale and Matlock, where tickets cost two shillings a day, and on the famous Dove there are several hotels and boarding-houses with fishing rights.

Devonshire and Cornwall abound in trout streams, which can be fished by ticket, or by obtaining permission from landowners. At Chagford and Newton Abbot, on the Teign, there are ticket lengths, and some of the Dartmoor streams are open to those who provide themselves with a license under the Duchy of Cornwall.

PART II

ANGLING FOR COARSE FISH

CHAPTER I

THE PIKE

Habits of pike—New methods of fishing—The paternoster—Snap tackle—Green lines—Live-baiting—Spinning—Casting the spinning bait—Pike fishing from a boat—Rivers and meres where pike abound—The author's experiences—Winter fishing is best—How to preserve natural baits—General advice.

Habits of Pike.

"THE mighty Luce or Pike is taken to be the tyrant, as the Salmon is the king, of fresh waters," writes Izaak Walton. This bold fish that sometimes grows to over thirty pounds in weight, and gives the angler excellent sport in rivers, meres, and ponds, is not to be lightly rated. I regard pike-fishing as a recreation ranking next to the pursuit of game-fish, and many are the pleasant hours which I have passed in angling for "the mighty Luce" in lakes and rivers and on the Norfolk Broads.

Pike or jack are predatory fish, subsisting chiefly upon small fish of various kinds. They will also seize young moorhens, frogs, beetles, flies, worms, rats, and mice, and they have been known to take the chub fisherman's cheese paste.

In the summer, soon after the spawning season, pike

Modern Methods and Tackle

haunt weedy places near the banks of rivers, but in winter they are found in the deeper water. They lie motionless in the water, in wait for hapless fry that chance to swim by, and by the unpractised eye they are easily mistaken for a sunken stick. Sometimes pike rise to the surface in hot weather, and appear to enjoy a sun-bath. They are then said to be "basking"; in the Thames and elsewhere I have often seen huge pike lying a foot or so under the water in quiet corners of weir pools and backwaters.

Our English pike, like other fish, have learned greater wariness since the days when Walton went trolling. I remember the coarse pike tackle of my boyhood, and wonder how we contrived to catch fish with it. Dead gorge fishing, or trolling, as we used to call it on the Thames, is not much practised nowadays by genuine fishermen, and the methods of live-baiting have much improved.

Modern Methods and Tackle. The Paternoster.

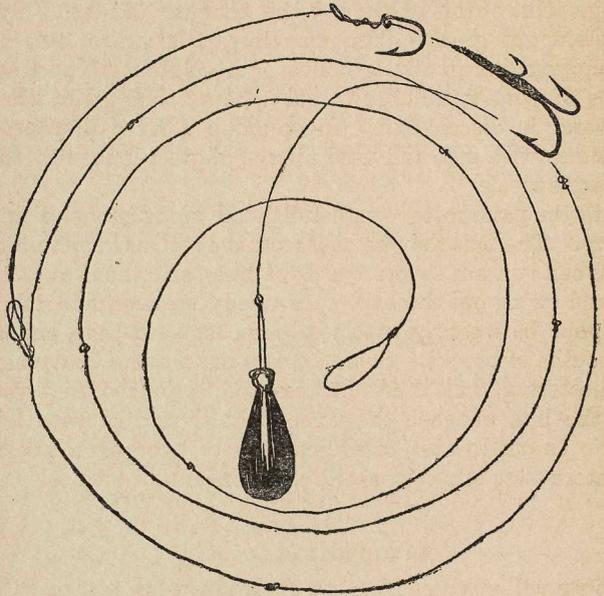
An excellent modern tackle for pike fishing with a live bait is the paternoster. Select a piece of good salmon gut, about two feet in length, and attach to this about a foot of thinner gut. When tying the knot follow the directions given on page 49, and above the knot fasten a snaphook, mounted on gimp, so that it will not slide up and down the gut, and fray it. You can enclose the loop of the gimp in the knot, when it will be a fixture, or you can loop it above the knot, and keep it in its place with a large split shot pinched on the gut above the knot. At the end of the thin gut attach a pear-shaped lead, painted green, which may be bought from any tackle dealer.

This tackle is used by our greatest pike angler, Mr. Alfred Jardine, and by Mr. John Bickerdyke, who highly recommends it. An improved snap tackle is that made of two triangle hooks on gimp. To each triangle there is a smaller hook, and the triangles are about two inches apart,

Angling

or may be procured so that they can be adjusted to the size of the bait.

The small hook of the upper triangle is inserted in the skin of the bait close to the back fin, and the small hook of the lower triangle is attached close to the gill case, near the pectoral fin. The thin gut below the hook can be broken if the lead is hopelessly "hung up" in weeds or between



Paternoster.

rocks, and thus the hook, bait, and salmon gut will be saved. In weedy waters you can use a longer lower strand of gut, to keep the bait off the weeds. Your running line should be of good silk, about eighty to a hundred yards long at the least.

After using your line, dry it by winding it on the back of a chair, and let it remain there till the morning. Some anglers like a dressed line for pike fishing with a spinning

Green Lines

bait. I do not dress my line with oil, but I frequently rub it with vaseline.

Green Lines.

A green line is less easily seen among weeds than a grey or white one; but if you do not use a green running-line you should at least have your gut stained green for summer fishing. Gut of this colour is to be bought. Judson's dye will stain gut green. You may impart a brown tint by soaking your gut in strong coffee or a solution of permanganate of potash, and brown gut is better than green when the water is discoloured. In spinning I have dispensed sometimes with gut, and used a trace of green line with the ordinary swivels.

With the paternoster you can fish all kinds of holes and corners. The bait may be cast from the reel, as in spinning, or you can run out several yards of line, coil them at your feet, and swing out the bait. In weedy streams and lakes drop your bait gently in close to reeds, weed-beds, and at the mouths of brooks. Some anglers use a small float when paternostering, but it is not essential, provided that you keep the line between the finger and thumb of your left hand. In dead water, in eddies, and in overgrown ponds the paternoster is a very useful and convenient tackle.

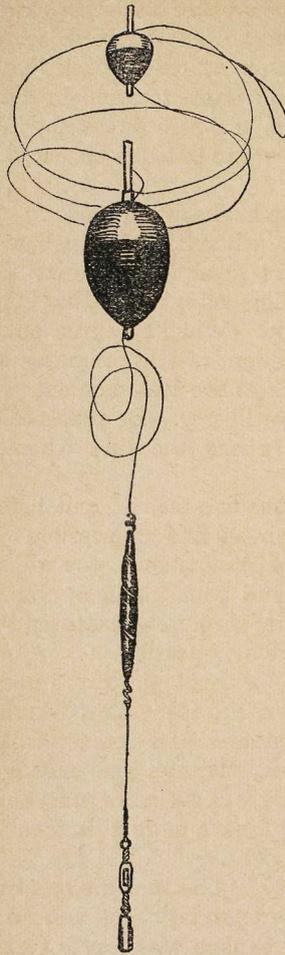
Live-baiting.

But we will suppose that you wish to try for a pike in a fairly clear mere, or in a slowly-flowing or rather deep river. In either of these cases you can fish with a float, and allow your bait to move where it will. Such a method of fishing is also to be recommended when the bottom of the river or lake is covered with weeds, for by adjusting your bait, it will swim clear of obstructions. With float tackle you can work a large area of water, without constantly moving as in paternostering.

You should use two floats: one big one, and a smaller

Angling

one above it to keep the line from sinking. Nothing is



Pike Live Bait Tackle.

more annoying than to find that your running-line has sunk below the float, deep in the water, when you need a tight line to strike a fish. The top float should be about a yard above the big float. You will need a lead to keep your live bait under, and you cannot have a better lead than the new spiral kind now everywhere on sale. The bait may be two feet or six feet below the surface, according to the depth and character of the water in which you are fishing. In the Norfolk Broads I have caught pike in less than two feet of water, and in these meres it is seldom necessary to fish deep. You will need a yard or so of stout gut, and it is well to have one swivel on it below the lead. Attach the snaphook to the swivel, and bait as in paternostering.

Swing out your bait, and allow it to swim with the stream, when fishing in a river. As the float sails down, play out line slowly from the reel. If the float begins to dance in a lively manner, you may be almost certain that a pike is regarding your bait with a hungry eye. Get ready for a "run." Presently the float goes under with a plump, or it is drawn rapidly sideways through the water. Do not strike

Live-baiting

furiously at this instant. Keep cool, give the pike a few seconds, and then with a lift of the rod *pull* rather than strike.

If my float is several yards away from the bank or boat when a run occurs, I gently recover as much slack line as possible, lift the rod suddenly, and begin to wind in firmly and quickly. But in recovering line before "hitting" the pike, do not on any account allow him to feel a check, or he may relax his hold of the bait.

When you have hooked your pike, keep the rod up, and play the fish from the reel. He will make a big rush, or he may stand and tug, shaking his head from side to side. Humour him in any case. Allow him to run, but never cease for an instant to feel him. When he turns on his side and shows signs of exhaustion, reel in promptly, and have the gaff or net ready. But at the last moment, your fish may make another dash for liberty. Be prepared for this, and see that you do not check the line when he plunges and darts away.

When pike are shy you must use fine tackle; and indeed it should be your ambition to fish as fine as possible. In the Welsh Harp water at Hendon, for instance, you will not succeed if your tackle is coarse and your methods clumsy, and in many clear streams it is absolutely essential that your gut should be as imperceptible as possible.

The man who fishes for pike without gimp, and uses a single hook on gut, will in the long run take more fish than the brother angler who employs stouter and coarser tackle. You will occasionally have a break, through the sawing of the gut by the pike's teeth, but you will get more runs, and I am inclined to assert that you will have more kills than the angler who uses gimp and thick gut.

When fishing with a single hook, I find that the bait lives longer when the hook is thrust through both lips instead of through the upper lip. I cannot explain why this is so, but I have proved it. In fishing with a single hook I usually give the pike more time before striking than I allow when using a snap tackle.

Angling

Spinning for Pike.

Pike may be caught with several dead and artificial baits, used upon traces fitted with swivels. Your trace should be from three to four feet in length, with three swivels. Use a small dace or gudgeon for dead-bait spinning, mounted on a Chapman spinner. There are many kinds of spinning tackle, and every angler has his preference; but I can only refer here to two kinds.

The Chapman has the advantage of being easily adjusted. It has two fans, which are fixed close to the mouth of the bait, and a flat spike which is thrust down the fish's gullet. On one side are two triangle hooks on gimp, and on the other a single triangle. One of the triangle hooks should be inserted in the side of the bait near the medial line, about the middle of the fish, and the other near the tail. You have then another triangle on the other side of the fish, which may be left loose or inserted, with one hook, in the side of the bait. In deep-water fishing you will need a lead. Use a bent spiral lead, and twist the running-line around it.

Another spinning tackle is still simpler. It consists of a trace and two triangle hooks on gimp, of the same construction as the snap tackle. Pass the gimp through the fish's gill before attaching the hook to the trace, or you may thread the whole flight through the gill. One triangle is fixed near the gill case, and the other under the back fin. The bait will hold better if you have also a single hook for the lips of the fish.

Casting the Spinning Bait.

Learn to cast from the reel, in the method which I have described in the chapter on "Salmon and Sea Trout," and use an optional check reel. In casting let the check be "off," and the reel free to revolve rapidly. When you have struck a fish, immediately pull the brass stud, and put the check "on." You can then play the pike from the reel, and so tire him more readily than you would if you had no check to the winch.

Pike Fishing from a Boat

Pike Fishing from a Boat.

I will now conduct you to a beautiful sheet of water in South Wales, called Llangorse Lake, on a breezy day in October. If you will take the sculls for half an hour, I will show you how to fish for pike from a boat. I intend to trail with a spoon-bait, because experience has proved that an artificial bait is more attractive in this water than a roach on a Chapman spinner. If I had a dace I think I could entice some big fish, as such a bait would be a novelty in this lake. Roach are so abundant in the lake that pike are not very keen at taking them on a spinning tackle.

Pull the boat slowly along the edge of the reeds in the deep, open water. I throw out my spoon-bait, having first attached a spiral lead to the running-line just above the trace. While you scull I pay out line, or let it run off my Nottingham reel, until my spoon is about fifty yards behind the boat. I then put on the check, and rest the rod across my knees.

This mode of spinning is an easy one, and it is justly condemned in the Thames and other rivers. But here one has a large sheet of deep water to work, and it is not always a simple matter to find the pike. We will scull in a zig-zag course here, for I think there should be a pike or two in this bay. Yes, there is a run! The reel gives a shriek, and the rod top bends nearly to the water. I strike with force, for I have a long line out. There is a swirl in the water about forty yards from the boat. I have hooked my fish. Scull quickly towards him while I reel in my line, for he is going away at a great pace. Now check the boat. The pike is coming towards us, and if you scull forward I shall have a slack line. I play the fish for about five minutes, and then bring him to the boat side. He gives another tug, and runs again, but he is tired and I check him. A quick stroke with the gaff as he rises to the surface, and he is mine—a good fish of nine pounds.

Angling

Rivers and Meres where Pike Abound.

Upon another day I am on the bank of the Dee, below Bala. It is a bright, frosty forenoon at the end of January, and as the sun mounts in the sky the river is ruffled by a north-west breeze. I have a rod and spinning tackle in my hand and a gaff slung upon my shoulder. In a canvas bag, also hanging upon my shoulder, I have a tin box containing eight or a dozen small brook trout, which I have preserved in formalin for winter pike-fishing. Failing trout, I use sprats, or dace, if I can get them. I put a trout on the Chapman, cast from the reel, and allow my bait to drop in the middle of a deep pool, below a scour. The length is fairly full of pike which have escaped from Bala Lake and bred in the river, and the owner of the salmon and trout fishing is anxious to thin out these sharks.

I spin for half an hour without a touch; but in the next pool, I run a pike immediately. Playing him till he is quite spent, I do not trouble to take the gaff from my back, but draw him on to a low sand-bank. He is a fish of five pounds. With a big stone I give him a blow on the head, and then remove the hooks. The bait has disappeared—where, I cannot tell. I re-bait, and go up-stream to a long, slow reach bordered with alders.

This is an awkward place to spin, but I know that there are heavy pike there. I cast with a short line between two alders. There is a flash of yellow in the water, a whirr from the reel, and I am playing a fine pike. He seems very reluctant to leave the spot where I hooked him, and fights in a circle, until I weary him, and bring him gasping to the gaff. He weighs ten and a half pounds, and I am very pleased that I have ridded the water of this destroyer of salmon-parr, trout, and grayling. After this the breeze drops, and I have no more runs.

Again I am in quest of pike, in a pool in Berkshire, in the midst of a lovely park. I have sculled the punt to a

Where Pike Abound

bed of weeds, and anchored just off it. In my bait-can are some lively gudgeon. I put one on a single hook, and cast my paternoster into a clear space amongst the arrow-heads and rushes. Perhaps fifteen minutes pass, and I am inclined to try another place. Suddenly the bit of cork which I am using for a float dips under, and the line moves off the reel. I give the pike about ten seconds, and then drive in the hook. He comes floundering to the top, and then rushes for the weeds. I check him as firmly as I dare, and he makes for the open again. But he is bent upon gaining the weeds, and he has his will. Among the cover he imagines that he is safe, and I have to let him sulk perforce for a few minutes. Then I tighten the line, feel him, and give the rod a jerk. He resents this, and fights his way into the open. And there I resolve to keep him until he is tired.

For pike fishing you should visit the Norfolk Broads, in the neighbourhood of Yarmouth or Lowestoft. Hickling Broad and Heigham Sounds are good pike waters. The charge for fishing in Hickling is half-a-crown a day, and the boat hire is two shillings. In Heigham Sounds and Barton Broad you can fish for one shilling per day. All the rivers and canals are free, and in the summer you will find pike in the big dikes that intersect the district. Live-baiting is the usual form of angling for pike in the Broads, and I advise you to obtain some live dace for bait.

The Thames abounds with pike, and the fishing is free from Oxford to Richmond. There are plenty of pike in the Stour, Medway, Trent, the Witham, parts of the Hampshire Avon, the Great Ouse, near Bedford, the Nene at Wellingborough, and the Arun at Pulborough.

Mighty pike are caught in the Irish loughs, and in some of the Scotch lochs; and in Wales you will find sport in Bala Lake and at Llangorse, while lengths of the Dee and Severn abound with these fish. The Wye also, from Builth downwards, contains many fine pike.

Angling

The Author's Experiences.

I will now give you a few hints from my own experience. Remember that if spinning fails, pike will often take a live bait, and especially if you use a fish foreign to the water. In the upper Loddon, in Berkshire, for instance, I fished without success with gudgeon through a long day, until I found two small barbel in the bait can. With each of these baits I quickly captured pike in the very swims that I had fished with gudgeon.

Let me tell you, too, that a small perch is a very taking lure for pike, although few anglers use this bait. Cut off the sharp dorsal fin, and bait with a perch, and I think you will agree that pike do not refuse perch as food. Perch are also good for spinning-baits. Goldfish are said to be deadly baits, but I have never tried them.

The phantom minnow is one of the most useful artificial baits, but I much prefer a natural bait for spinning. I have taken pike with the spoon, Devon minnow, and Geen's spiral minnow. Pike will often take an artificial fly in ponds. Use a big bass fly, dressed like an Alexandra, and work it under the water. Such flies are now on sale, and I intend to give them a trial in weedy waters in summer.

Winter Fishing is Best.

The best season for pike fishing is from October to February. Frosty weather gives the fish an appetite; but when a shrewd east wind accompanies frost I have not met with very good sport. I have found that pike feed well on windy, warm days in winter from eleven until three. Bright, still days in summer are not favourable, and when there is melting snow in the water most fish are off their feed. If I were going upon a fishing holiday I would choose the months of November and January.

How to Preserve Natural Bait.

It is often difficult to obtain proper natural baits for spinning. Procure your dace, gudgeon, or sprats, when

General Advice

and where they are plentiful, and preserve them in a solution of formalin in pickle bottles. Add one teaspoonful of formalin to a pint of water, and see that your baits are fresh and clean before putting them into the solution. Cork the bottles well.

General Advice.

Live baits can be kept in a stream or pond in a lid box, with two sides of perforated zinc, to allow the water to pass through. If you have bought live baits overnight, stand your bait can under a tap, close the lid, and allow the water to drip upon it. In warm weather give fresh water to your baits as often as possible. Do not feed your live baits with crumbs or worms. When baiting, handle your gudgeon or dace tenderly.

After floods in rivers, spin or live bait in bays or shallows. In the evening during hot weather watch the shallows, and you will often see pike chasing small fry. Try a minnow or a very small gudgeon at such times, without a float to your line, and use a light leger bullet above the gut. When spinning, do not work the bait quickly. Big and well-fed pike will not hurry after a bait spun at lightning speed.

CHAPTER II

BARBEL AND CHUB

Legering for barbel—Nottingham style—Ground-bait—Streams for barbel—The chub—Fly-fishing for chub—Some good baits—Float fishing—Winter fishing—Summer and winter baits—Haunts of chub—Size limits.

Legering for Barbel.

LEGERING for barbel is a sport that has many ardent followers upon the Thames, the Trent, and other streams of England. The barbel is an uncertain feeder, sometimes lying inert among the weeds of a gravelly length of the river, and at other seasons in deep holes, and by the roots of trees. When well on the feed, barbel take lob-worms and other bait voraciously, and give very exciting diversion to the angler. Thames barbel sometimes grow to ten pounds in weight. Yarrell states that the biggest barbel on record weighed fifteen and a half pounds.

Izaak Walton describes the barbel as a lusty and a cunning fish; so lusty and cunning as to endanger the breaking of the angler's line by running his head forcibly towards any covert or hole or bank, and then striking at the line, to break it off with his tail.

In warm, dull weather, after rain, barbel can often be tempted with a lob-worm. The hook should be of number 2 or 3 size, and the gut of good quality, such as is sold for lake trout fishing. Have a bored leger bullet on your running-line above the gut, and let the gut be about

Ground Baiting

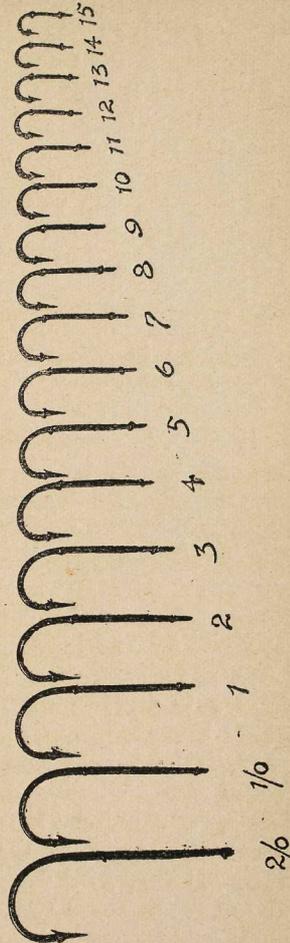
three or four feet in length. Swing out your bait downstream, in a sharp run beneath overhanging willows, or in a hole amid scours. Let the bullet sink to the bottom, and wind up your slack line, which you should hold between the finger and thumb of the left hand.

Nottingham Style.

In some waters you may find it more convenient to fish with float tackle in the Nottingham style. Your line must be free running, the float a fairly heavy one, and you must affix split shot to the cast, about eight inches above the hook, until the float "cocks" or stands upright in the water. Bait with a lob-worm, and let the stream carry your float down the swim. Don't check the float, but pay out line until your tackle becomes unmanageable, and then recover the line steadily, disturbing the water as little as possible. If the float glides away rapidly aside, or sinks suddenly, strike with a rather heavy lifting motion, and play the barbel judiciously, allowing him line if he fights hard, but always feeling him.

Ground Baiting.

Generally speaking, you will not have sport of the first order in barbel fishing unless you liberally ground-bait

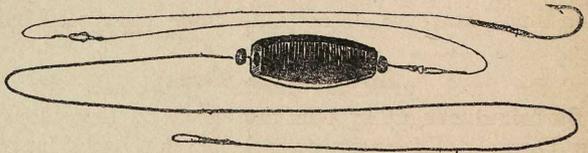


Scale of Hooks.

Angling

your swim at least twenty-four hours before fishing. You can scarcely overdo the ground-baiting. Enlist the assistance of your friends, and for several nights apply yourself diligently to the back-aching operation of "lobbing" on a well-mown lawn. If the weather is very dry, have the grass thoroughly watered at dusk. About ten o'clock provide lanterns, and several large worm-bags, or other receptacles, and "quarter" the lawn. With a little practice you will be able to catch the lob-worms without breaking them; but you must be very quick in seizing upon the slimy creatures.

Store your ground-bait in a large tub of dry earth, and place the worms in clean damp moss. It is important that your hook baits should be fresh, lively, and well scoured in



Barbel Leger.

moss. Select the females for the hook, *i.e.*, those worms without a knot to them near the tail. The males will serve as ground-bait.

Try to discover the haunts of barbel before putting in your ground-bait, or you may labour in vain. If you are the happy possessor of a long purse, you can buy your lobs, and supposing you wish for really good results, a sovereign will not be too much to spend upon ground-bait. Throw in some of the worms forty-eight hours before fishing; repeat the baiting in twenty-four hours, and again a few hours before operations with the rod and line. You may also reserve a number of the lobs to throw in while you are fishing. When ground-baiting a swift part of the river, make your worms up into balls with wet clay, or they will be washed out of the swim and wasted. In still,

The Chub

deep water you can dispense with the clay, but be careful to drop your bait in the right spot.

Besides lob and brandling worms, barbel will sometimes feed upon gentles, bread paste, and cheese. You must be a philosopher if you would become a successful barbel angler. The fish are notoriously sluggish in their habits, and often refuse every sort of lure. But if you persist, the red-letter day will come sooner or later, and a really good day with barbel will not be readily forgotten amongst your fishing reminiscences. When barbel are basking early in the summer, as I have seen them in the Kennet and Thames, you will not tempt fish to feed. They lie semi-torpid near the surface, in the still corners of weirlpools, and under overhanging branches, and afford a fine opportunity for estimating their weight "by the power of the eye." At such times, however, do not build your hopes too high.

Streams for Barbel.

Barbel are caught by punt fishermen in many lengths of the Thames. There are good swims for barbel at Bourne End, Great Marlow, Culham, and Sonning. In the Trent there are many favourite stations for the barbel fisherman. At Ambergate, Whatstandwell, and Matlock, on the Derwent, there are a fair number of heavy barbel. One of the best barbel rivers in Europe is the Douro in Spain. These fish are also abundant in the Garonne and the Rhine.

The Chub.

The chub is hardly a beautiful fish, nor can it be claimed as a table delicacy. In Yorkshire, however, on the banks of the Tees, I once met a dame who was "very fond of scallies" (chub) and "kenned how to make 'em tasty." I like the chub, because he rises boldly to the fly, and so long as he confines himself to rivers that do not contain game fish, he should certainly be preserved. Chub are not so fastidious as barbel. They will take any kind of worm,

Angling

gentles, cheese, cherries, blackberries, bread paste—sweet or plain—dock grubs, and other baits. In the little river Rib, in Hertfordshire, I caught a three-pound chub on a spoon-bait, while fishing for pike.

Fly Fishing for Chub.

Personally, I prefer fly-fishing for "the chavender or chub" before any other mode of taking this fish. It is a pretty sport in summertime to fish along the boughs of the alder and willow on a southern stream, with a trout rod and a black palmer or a big red tag. You mark your fish, a great buff-coloured fellow, standing close to a branch that dips into the Thames or Loddon; and kneeling in the stern of your boat you cast a fly in front of his white snout. There is the snap of a great jaw, a swirl in the water, and you are fast in a powerful and plucky "loggerhead," who charges for the boat, tugs, dives down, and bends the slender rod into the shape of a sickle, until he comes flapping towards the landing-net.

Some Good Baits.

Wherever there are slow-gliding deeps under trees on the Thames, you may expect to find feeding chub from June till September. You should use an ordinary trout rod, but not one of the slenderest and sloppiest kind, for at any moment you may hook a five-pounder, and have to hold your fish hard, to prevent him from gaining a weed-bed or other harbour. The cast should be of medium gut, and the fly moderately large for big rivers. Almost any kind of buzz fly will attract chub, though there are special chub patterns. In very bright weather you must fish rather finer, and have a smaller fly on your cast. An imitation bumble-bee or cockchafer for chub fishing can be bought at most tackle shops. Mr. Kennedy, of Solihull, Warwickshire, has invented a floating coch-y-bonddu, which is the best "counterfeit pre-

Winter Fishing

sentment" of the living insect that I have ever seen. This beetle is a stand-by for some anglers in the trout lakes of Wales; and although I have not yet had the chance of trying it amongst the chub, I believe that it would entice many of them in still pools during hot weather.

You can fish for chub with either dry or wet-fly. I think the wet-fly will take the most fish, but I may be wrong. Many chub fishers let the fly sink, and work it gently down or across the stream. The tail of a lob-worm, used as a fly, will very often secure you a good basket of chub. Cast the bait, let it sink a few inches, and draw it slowly to the surface. A lob-tail is a good bait employed in this manner after heavy rain. Bluebottles, and other large bodied flies, used alive, as in dapping for trout, will prove highly alluring to big chub in the hot months. Grasshoppers are a deadly bait on the surface, as Izaak Walton points out.

Float Fishing for Chub.

You may fish along chub-boughs with a float tackle, in the method that I have described for barbel fishing. Your bait should be about mid-water in the summer, and deeper in the winter. Make a paste of moistened cheese, and knead it well in a clean rag. Cover a number seven hook with a piece of this paste, and try swims down close to the boughs. If chub are there, you will catch one or two. After a few swims, try another "pitch." You may also bait with a worm, or with three or four gentles, when fishing in this style. A long swan quill float is useful for chub fishing in deep water.

Winter Fishing.

Should you discover a deep hole haunted by big chub in winter, bait the place overnight with boiled rice and potatoes, worms, and bran mixed with soaked bread. Next morning leger with a bright lob-worm, and you will catch fish.

Angling

Summer and Winter Baits.

Paste, cheese, and gentles are summer baits for chub. In the cold months fish with the pith from the marrow of an ox, lob-worms, and brandlings.

Haunts of Chub.

Among the favourite haunts of chub in the Thames are Bourne End, Abingdon, Sonning Reach, and Henley. There is also noted chub water at Sunbury. In the upper Loddon and Kennet these fish are numerous. The Great Ouse, in the neighbourhood of Huntingdon, contains fine chub, and there is good fly-fishing for chub at St. Neots.

Size Limits.

Barbel under the length of sixteen inches may not be retained from the Thames. The limit for chub is ten inches.

CHAPTER III

FISHING FOR PERCH

Haunts of perch—Perch in meres and ponds and rivers—Minnows on paternosters—Worm-fishing—How to lure perch—Personal experiences—Record fish, and useful hints.

Haunts of the Perch.

THE perch is one of our handsomest fresh-water fish, a bold feeder, and are agreeable additions to the breakfast-table. Perch seldom frequent very sharp water, but prefer quiet, weedy corners, holes near bridges, locks, and weirs, and banks where there are plenty of tree roots. They usually swim in shoals, and I have noticed that big perch choose the company of their peers in bulk and weight. In the Norfolk Broads perch sometimes grow to three pounds, and heavier fish than that have been taken. A two-pound perch is, however, a good fish, and perch of a pound, and less, give capital sport.

Perch in Meres, and Ponds, and Rivers.

Lake and pond perch vary in size according to the nature of the different waters and the quality of the food in them. I have caught over seventy small perch, in a day, from an old weedy pool in South Wales, but none of the fish weighed more than a quarter of a pound each.

Roach swarmed also in this water, and the struggle for existence was so severe that the fish could not attain to a presentable size. In other private ponds I have caught

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perch of over two pounds in weight, and seldom taken any under three-quarters of a pound.

In Barton Broad, and the Ant, which flows out of the Broad, there are some very fine perch, and big specimens have been captured in Heigham Sounds and other waters of Norfolk. The Stour, the Lea, the Medway, the Wey, the Loddon, the Kennet, and the Thames contain plenty of perch. In Wales there is good fishing in Bala Lake, and some exceptionally big perch are to be found in Llyn Arenig, not far from Bala ; also in Llangorse Lake in the neighbourhood of Brecon. The Wye above Hereford has some deep pools haunted by perch. This fish is abundant in Windermere, but the perch here are not often big.

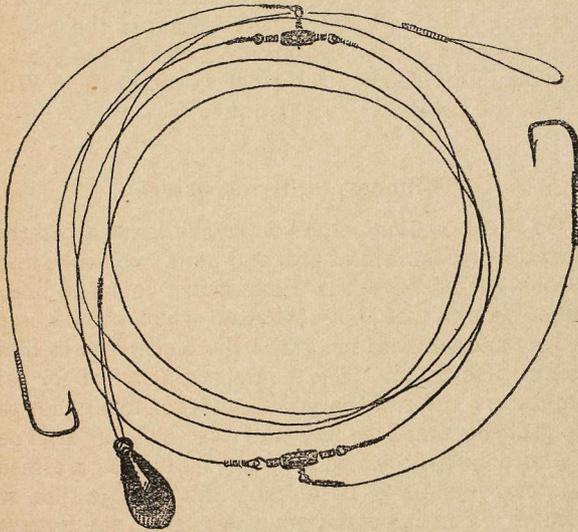
Minnows on Paternosters.

If you wish to catch perch you should make a paternoster of medium or fine natural gut, and have two hooks upon it. One hook should be about a foot below your reel line, and the other about a foot above the lead, which should be pear-shaped, and attached to the gut in the mode described in the chapter on pike-fishing. Use a number eight hook for baiting with minnows, and a size larger for gudgeon fishing for perch. Small gudgeon are, I believe, the best bait for large perch, but the minnow will not be refused when perch are feeding. Carry your live baits in a can, and change the water frequently. You can stand your bait can in the river while you are trying a corner, but be careful to secure the lid or the minnows will escape.

In big waters on windy days I use a small float above the paternoster. Floats for this purpose have a deep slit in them, and the line is secured by driving in a peg of wood or piece of quill. Wind the float almost up to the ring of the rod, and you can swing your paternoster several yards from the bank or boat. But whenever possible fish with the lead almost directly beneath the rod top. You will be able to feel the bite of a fish better if you fish in this manner. In sluggish

Minnows on Paternosters

streams and lakes you may use float tackle for minnow fishing. Four to six feet of gut will be ample. Do not use a big gaudy float, but a fairly large one is necessary in rough weather. Bait with one minnow, hooked through both lips, and let your bait play about in the stream in holes, close to piles, camp-sheathing, and off beds of water-lilies. If there is sufficient stream, allow your bait to swim down close to the bank, and see that you do not check the line.



Perch Paternoster.

When you have a "pull" from a perch lower the point of the rod slightly, let a few inches of the slack line between your finger and thumb run out, and then strike firmly. Play perch carefully, for if you lose a fish the misadventure is apt to cause panic among the shoal, and you may not take another perch in that place. Do not stay long in one spot, but rove the bank, and drop in your lead here and there. Try the outlets of dykes and streams, and the vicinity of rushes, water-lilies, and weeds. Near sunken trees and

Angling

stumps are favourite lurking-places of perch, and they often come into sandy bays to hunt for minnows.

When the stream is swollen you may use a minnow or worm on a leger. But for all-round perch fishing there is no better tackle than the paternoster.

Worm Fishing.

Shy perch may be sometimes enticed by using a small worm, a little hook on fine gut, and three or four shot eight inches above the hook. Cast quietly, and slowly draw your bait along the bottom, the slower the better. Perch will take the red worm, brandling, and lob. My best fish have been captured with lob-worms. Scour your worms in damp moss for a few days before fishing, and in baiting the hook leave a wriggling end. When using the paternoster you can bait the upper hook with a minnow, and the lower one with a lob-worm.

How to Lure Perch.

To lure perch, throw in several score of whole or chopped worms into a likely corner, a few hours before fishing. I have seen the live minnow lure succeed very well. Procure about a dozen minnows, put them in a pickle bottle full of water, well cork, tie a string round the neck of the bottle, and sink this aquarium in the spot where you intend to fish. The minnows are almost certain to attract the attention of perch, and they will run eagerly at your bait. You can also bring perch together by throwing in clay and bran in balls, by stirring up the mud with a rake, and by casting in worms while you are fishing.

I have said that the perch is a bold feeder, and this is quite true when he is in the humour. In hot weather, during the daytime, you will often find perch sullen, but at sundown they begin to feed. During a thaw after a sharp frost these fish often feed voraciously, and the best bait at such times is a well-scoured lob-worm. After rain,

Personal Experiences

especially if the water is stained, perch are on the feed. There is, however, no fixed rule to aid you in ascertaining when perch are feeding, and you must take your chance and angle in all weathers, regardless of wise saws as to "a southerly wind," &c. I have caught perch in a biting east wind. Melting snow is, however, almost invariably inimical to good sport with perch.

Personal Experiences.

In a muddy, weed-grown lake in one of the southern counties, I have had excellent takes of perch with worms on a paternoster. One day in February I caught four perch, each over two pounds, in fifteen minutes. As the water was very shallow, I fished with fine tackle, and threw my baits a dozen yards at least from the punt. I avoided all noise and excitement, and sculled the punt very cautiously up to weeds where these big fish lay.

When fishing in a slow stream, such as the Ant in Norfolk, or in old canals, I sometimes use float tackle for perch. If the fish are not feeding well, I leave my rod on the ground, and let the float sail about in an eddy or corner, while I spin for a pike or bait another perch hole. You can, however, command more water with the paternoster than with float tackle, and, on the whole, I prefer that method.

Record Fish and Useful Hints.

On the authority of Pennant, a perch of nine pounds has been caught from the Serpentine. Edward Jesse, in a footnote to Walton's "Complete Angler," says that he once had a perch of five pounds and ten ounces upon his table. This fish was caught in the Colne, at Hampton Common. In the Thames perch do not attain to that weight nowadays, but they are increasing in numbers, and I am told that London anglers consider a pound perch as only a moderately good specimen. I have not fished for Thames perch

Angling

for many years. In my boyhood I took several nice perch, some of them over a pound apiece, fishing from the towing-path below Whitechurch Bridge.

Perch will sometimes run at a natural minnow on spinning tackle, and I have caught them on spoon-baits and Devon minnows. In some big lakes spinning for perch is a good way of fishing on breezy days. A small trout spoon, or a spinning Alexandra, will often entice perch. In a reservoir near Birmingham heavy baskets of perch have been made with the artificial fly, worked in a slow sink-and-draw fashion. I think that fly-fishing for perch might be found successful in many pools.

CHAPTER IV

RUDD, ROACH, AND BREAM FISHING

The rudd of the Broads—The Norfolk style of angling—Fly-fishing—The roach and roach anglers—Newest methods—Tight line—Fish fine—Breadcrust bait—Paste, gentles, and worms—Roach in winter—Hints to anglers—Favourite swims—Bream and their habits—How and where to fish for bream—The long cast with float tackle—Big catches in Norfolk—Bream in rivers.

The Rudd.

FISHING for rudd is a very interesting branch of the angler's sport. In the summer of 1902 I obtained permission to fish for rudd in some ponds in Essex, and in two days my companion and I caught enough fish to stock a new pond. The rudd which we kept alive were small, about a quarter of a pound each, and I know that in seven months they have more than doubled their weight, and that they will rise to an artificial fly. None of the rudd from these ponds were monsters, but some weighed nearly a pound, and gave good sport on fine tackle and fly rods.

Rudd sometimes feed upon the bottom of meres and rivers, but they are also surface feeders, and take almost any kind of floating insect. If you are fortunate enough to live in the neighbourhood of a stream or pool stocked with these fish, you may vary your methods of fishing for them from fly to bait fishing.

I have not found it necessary to ground-bait for rudd in small ponds, as the fish usually feed hungrily in such

Angling

waters, and seize upon your worm or gentle almost before it can sink to the bottom. But in the Norfolk Broads, where one has to discover the haunts of the fish, it is necessary to bait a swim liberally with boiled wheat, rice, and soaked bread. The place should be well baited about twelve hours before fishing. Mark the spot by having little buoys of reed, or of wine corks, attached to a string with a stone to sink them. This is very important, for it is sometimes difficult to locate the exact ground which has been baited.

Rudd in the Broads.

The rudd in the Broads are somewhat fitful feeders, and they are likely to take fright and depart if you approach too near to them in a boat. You should, if possible, have your boat pitched within long casting distance of the place which you have baited, and left there till the morning. Approach in another craft, enter your moored boat quietly, and fish over the baited ground. Your worm or gentle should be about six inches from the bottom. Rudd will also take white paste and boiled wheat. See that your tackle is sound, for you may hook fish of two and three pounds.

Rudd frequent beds of water-lilies, and are often to be seen in shallow water, and in quiet corners of broads that are not much disturbed by boats. The summer yields the most success in rudd fishing. In the winter one seldom sees rudd in the Broads, and it is supposed that they lie inactive among the reeds until the temperature of the water rises. July, August, and September are good months. A breeze is an aid, as it ruffles the water and renders the shadow of the rod and tackle less visible to the fish.

Fly Fishing.

When rudd break the surface of the water, you may surmise that they are taking flies, and at such times you should use a fairly strong fly cast, a ten-foot trout rod, and

Newest Methods

a rather big dun or palmer. Let your companion scull the boat quietly by the reeds, about twenty yards from them, and cast towards the reeds. Watch for rising fish, and approach carefully to within casting distance. The bigger and shyer rudd may be enticed with the fly about dusk on warm evenings. Small fish will often rise as fast as you can cast over them. The fish may be drawn to the surface by throwing in small pieces of bread.

The Roach and Roach Anglers.

Roach are more widely distributed than rudd in our lakes and rivers. They are the prey of schoolboys and of veterans, and the favourite fish of thousands of fishermen in London and other big cities of the kingdom, who spend their half-holidays on the banks of rivers, canals, and ponds. Every Sunday from June till March sees an exodus of roach fishermen from the towns, each one of these devotees of the roach pole carrying his bag of ground bait, box of gentles, cubes of breadcrust, and in many cases a green box containing a collection of lines, floats, and hooks, and a substantial luncheon. These are the anglers who really enjoy their sport. They are mostly working men, and for eight hours of the day during six days of the week many of them labour in close factories in dingy cities at more or less unwholesome occupations. Their holidays are well earned, and it is a pleasure to see them on the banks of the Thames, the Lea, and the Grand Junction Canal, watching their quill floats intently and now and then playing a three-quarter-pound roach on their long bamboo rods.

Newest Methods.

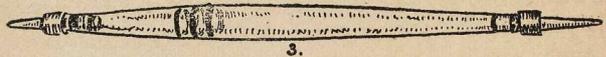
The specialists in roach fishing angle in a very scientific and painstaking manner. One expert will use a nineteen-foot cane roach-pole and a tight line of fine-drawn gut, without a reel. With this tackle he will catch roach of over

Angling

a pound, sometimes of two pounds apiece, with a bait of bread-crust. Another adept of "roaching" fishes in the Nottingham style, and lets his float swim down a sharp stream until you can scarcely see the red top of the quill. But he will detect the least checking of his float, and be alert for the nibble of a roach.

A Tight Line.

I have not often fished with the approved modern roach pole, but I have watched hundreds of fishermen using this weapon. It has many advantages. For one thing, with a long rod and a tight line, you can strike a fish much better



Roach Floats.

1. Porcupine Quill.

2. Cork.

3. Taper Quill.

than with a short rod and a lot of slack line. The pole enables you to fish well out in the stream, and at all times the point of your rod can be kept well over the float. Roach often bite in a niggling fashion, and the float scarcely responds to the nibble. Big roach sometimes take the bait with the least fuss, while little ones drag the float under, and almost out of sight. Watch your float closely in roach fishing. I do not advise you to strike at the very first shudder of the float. Experience can alone teach you the right second to strike your fish.

Fish Fine

Fish Fine.

Roach often feed shyly, and in low water during hot weather you cannot hope to make a very heavy catch. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. But in much-fished rivers and canals you must fish fine, try several baits, and keep to your swim patiently till the roach begin to feed. Some of the best roach water in the Thames is above Oxford, where the river is swift in places, with trailing weeds and a gravel bed. The roach pole is not of much service in such swims. You need a heavily-shotted float—a long swan quill for preference—for this sort of water. Your line should be light and fine, and not liable to swell and kink. The rod should be eleven or twelve feet long, and springy in action, as you will need to lift a long line in striking. A bite often occurs at the very end of a long swim in this style of fishing, and to hit the fish you must bring the rod up quickly, and with some force. If your rod is too stiff you are apt to break the cast when striking a fish several yards away.

The days of fishing for roach with a big round float, water cord, and thick gut are nearly over. Unsophisticated roach in turbid streams and private ponds may be taken occasionally on such primitive gear; but among the intelligent fish that swim in clear waters you will court failure unless fine gut is used. The roach has been called "the sheep of the water." Roach are apt to become wary as they increase in size, therefore the angler must fish for them with skill and cunning.

Bread-Crust Bait, Paste, Gentles, and Worms.

The bait most approved by modern roach fishers is bread-crust, cut into cubes about the size of dice. Soak the crust of a cottage loaf, let it partially dry, then cut it up into pieces for the hook. Paste of white bread will also attract roach. For paste use the crumb of a white loaf, soak it well, and knead and work it in a clean linen rag till it is of the

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consistency of putty. Well-made paste ought not to wash off the hook. Some anglers mix cotton wool with their paste but this is not necessary if you knead it sufficiently. Yellow paste will sometimes tempt fastidious roach. You can colour your paste yellow with a little saffron. Red paste is sometimes used. A little rouge, or a tinge of powdered vermilion, will give a deep red hue to bread paste. While fishing for roach, throw in soaked bread, boiled wheat, a few gentles, or a handful of worms. Some fishermen heavily ground-bait for roach, but an experienced roach angler tells me that he seldom uses more than a few handfuls of ground-bait for each swim.

If pas or bread-crust is refused, try three fresh gentles on a small hook, taking care to cover the shank and point of the hook. After rains roach will often feed on worms. A lobtail is a good bait in certain states of the water, and so are brandlings and small red worms. I have not caught any roach over a pound and a half, but my biggest fish have been taken with worms in the Thames, Wye, and ponds.

Most of the old writers on roach fishing tell us that the bait should be on the bottom. This is questionable advice. The bait should certainly be *near* the bottom, say an inch or so from it. If you fish on the bottom in very muddy pools, I am afraid that you will catch but few roach, for your worm or paste will become soiled, and may even sink into the ooze. If your bait touches the bottom in river fishing, your float will be constantly checked or drawn under by the dragging of the bait on the gravel, and you will scarcely know whether the check is due to fish or to dragging. Always plumb your depth with a folding lead before fishing a swim, and let the bait sail just clear of the bottom. When fishing strong, shallow water, you can gauge the depth with the eye.

Roach in Winter.

Winter is perhaps the best season for roach fishing. These fish often feed well during a frost. Now and then they bite

Favourite Swims

during a fall of hail or snow; but they are not usually on the feed when the wind is in the east.

Hints to Anglers.

In the summer roach will sometimes rise to flies, and you may catch them then with a trout rod and a small black gnat or blue dun. In Llangorse Lake a good many roach are taken with the artificial fly, and I think this way of fishing would be successful in many pools. Dock and wasp grubs are greedily accepted by roach, and but few of the biggest and variest roach can resist the dock grub in the autumn.

Favourite Swims.

There is a wide choice of waters for roach fishing. Twickenham, Datchet, Pangbourne, and Goring are favourite stations on the Thames. In the Sussex Ouse, near Lewes, there is a plentiful stock of roach, which contains many over a pound a-piece. The fishing is free. The Great Ouse, near Huntingdon, the Norfolk and Suffolk streams, the Hampshire Avon, and the Trent contain plenty of roach.

Bream and their Habits.

Bream frequent parts of the Thames, many of the rivers of the East Coast, certain canals, and several of our English meres and pools. In the winter bream are torpid, and do not appear to feed much. But in warm weather they give capital sport in the Broads of Norfolk and Suffolk. Bream were formerly regarded as a table delicacy, but nowadays this fish is not found on the *menu* of epicures.

Where to Fish for Bream.

Anglers for bream in Barton Broad make a careful study of the habits and haunts of these fish, and angle for them in

Angling

a very ingenious manner. Plenty of ground-bait is necessary if you wish to make a heavy catch of bream. Every bream fisher has his own fad in ground-bait, but, as a rule, bran, bread, rice, or wheat, well soaked and made into stiffish "pudding," will bring bream together. Worms are preferred by some anglers as ground-bait. A few handfuls will not serve; you need plenty of them, and they should be distributed several hours before fishing in the feeding-grounds. Chopped raw meat is sometimes used.

Long Cast with Float Tackle.

Barton Broad is shallow, and the water is clear. The baited place must be approached quietly, and to obtain satisfactory sport you should fish twenty or even thirty yards from the boat. Alma Nichols, a specialist in bream fishing, uses a dressed line of medium thickness and a heavy cork float. The line is run out from the reel, and coiled loosely, and the rod swung for a long cast, the heavy float and the shot aiding in the operation of getting out a very long line. This fishing requires practice, and is not easy at first. But the results are wonderful.

Big Catches.

The takes of bream are reckoned by the hundredweight, and a two-pound fish is far from uncommon.

Bream in Rivers.

In rivers bream can be caught on a leger, baiting with worms, gentles, or pieces of raw meat. It is always advisable to ground-bait your swim overnight, either with worms, greaves, boiled barley, or rice, or a mixture of these dainties. In slow, deep streams float tackle can be used. The hook should be of the same size as for barbel, if the bream run large, and the gut must be sound. A yard of gut will be

Bream in Rivers

long enough for leger tackle, and from four to six feet for float fishing. The bream has a rather small mouth; therefore give him time to take in the bait before you strike.

Among likely waters for bream fishing, I may mention the Bure, the Stour, the Waveney, the Yare, the Chelmer, the Lea, the Great Ouse, the Wey, and the Nene.

CHAPTER V

CARP AND TENCH

Habits of carp, and their haunts—Carp basking in hot weather—How to ground bait—Sweet paste—Personal experiences—Tench—Their coyness—Fishing for tench—A record catch.

Habits and Haunts of the Carp.

In mediæval times carp were bred and carefully preserved in moats and stews, which still exist in the domains of monasteries and country seats. Carp are bottom-feeding fish, and they thrive best in deep pools, slow rivers, and waters with a muddy bottom. In cold weather carp are supposed to burrow in the mud, and to lie torpid in a state of hibernation; but I am not aware that the winter habits of these fish have been positively determined by naturalists. Carp often grow to the weight of two and three pounds, and fish of fifteen pounds have been caught in England. They live for many years, and are said to attain greater age than any other fish.

It is probable that the carp was introduced into England, for Leonard Mascall, an early writer on angling, who wrote in 1590, speaks of "the carpe which came of late yeares into England." Walton refers to the carp as "a stately, a good, and a very subtil fish."

Carp spawn about the end of May, and they are in condition in July. In some ponds they breed rapidly, and grow quickly to two, three, and six pounds, while in other waters they remain small, though they may be very abundant.

Sweet Paste

Carp are occasionally caught from the Thames, and they are found in several English rivers. But the biggest carp are usually captured from old ponds which have been inhabited by their species for two or three hundred years.

Carp Basking in Hot Weather.

In hot weather carp sometimes rise to the surface and lie there inert. When they are basking in this manner, you may form an estimate of the number and weight of the fish in a pool, and in a well-stocked water you will see three or four big shoals of the fish, with individuals from a pound to six or even eight pounds in weight. Upon two occasions I have seen carp taking a sun-bath in this fashion, and I shall never forget the spectacle of the scores of aldermanic fish lying under the drooping bough of a beech-tree.

Carp fishing is an engrossing sport, but it is one that is best described as uncertain. It is not very easy to tempt big carp to the hook; yet, if you have once succeeded in catching a great golden three-pounder, you will not abandon angling for carp after a few blank days.

How to Ground-Bait.

Ground-baiting is, I think, essential even when carp are freely distributed in a pool, for carp must be attracted by the sight of a banquet to induce them to feed. I have never baited heavily for carp. Boiled potatoes should be used, and you may add soaked bread and bran. If possible, throw in a little bait, a few handfuls, for three days, and repeat the baiting on the day of fishing. A piece of half-boiled potato is recommended for baiting the hook, but all my captures have been made with sweet paste.

Sweet Paste.

To make sweet paste, take a good slice of white bread, soak it well, and add two tablespoonfuls of honey. Gentles

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and worms will be accepted sometimes, and capricious feeders might be tempted with coloured pastes. Still, I know no better bait than sweet paste, and you should never be without it on the bank of a carp pond.

Personal Experiences.

Perhaps I can best assist you by relating my own experiences in fishing for carp. About ten years ago I obtained permission to fish in a pond of about three acres, in a wild part of Devonshire. The genial owner of the water told me that there were carp in the pool, but they were so wary that, to his knowledge, no one had ever succeeded in catching any, while an effort in netting the pond had failed.

I paid a preliminary visit to the pond on a blazing July morning. The water was surrounded by trees, with rush beds here and there, and some large patches of weed. Towards the middle of the pond there appeared to be a considerable depth of water, but close to the bank it was from three to four feet deep. Suddenly, in a sunny corner of the pool, I saw a shoal of basking carp, and the sight set my heart beating. Some of the fish would have turned the scale at six pounds, and there were dozens of three-pounders.

I baited a place with bread and potatoes, and in two days I returned with more ground-bait, sweet paste, an eleven-foot rod, a fine, strong silk running line on a Nottingham reel, and some medium salmon gut. My float was a small porcupine quill.

The day was dull and warm, without any breeze. I had marked my baited place with a couple of short sticks stuck into the bank. The depth was a little over four feet, and the bottom muddy. To the right of the baited ground was a bed of weeds, a fine harbour for fish. I put on a piece of sweet paste, adjusted the float to the right depth, and quietly threw in the bait. For

Personal Experiences

half an hour my quill stood idly in the water; dragonflies skimmed over it, and midges persistently attacked my face and hands. Then I had my first bite. It was just a shudder of the float, and no more, and I waited for the quill to disappear. But only once during the day did a carp take the float under, and I learned that these fish are very cautious feeders.

At the next movement of the float I quietly raised the slack line from the water, and at the second little jerk, I struck. The point of the rod dipped to the water, the line flew from the reel, and the fish made for the weed-bed. And then, alas! my line came back slack. Upon reeling in, I found that the hook had straightened. I put on a fresh hook of rather stronger steel, and threw out again.

In about ten minutes there was another nibble. I struck, and felt a good fish. This time I played my fish more cautiously, though I gave him no rest for five minutes, and when he came to the net I saw that he was about a couple of pounds.

Upon that day, and others that followed, I took several fine carp from the same corner, and lost at least four heavy fish. The carp were in fine condition, very strong fighters, and tinged with gold when freshly caught. They were also agreeable eating.

The point of main importance in fishing for carp is to keep well away from the water. If there is no natural cover on the bank, a screen should be constructed of boughs. Edward Jesse recommends a wattled hurdle. Never disturb the water by throwing in balls of ground-bait, or splashing with the float. Fish as delicately as you would for chalk-stream trout, and let your tackle be as fine as is compatible with strength.

When carp are feeding on or near the surface, try a lob-worm or brandling on an unshotted cast. Throw it lightly, and let it sink slowly to about eight inches, then cast again. You must avoid showing yourself or waving the rod about.

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The Tench—A Coy Fish.

The tench is another interesting pond fish, and, like the carp, it is a coy feeder. Tench are probably the most disappointing fish in the whole category. For weeks and months, even for years, they refuse to take any sort of hook-lure; but a day comes when they are madly hungered, and then the sport is immemorial. In ponds where there are carp you may expect to find tench. They also frequent some of our rivers, and they are fairly abundant in the Stour. Tench are not caught every day. I have only seen one from the Thames, and that was a two-pound fish, captured by a Reading working man in the reach below the Kennet's Mouth. It was a beautiful specimen, and freely dusted with gold.

Fishing for Tench.

Tench will take lob-worms, brandlings, gentles, sweet paste, and, according to Izaak Walton, a paste mixed with tar. I say "will take," but of course *all* depends upon the tench's whim. Mr. C. J. Cornish, in his entertaining "Nights with an Old Gunner," has a chapter entitled "The Great Tench Catch." He says: "Tench are not only the shyest of all fishes, but have the longest memories. They will bite greedily once in ten years. Then every tench in the lake grows suspicious, and holds aloof from any form of bait."

A Record Catch.

The writer then narrates how a party enjoyed extraordinary sport with tench "for one day only" in a private lake. The water was well baited with lob-worms.

"We had," he says, "not long to wait. In about thirty seconds, or less, a shiver, then half a dozen little dips; then a steady rush of the float was seen at the end of the doctor's line; and the next moment he was fast into something—a heavy fish not to be trifled with. We should all

A Record Catch

have rushed to see what he had got, and whether it were a tench or not, had not exactly the same thing happened to each and every one of our floats in the next half-minute. Then a splash and a cheer from the doctor showed us that it was as he expected. He was fast in a three-pound tench, and was in the act of landing him. And we were all in the same case ; each had a fish, and that fish was a tench, deep, broad, slab-sided, covered with tiny scales of dark gold and honey colour, and richly lubricated with something like liquid glue. They came on solidly and stolidly, just waiting for one to be taken off the hook and a fresh worm put on, and then cruising off with bait and float as if there were no such thing as a hook or a fishing-rod in this wicked world.

"In an hour there were four golden piles of fish lying on the bank, one by each rod, and the catch was going on as steadily as ever. We sent a boy up to the house to ask for a sack, filled it, and set to work to fill another. This we did by nine o'clock, and the tench were only just beginning not to be afraid of being caught, but to leave off feeding. . . . We caught another sackful next morning, and then the tench found us out. After eight a.m. not a fish would bite."

While writing this chapter, I picked up *The Angler's News*, for August 1, 1903, and found mention of several tench among the week's catches of fish in different parts of England. At Bures, on the Stour, a two-pound tench was among the captures, and I read that "numerous tench" have been taken with the worm from the Chesterfield Canal. "Odd tench" were also taken during this week in the Mount Pleasant Drain at Boston, Lincolnshire. At Huntingdon "some nice tench up to 2 lb. 11½ oz., and 2 lb. 12½ oz." were captured. I also noted that carp of three pounds, four pounds, five-and-a-half pounds and seven-and-three-quarter pounds were caught from the Burgess Hill water belonging to the Brighton Anglers' Association.

CHAPTER VI

DACE, BLEAK, GUDGEON, AND EELS

Dace fishing with the fly—Bottom fishing—Bleak fishing with fly and maggot—Gudgeon fishing—Eel fishing—"Bobbing"—Legering—Attractive lures for eels—Night fishing for eels—Runs of eels in rivers.

The Dace.

THE dace is a handsome silvery fish, sometimes found in company with trout, and fond of clear, swift streams with a gravel bed. Dace will not thrive in ponds; but they are often caught in rather deep and still lengths of the Thames; and in big pools on the Dee, below Llangollen, these nimble fish feed near the surface during the warm months. On summer evenings, when the sun is setting, I have often had an hour's amusement in catching dace with an artificial fly; and I can recommend this sport as an introduction to fly-fishing for trout.

Caught with the Fly.

The black gnat, red quill, blue dun, red tag, and almost any small hackle fly will take the fancy of dace when they are feeding on the surface. The cast should be of the finest drawn gut, and the flies dressed on number 15 hooks. You can fish for dace with either a dry or wet fly. In very sharp streams, the wet fly can be used, and in slow pools the dry fly will attract the bigger dace.

The Gudgeon

Bottom Fishing.

For bottom fishing the gentle is a popular bait; but dace will often take paste, and especially red paste, with avidity. In coloured water after rain, there is no better lure than a lively red worm. Swim your bait down the streams between weeds, and strike at the first check or tightening of the line. A few worms or a handful of soaked bread can be thrown into the swim to attract the dace.

The Thames yields an enormous quantity of dace every year for pike baits, the Thames dace being one of the best live baits in any water, and excellent on a spinning-tackle. It is feared that dace may one day become scarce in the lower reaches of the Thames, unless restrictions are placed upon the netting for baits. At Richmond, Teddington, Hertford on the Lea, and Maldon on the Blackwater there are swims for dace. In the Lark at Mildenhall there are plenty of large dace which rise to the fly.

The Bleak.

Bleak afford sport for young anglers. They are bright little fish, and very useful for live-baiting for Thames trout and pike. Preserved in formalin solution, bleak make good spinning baits for the Irish lakes. You can catch bleak with a single gentle on a tiny hook, with a bit of bread paste, or with an artificial fly. The fish may be seen in shoals, near the surface, in the Thames and Kennet, close to bridges and locks. Let your bait sink about a foot below the surface, and use a small porcupine float and fine gut. To bring the fish on the feed, throw in a little half-soaked bread or a handful of oatmeal.

The Gudgeon.

Gudgeon are bottom fish, frequenting sandy shoals and sharp streams flowing over gravel. They are greedy feeders, and bite well at red worms, or half of a brandling, and

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sometimes at gentles. Gudgeon are very abundant in the Thames, where they are easily attracted together by stirring up the sand and gravel with a rake. The rake should be used about a dozen yards above the swim, and the bait allowed to swim down in the discoloured water. A gudgeon of seven inches is considered a fair fish, but there is the record of one which weighed half-a-pound. Gudgeon fried in butter are almost as toothsome as soles. For gudgeon fishing use a small hook, fine gut, and a thin silk roach line on a Nottingham reel.

Eels.

Eel fishing in rivers and ponds has many attractions for some anglers. I know one enthusiast who pays half a crown a day to fish for eels in a trout preserve. But there are hundreds of miles of free fishing for eels in the United Kingdom, and the sport is one of the least expensive branches of angling.

Bobbing for Eels.

I have never "bobbed" for eels, but I am told that it is a fascinating diversion. The eel is a great devourer of the spawn of game fish, and as they play havoc in trout waters, I am glad to hear of any means of attracting them to the hook. To "bob" for eels, string a number of worms on strong pack thread, by running the thread through them with a needle; wrap the bunch of worms round your hand, tie with the two ends of the thread, leaving plenty of wriggling tails. Next attach your baits to a stoutish length of water cord, and use a short, stiff rod or pole. Throw in the baits and let them sink in holes and muddy corners, and when you have felt two or three tugs, do not strike, but pull up your line steadily. In this way three or four eels may be taken at a time.

Legering.

Legering for eels is a more sportsmanlike method than

Night Fishing

"bobbing." You will need fairly strong gut, a leger bullet, and a hook big enough for a lob-worm or a couple of brandlings. With this tackle you can fish in slow or swift streams. I have legered for eels in the Guadalquivir and the Rio Minho in Spain, but you need not go further from London than the Grand Junction Canal at Alperston, or to Richmond, if you wish to catch eels. There are, indeed, very few streams in England without a store of eels. In the Thames, however, I have never found eels biting freely, though the river abounds with them in certain lengths.

An Attractive Lure.

Here is a tip for a deadly eel bait: Get a red herring, fresh if possible, remove the head and bones, and beat up the flesh in a mortar, adding a little water, till you have made a paste. Bait your hook with pieces of this paste, and you will have sport wherever eels abound. I can also recommend pieces of the raw entrails of rabbits and fowls as tempting baits. In hot weather eels will seldom refuse one or the other of these delicacies, though they may be indifferent to worms. If you think it is necessary to ground-bait, use chopped worms, intestines, and pieces of fish.

Night Fishing.

When eels will not feed in the daytime, you should lightly bait a few places, and fish for them after dark. A leger is better than float tackle for night fishing. Keep your line tight, and hold it between the finger and thumb of your left hand. Strike at the second tug, and play a heavy fish carefully. When you land an eel, promptly put your foot on his head, or he will writhe himself around your line till it is hopelessly tangled. Sometimes it is advisable to decapitate an eel before removing the hook. As eels often swallow a bait deeply, always provide yourself with a disgorger.

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Runs of Eels in Rivers.

If you are in Norfolk during a "run" of eels in the rivers, you should accompany one of the professional eel-fishers. At such times the takes made by "bobbers" are often extraordinary. During these migrations the eels travel in vast companies, usually close to the shore. Jesse says that two watchers on the Thames at Kingston "calculated that from sixteen to eighteen hundred passed a given line per minute" during a run.

PART III
SEA FISHING
CHAPTER I

ANGLING IN THE SEA

Sea fishing—Tackle for sea fishing—Rods *v.* hand-lines—Where to go
—Boat fishing—Pier fishing—Fishing from rocks, shores, and
piers—Fishing with fly.

Sea Fishing with Rod and Line.

ANGLING in salt water with a rod and line has been described as a "neglected art." But during the past fifty years this art has seen many changes and improvements; and among the increasing number of its experts we recall the names of such experienced anglers as Mr. J. C. Willcocks, Mr. Cholmondeley Pennell, Mr. Frank Buckland, Mr. Aflalo, and Mr. John Bickerdyke, to whose book on sea-fishing I am indebted for several hints in this and following chapters. Sea fishing ranges from the pursuit of the mighty tarpon in the Gulf of Mexico to hand fishing for flat-fish at Southend. It is therefore a sport for every one, rich or poor, and to the angler in fresh water it provides a pleasant change at seasons when river fishing is not practicable.

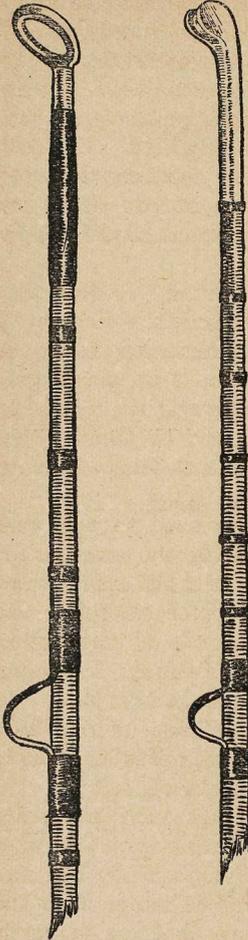
Rods and Hand-lines.

Various kinds of salt-water fish can be caught around our coasts with the fly, the spinning bait, natural or artificial,

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and with many sorts of soft bait. Tackle makers now supply special rods, reels, lines, weights, and hooks for sea fishing, usually at a very moderate cost. The beginner should buy a sea rod with a Bickerdyke end ring, and fitted with large bridge rings. A fairly long rod is best for angling from rocks and piers, and a shorter one is convenient for boat fishing. A well-made ordinary rod, fitted with a pulley end ring, nine feet in length, made of hickory and lance-wood, can be obtained for ten-and-sixpence, and a superior all-green-heart rod costs about a guinea and a half.

A large reel is necessary for deep fishing, and for angling for big fish, as it must hold plenty of line. Wooden Nottingham reels answer very well, and the line may be of twisted silk of the thickness used in pike fishing. The line should be of good quality, and for bass, mullet, pollack, and conger fishing about 150 yards long. A gaff with a four or five feet handle is essential, and it is well to carry a "priest," a steel or iron knobbed bar for despatching big fish.



Tops of Sea Rod.

Care should be taken of sea-fishing lines, for salt water is apt to quickly rot silk. After fishing, soak your line in fresh water, and then dry it on a dryer, or by coiling it around the back of a chair. A frequent dressing of vaseline protects the line.

Rods and Hand-lines

You can buy sea paternosters ready for use, or make them yourself from salmon gut. Two yards of gut will be sufficient. Messrs. Warner & Sons, of Redditch, supply special swivels for attaching the hooks to a paternoster, and I advise you to use these swivels. A Hemens' lead enables the fisherman to alter his weight to light or heavy, or you may use a pear-shaped lead of the ordinary kind. You will need hooks of various sizes, and the eyed make are the most convenient for general purposes. One or two floats are useful. The split float which I have recommended for pike fishing will be found satisfactory.

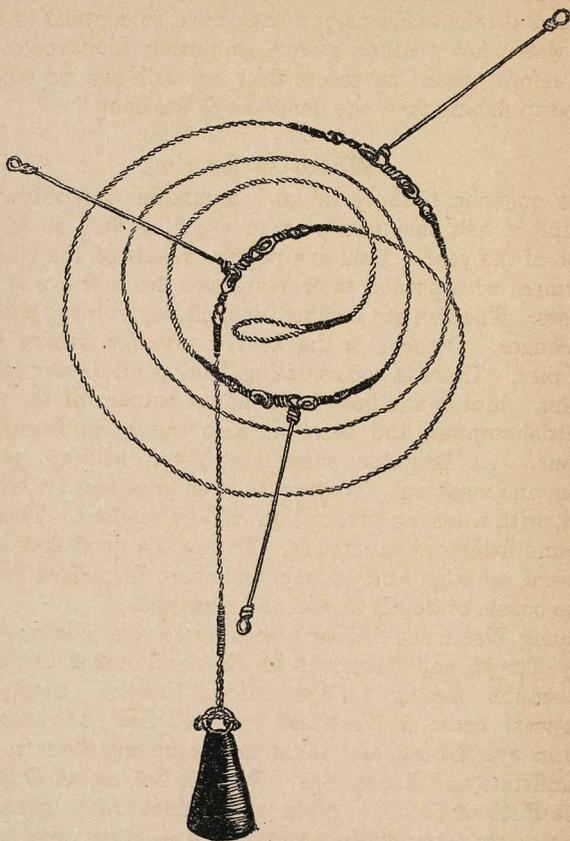
"Generally speaking, for shore fishing," writes Mr. John Bickerdyke in *Sea Fishing* ("Badminton Library") "there is nothing better than the paternoster made of salmon gut or twisted gut with two hooks on single gut, placed eighteen inches apart, the lower one six inches or less above the lead. The hook links may be about seven inches in length, the lower one double that length if there are flat-fish about."

Professional sea fishermen, who are used to nets and hand-lines for taking fish, are apt to deride the amateur for employing a rod, reel, and fine tackle. But the amateur can often beat the professional in his own water; therefore use the rod and reel, and follow the example of the higher exponents of the modern science of sea fishing. In fishing from a shore, the rodman has the advantage over the hand-liner. With a rod, Nottingham reel, and free-running line, you can cast well out, and while the hand-liner is laboriously coiling his line on the winder you can quickly reel in. On a hand-line the pull of a fish when he seizes the bait is not so readily felt as on a rod-line. Reflect also upon the superiority of the rod and check reel in playing a heavy fish, and you will decide that in theory the rod is better than the hand-line. In use you will soon prove that rod fishing is a more entertaining and sportsmanlike mode than hand-lining.

Pay no heed to the supercilious angler who tells you that

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"any duffer can catch sea fish." Skill, powers of observation, knowledge, and patience are as necessary in sea fishing as in angling in rivers. It is true that certain kinds



Sea Tackle with Booms.

of salt-water fish come readily at times at almost any bait, and that large takes are secured now and then on the rudest tackle. But the fish most worthy of your attention, such as the grey mullet, bass, and pollack, are possessed of intel-

Where to go

ligence and cunning, and they are not to be caught in a casual, haphazard fashion from any rock or pier. Sometimes you will experience difficulty in finding the haunts of fish, and at other seasons you may have to contend against clear water, hot weather, storms, and other hindrances. It is therefore absurd to assert that no skill and no wit are needed in fishing for "the denizens of the deep."

Where to go.

The question "where to go" must be determined by the kind of fish that you wish to catch, as well as by the season of the year. Deal is a popular resort of the London fishermen, who pursue their recreation from the pier and in boats. The fish are codling, dab, plaice, whiting, pollack, and conger. October is the best month for fishing from Deal pier. There is good whiting fishing off Dover in the autumn. Mullet and bass frequent the estuary of the Arun at Littlehampton, and bass are also caught in Shoreham harbour. At Brighton there are silver whiting, plaice, conger, and mackerel. Weymouth is an excellent sea-fishing resort, with a strong association of sea anglers. There is all-round fishing at Plymouth. Fowey is a good station for mackerel, whiting, and pollack, and there is pollack fishing off the coasts of South Devon and Cornwall.

Among Welsh sea-fishing places there are Tenby, Aberdovey, Towyn, and Barmouth for bass and mullet, and there is all-round fishing in the Menai Straits. Along the north-west coast of Scotland you will find a variety of sport in sea fishing, and there are some excellent resorts in Banffshire and Kincardine. Pollack fishing at Dunoon, on the Firth of Clyde, is often of the first order. I cannot do better than transcribe a portion of a letter sent to the *Anglers' News* of August 1, 1903, by Mr. A. G. S. McCulloch: "We have had fish of twelve pounds, and very few under four pounds. The big ones pull very hard, and the rod bends nearly in a circle. It is fine fun. We have had a few hours' fishing on the bottom, and had codling, whiting,

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haddock, but nothing extra large." Below is a record of the four days' sport with pollack at Dunoon :—

Friday, July 24th	2 rods	16 fish (with fly)
Saturday, July 25th	2 „	24 „ (with eel)
Monday, July 27th	2 „	29 „ „
Tuesday, July 28th	3 „	34 „ „

—
Total 103 fish

On the Yorkshire coast Filey, Scarborough, and Whitby afford varied sea angling. Yarmouth is a favourite port for sea fishers in the autumn, when cod and codling are often abundant. Lowestoft is noted for cod, and so is Cromer. There is fishing for flat-fish at Burnham-on-Crouch; and at Leigh and Southend the fishing has much improved during recent years.

Boat Fishing.

When hiring a boat for sea fishing, see that it is provided with a good anchor and sufficient rope, and look to the oars and sails. Engage an experienced attendant, one who is accustomed to accompany rod fishermen, and he will take you to the feeding grounds of fish, and provide the bait. Baits are, of course, an important point, and you must have a good supply of lugworms, mussels, herrings, and shrimps.

Pier Fishing.

The piers of watering-places are often in good positions for the fisherman, and the pier companies nowadays offer advantages for angling, sometimes at a small charge. It is a pleasant sport to fish for codling, rock fish, and whiting, from a rocky promontory on a calm autumn day. I well remember the zest with which I entered into this pastime as a lad in the beautiful island of Jersey. That was in the old days of hand-lining; but to-day, in the Channel Islands, most fishermen use the rod.

Fishing from Rocks

Fishing from Rocks.

Rocks are often excellent stands for fly fishing for bass. I regard this kind of fishing as a good second to angling for game fish with the fly; and if you are by the seaside when bass and pollack are about, I advise you to try your skill with the fly-rod in competition with these sporting fish of the sea. Bass flies are now a speciality of the fly-tyers, and every year attention is being paid to this fine sport with the game-fish of salt water. The bass is not the only fish that will take an artificial fly. Grey mullet, mackerel, sea trout, and occasionally salmon, are to be lured with the fly in salt water. Pollack, codfish, and garfish are also surface feeders, and herrings will sometimes rise readily to the fly.

CHAPTER II

BASS, POLLACK, GREY MULLET, ETC.

Game fish of the sea—General hints—Where bass abound—Bass-fishing with the fly—Spinning—Baits—Pollack—General directions—Cod-fishing—Grey mullet—The conger.

Game Fish of the Sea.

THE bass, or sea-perch, deserves the highest rank among the fish of our coasts as a sport-giving fish. Bass are addicted to roving, and often find their way up estuaries to the point where the highest tides reach the fresh water. On an incoming tide, you may sometimes see large bass sporting like salmon, and I have often peered for an hour into the clear blue water of a Welsh estuary, and watched huge bass slowly swimming close to the rocks at high tide.

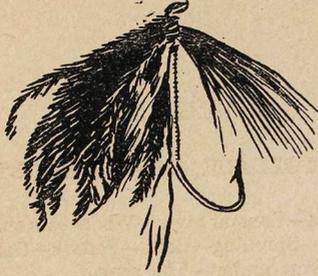
Bass feed voraciously upon herring fry, which they catch near the surface of the water. The fish of from a pound to five pounds are fairly common, and usually quest for food in large shoals or "schools." Bigger bass are sometimes taken on the fly, but as a rule the heavy fish are caught with the spinning bait or with various soft baits.

General Hints.

Before starting on a bass-fishing campaign, ascertain whether the fish are about, and when you arrive on the scene learn the feeding-grounds and the dates and hours of favourable tides. For flies choose some of the ordinary salmon dressings, a large Alexandra, and patterns with

Where Bass Abound

tinsel bodies. A salmon rod is perhaps the best implement of its kind for bass-fishing with the fly. Your running-line should be quite 150 yards long. It need not be dressed,



Bass Fly.

but it is better to grease it well. Some bass anglers use twisted gut casts. A sound single gut salmon cast is strong enough.

Where Bass Abound.

Bass abound off the coasts of Devonshire and Cornwall, though it is feared that the fish are not so common as they were some years ago. From Aberdovey to Carnarvon, thence along the Menai Straits and around Anglesey, bass are often found in large schools. There is a capital "pitch" at Towyn, at the mouth of the Dysynni river, and bass frequently ascend the estuary of the Mawddach at Barmouth. They also resort to the estuary of the Glaslyn at Portmadoc. Bass come inshore in warm weather, but in the southern waters they may ascend the estuaries as early as March.

Bass Fishing with the Fly.

Having found a rock hugged by bass on the flood-tide, cast your fly and work it with little jerks either upon or just under the water. You will probably see or hear the splash of fish. Cast over these splashes and keep out of sight, for bass are often shy of the rod. Never row a boat

Angling

amongst a school of bass, but have your craft held within long casting distance. Follow the shoals cautiously and avoid disturbing them by flourishes and splashing with the oars.

When the days are glaring and the sea a translucent blue you must take advantage of a cloudy night for bass-fishing with the fly. If they are bottom feeding fish for them with bait on a leger or paternoster. A bait used in the Mawddach estuary in Wales is a piece of bacon fat, and some big fish are often attracted by it. The boat should drift up with the tide and the bait may be trailed on a long line with a light bullet attached to the gut, or you may choose a channel or deep bay and fish with a stationary bait on the bottom. Lugworms, bits of fish, and soft crab are common baits for bass, and one or another of these lures will entice fish when they are feeding below the surface.

Spinning.

Sand-eels, either alive or used dead, on spinning tackle are very successful baits at certain times. There are several artificial sand-eels on the market, and the lighter kinds can be cast as a fly. The live sand-eel is used in the Devonshire estuaries with marked success.

In the *Field*, August 1, 1903, Mr. John Bickerdyke described this method of bass-fishing. The local anglers use an eleven feet trout rod and a cast of medium salmon gut. "At the end of it," writes Mr. Bickerdyke, "is a single hook, and as far above it as the rod will allow a quarter of an ounce of lead or less. The hook is passed through the lip of one of the live sand eels taken from the triangular box towing alongside and then caught lightly a little below its throat. The bait and lead are thrown overboard and the line unreeled while the boat is held up by the man, and then when bait and line are extended in the swift-flowing tide the boat slowly follows it. Some days the fish charge the bait with open mouths and almost swallow it at

The Cod

the first gulp, and then the single hook is good, laying hold of every fish and having the advantage of being quickly removed after the bass has been lifted out by means of a long-handled landing-net." Bass up to eleven pounds in weight have been caught by this method, but as a rule the school fish of these waters are about two pounds.

The Pollack.

Pollack are caught with the fly, the sand eel, and other baits. You may spin for pollack from a boat with an artificial bait known as the baby-spinner, which is a modified spoon with a single hook and swivels. Pollack will run at almost any kind of big fly when they are chasing small fry near the surface. They are to be enticed on the flood-tide by fishing with a ragworm on float tackle. The bait may be sunk about mid-water when angling from rocks and piers. A live shrimp is another tempting bait, but perhaps the ragworm and sand-eel are the most deadly lures for big pollack.

General Directions.

Select rocky ground for pollack-fishing and be well prepared for a stiff contest if heavy fish are on the feed. The rod should be powerful, the line long, and the salmon gut of the best quality. These fish fight hard and need skilful playing before they can be gaffed.

The Cod.

The cod is a greedy fish and will take all kinds of strange baits. Mussels, lugworms, bits of herring, limpets, whelks, and crab will tempt the hungry cod. Large cod frequently come close into the shore and they are often caught by anglers from the beaches of the east coast. Use a rod and Nottingham reel with a well-weighted paternoster and cast out from the shore when cod or codling are about.

When fishing for cod from boats in deep water and strong

Angling

currents you will require a heavy lead and a stiff sea rod. Some sea fishermen prefer the night for cod-fishing, but many good fish feed in the daytime. The bait need not be upon the bottom for cod-fishing, though the fish cannot be called surface feeders. If you bait with crab tie the bait to the hook with thin silk, or it will soon wash off.

Grey Mullet.

Grey mullet swim in shoals and often come into estuaries and harbours at high tide. They are wary fish and occasionally give great sport to the rod fisherman. Macaroni has been recommended as a taking bait for them and some fishermen use breadcrust. It is important to fish quietly and stealthily for grey mullet, and success may not even then await the experienced hand. The tackle must be strong, for the fish are very powerful.

The Conger.

The conger is, generally speaking, a shy fish, loving the harbours afforded by rocks. Congers will take a variety of baits, but it is often difficult to tempt them in the daylight. They are wary of coarse tackle, but apt to break away from fine gut and small hooks. Gimp should be used on the hooks. The rod should not be weak and whippy and the line must be stout. Congers sometimes rush into awkward corners among the rocks as soon as they feel the hook; therefore hold your fish as firmly as possible, and if he sulks do not tug hard at the line, but keep a steady pull till the fish moves from his coign of vantage.

Congers sometimes remain in pools after the tide has receded. If you chance to find one of these writhing monsters in a hole, he may be ejected by means of a gaff-hook or with one of the iron crooks used by lobster-catchers.

CHAPTER III

OTHER SEA FISH

Soles and plaice—Other flat fish—Mackerel fishing—Reeling—Shore lines—Lobsters and crabs—Prawning and shrimping.

“THERE are plenty of good fish in the sea” in spite of the steam-trawlers, and if you cannot succeed in catching the wary mullet, the game bass, and the mighty conger, there are still many fish that may be more easily captured.

Soles and Plaice.

Flat-fish are found in abundance close to the shore, and most of the species are hungry feeders. Soles come first among fish of this order, but they are unfortunately becoming scarcer every year. The lemon-sole is, however, plentiful at many of the coast towns, and they take lug-worms freely. They are often found close to rocks. Plaice give a capital sport on the rod and line. Choose a muddy or sandy bottom for plaice-fishing, and use a piece of lugworm or mussel on a rather small hook. When fishing for plaice from a boat on an incoming tide, move nearer towards the shore about every twenty minutes. The bait should be upon the bottom.

Other Flat Fish.

Flounders will take almost any sort of bait. Use a paternoster for flounder-fishing, with small hooks and medium gut, and fish near the bottom.

Angling

Skate are frequently caught with the rod, and as they often grow to a great size, strong tackle is necessary. A small fish or a piece of soft bait will attract skate.

Turbot frequent sandy grounds in warm weather. They will take mussel, limpet and lugworm bait. Halibut are fairly abundant off our northern coasts. They are found in company with cod, and are often taken on lines by the deep-sea fishermen. Stout tackle is necessary for halibut fishing, and the fish must be carefully played. Pieces of fish are used for bait.

The sand-dab is very common in sandy bays and estuaries. Fish for them on the bottom with an ordinary roach-hook, on leger or float-tackle, and use rather fine gut. I have taken sand-dabs on a small fly-rod and a shotted fly-cast by allowing the hook to sink to the bottom. Dabs will take lob-worms, brandlings, mussel, winkles, and almost any soft bait.

Mackerel.

Mackerel give good sport, and may be caught by various methods. When they are feeding on the bottom, bait with entrails of fish, a piece of fish skin, or a portion of a mackerel. A paternoster is the most handy tackle for this kind of fishing. It should have swivels, smallish hooks, and a lead suited to the strength of the current. Mackerel often bite cautiously, so watch for nibbles, and be ready to strike. A float is sometimes used with the paternoster.

Reeling.

Reeling, or railing from a boat, is a favourite mode of mackerel fishing at many seaside towns. A sailing boat is usually hired for the sport, but you can fish from a row-boat. You will need a trace lead with swivels, and a yard or two of gut, and for bait use a piece of fish skin tied to the hook. When the fish are surface-feeding, a light lead will answer, but occasionally a heavier sinker will

Shore-lines

be required. Geen's lead can be recommended for mackerel reeling.

Let the bait spin behind the boat, and hold the rod ready for a pull. A piece of claypipe stem, threaded on the gut above the hook, is often used, and there are times when this lure kills a large number of fish. Sometimes several hooks are lashed on the gut above and below the pipe stem. A piece of chamois leather, or a bit of an old white kid glove, may be used, but the clay-pipe stem is almost always taken. Small spoon-baits, baby-spinners, and artificial metal minnows will entice mackerel.

By all means try the artificial fly for mackerel when they are on the surface. You may have lively sport at such times, for mackerel are attracted by any bright object moving through the water. Mackerel often swarm off the North Wales coast in the summer, and they are caught in large quantities at Tenby and in the Bristol Channel. Fowey is a good place for mackerel fishing, and there are sometimes big takes at Weymouth during the summer and autumn.

Shore-lines.

While you are at the seaside you may by way of experiment set a shore-line. This is not true angling, but there is a certain fascination in taking up the line when the tide has receded, especially when all kinds of queer fish have hooked themselves. For a sand-line get about two hundred yards of water-cord and a big winder. Tie on about four dozen looped eel-hooks on three-inch pieces of cord, and attach to the line. Bait with pieces of meat, fish, ragworms, mussels, whelks, &c., in as much variety as you please. Lay the line out at low tide, on a firm sandy bottom, in a bay where the sea recedes for some distance. At the end of the line attach a heavy stone, as big as your head, for a sinker. As soon as the tide is out, you must look to your line, or you may find that a longshore prowler has purloined both line and fish. It is useless to set these lines in weedy creeks,

Angling

or amongst sunken rocks, where the sea is rough. If you bait with live sand-eels, or other small live fish, you may catch a few heavy fish, and perhaps a conger.

Lobsters and Crabs.

Some interesting days may be spent in lobster-hunting among the pools at low tide. If you enjoy pain amid your pleasurable excitement, you may emulate the courage and skill of the Isle of Wight lobster catcher, who takes his prey with the naked hand. Most fishermen, however, use a blunt-pointed iron hook on the end of a pole, and let the lobster get a grip of it. The hook is smaller in the bend than any ordinary gaff-hook, and longer. With this weapon, an old pair of boots on your feet, and your trousers rolled above the knees, wade into the weedy pools, and poke about in the holes until you feel a lobster.

It is not easy for the beginner to discover the hiding-places of lobsters, so, if possible, engage the services of an experienced native who understands the business. If you irritate the lobster unduly he will get obstinate, and no hauling will induce him to leave his holt. Tickle him until he clutches the hook, then endeavour to tempt him into the open.

Crabs are often taken with the iron hook in the manner that I have described. But most amateurs prefer to set pots and traps for lobsters and crabs. These pots can be bought at most seaside towns, or from the fishing-tackle makers. The traps should be set amongst sunken rocks, and in gullies. Bait with fish entrails and heads, and pieces of raw meat. You will need a line to sink the pot, and at the end of the line fasten a large piece of cork as a buoy. Carry a fishing basket for your spoil.

Prawning and Shrimping.

Prawning and shrimping with nets provide healthy amusement for young folk, and even materfamilias will often enter

Prawning and Shrimping

into the game with zest during the annual holiday at the seaside. I have spent pleasant hours in prawning in the pools between Oxwich Bay and Port Eynon, on the coast of the Gower Peninsula in South Wales. You will need a fine-meshed net with a five-foot handle, and you must be prepared to wade into the water up to your thighs. Wear fisherman's long boots, or at least protect your feet with stout shoes, or they will be badly scratched, and perhaps deeply cut by rocks.

If you carefully walk up to a pool you will probably see one or two prawns and a few shrimps in the green water. Do not dash at them with the net, but slide it gently in, and quickly get it underneath the prey. Try beneath the fringes of weed in the pools, working the net carefully all along them, and now and then examining it. Throw out the weed that is sure to collect in the net, and look amongst it for prawns. You must watch the tide, or you may find yourself cut off from the shore.

Shrimps frequent sandy bays, and may be found in large pools left by the tide. Wade into the shallow water when the tide is rising, and push the net in front of you, lifting it now and then to pick out the fish. Sunk nets of small mesh may be used for prawns and shrimps. Bait with pieces of meat and fish, and sink them in a pool. Use a line and a long stick for lifting these traps, and watch till the prawns have found the bait and entered the net, then pull up as sharply as possible.

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