

**Manchester Anglers'  
Manuscript Book**

Volume 5

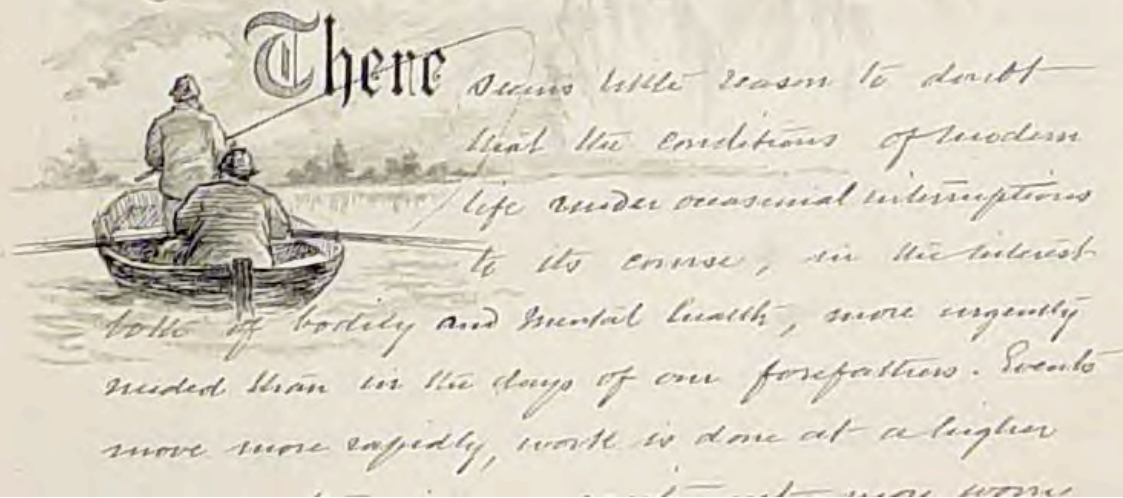
## Page Numbers in this Book

“Notes on an Autumn Visit to Crummock Water, Ennerdale, Wastwater and the River Irt”	Henry Simpson MD	1
“An Easter Holiday”	Abel Heywood Junior, Hon Sec.	7
“Hard Lines and Tight Lines on Eden”	Henry Morris	11
“Fishing in Derbyshire”	.A.J. Hutton	18
“The Dove”	J.A. Hutton	22
“Grayling Fishing”	J.A. Hutton	26
“The Rivers about Rhayader”	Dr H.R. Hutton	30
“Cane Rods and Their Construction”	E.R. Austin	37

Some pages were photographed from the Manuscript Book, some from Angler's Evenings and others, where the handwriting was difficult to read have been typewritten.

# Notes of an autumn visit to Crummock Water, Ennerdale, Wasl Water And the River Irt. By Henry Simpson. M.D.

Read March 10<sup>th</sup> 1885,



## “Notes of an autumn visit to Crummock Water, Ennerdale, Wasl Water and the River Irt.” By Henry Simpson M. D.

"There seems little reason to doubt that the conditions of modern life render occasional interruptions to its course, in the interest both of bodily and mental health, more urgently needed than in the days of our forefathers. Events move more rapidly, work is done at a higher pressure, there is more excitement more worry and more ease. --- And perhaps no men are more disposed to fall in with this perfectly correct view of the question than the "Gentle Anglers" who know from experience the benefit derived from change of scene and occupation, and how they come back to their work refreshed and invigorated by a visit to some favourite lake or river. I have no wish to deny that they may have additional reasons for taking a holiday nor that the pleasant recollection of the enjoyment of fishing itself, is devoid of influence in making them always ready if they can possibly "get off". But whatever the reasons for a fishing holiday may be, I am prepared to maintain that in relaxation, no recreation is more satisfying and more productive of good to the hard worked business and professional man.

Feeling a good deal of this longing to be away to clearer skies and purer waters than we are hereabouts favoured with it came to pass that my wife and I found ourselves on the 19<sup>th</sup> September last, on our way to Crummock Water. It was late for trout; but I had been prevented from taking my holiday earlier and was told, on good authority, that the last month of trout fishing at Crummock Water was often good.

How far this was borne out in my case you will learn from my pitiful story; but we will not anticipate.

I need not tell you of the almost boyish sense of freedom one felt as our smoky chimneys with the black pall they hang over city, were left behind; nor need anything be said about autumnal visits, beyond this, that the brightest and most varied were due to a prosaic cause--- the fading foliage of some potatoe fields glowing in the September sunlight.

Leaving Manchester at 10 we reached Cockermouth a few minutes past three. As far as Penrith our course lay north, but there we turn off at right angles, to the west as far as Keswick, where glimpse may be had of Derwentwater. Beyond this the line takes a north westerly direction, skirting the shore of Bassenthwaite Water. At Cockermouth we were met by a trap from Scale hill, near the lower or north end of Crummock Water. For a great part of the distance the scenery is so beautiful, so diversified and in every way so great a contrast to our surroundings that the railway journey is robbed of its tedium. The distance from Cockermouth to Scale Hill is about six miles and you drive along quiet pleasant lanes from a comparatively open country right in among the mountains which close in behind as you advance.--- And on such an afternoon we were favoured with, jogging along in an easy quiet fashion, neither passengers nor driver nor even the horse in a hurry breathing the still clear air and basking in the sunlight, which lit up wood and crag and mountain side, seemed to be enjoyment sufficient. It was as though for a while care and toil were behind the hills and you might indulge for a brief space in a pleasant dream of “The world forgetting, by the world forgot”.

Next morning Isaac Tyson appeared, a tall hale old man just touching seventy years, who had been commended to me as a good boat man and fisherman. His aspect was grave to say the least, his face strongly lined and his manner reserved;

But beneath this cold exterior lay a good deal of dry humour and he was always ready to row and to fish as long as you pleased, for his seventy winters had not lessened his keenness for sport. The Inn is about half a mile from the water but the way lies along a pleasant woodland road from which glimpses are here and there gained of the River Cocker which lies below us to the right of the path. ---- Pool and reach and brawling rapid are all to be seen; but old Tyson tells you it is not worth while to try the Cocker for its glory has departed.

Workington now gets its water supply from the lake and since this has been the case the height of the river varies so much and so rapidly, that no decent sized trout are found in it.

It was between ten and eleven when we got down to the water; but before this there was no difficulty in forecasting the days’ sport. The sky had scarcely a cloud, the air was hot and not a breath stirred the leaves. “It’s a lady’s day,” remarks Tyson sententiously. The lake was like a sheet of glass and the great hills looking down on it as it lay sleeping were reflected from its surface in a picture so lovely that one could not quarrel with the weather. “It’s a sailing day today a lady’s day” with some contempt for fine weather. “Its only a sailing day—We’d better go up to the head of the lake and see Buttermere and get that done. It’ll have to be done so we better do it today when we can not fish.” So he rowed us gently up while we reigned ourselves to the “secret doing of nothing” that is often sufficient exertion at the beginning of a holiday.

I certainly put up my rod but with little idea of making it useful. Thinking I was careless as to how I placed it in the boat he says “mind the rod if it goes over you will never get it back. There’s many a dozen at the bottom of this lake.” All this time the surface of the water lay unbroken by the mystic circles a fisherman loves and that he must look for even in the Styx or worse still in the Irwell itself.

Under the old mans’ guidance we went to a little eminence commanding a view of Buttermere and just below of us of the hamlet with its two hotels and little church. No fishing is allowed in Buttermere nor may I say in Loweswater, which belongs to the same proprietor so I did the former from this vantage ground. (*Sic*)

After eating our sandwiches I left my wife in the old mans care and made my way across the fields to the Dub the stream that runs from Buttermere into Crummock Water. It was about a mile in length and looks as if good trout should at times be taken there; but now it was very low, absolutely clear, much overgrown with weeds and without a ripple. Fishing down it on such a day as we had, right in the face of any fish there might be, I only took some small trout.

While I was away an amusing incident took place and Tyson greeted my return with “We’ve seen a hunt” and very much he seemed to have enjoyed it. My wife told afterwards that a gentleman and his wife had come up and sat down to take their lunch close by them. Presently a pack of beagles and some gentlemen made their appearance having met at the Fish Hotel just below. They took their way up the hill to the left and were soon on the track of a hare, which the stranger before long caught sight of.

He was evidently a man of much conversational power and did most of the talking his wife only having to indicate an occasional assent. “Its true there is the fox” – old Tyson--- his grave sombre countenance never changing – puts in --- “Naa—its nane of a fox.” --- “Yes, yes it is a fox”--- “Naa its nane

of a fox.” Meanwhile the stranger debated to his wife on the various proofs it being a fox. “The sheep all turn and look up which they would not do for a dog.” Catching sight of the hare again he turns to Tyson “There it is as I said—there’s the fox”--- “Naa its nane of a fox” but not another word of information could he give; or do anything to correct the mistake which the stranger stuck to manfully.

Two or three rocky and wooded, islets at the upper end of the lake add to the beauty of the scene, and near where the Dub falls in there is a reedy shallow of some extent where pike are said to harbour. As the hope of trout fishing seemed small, we prospected this part on starting down again, but without result. So my first day was a blank as regards fishing; but a pleasant day notwithstanding.

Next day, Saturday, a good breeze blew from the S. W. and we spent most of the day on the lake. We rowed to a point some distance up and drifted down again having dropped a stone secured to a rope over the side to lessen our rate of progress. Tyson fished with a spliced rod – of sterling merit no doubt—but rough extension – about 18 ft. long. I used a smaller one. He can throw a good line and has done so pretty regularly for the last fifty or more years. His long rod of course gave him command of the water, which was of no consequence, as the fish were not taking; but it would have placed me at a disadvantage if they had been.

Soon after we began to fish he had a rise and so had our expectations. You know how many reasons there are that fish won’t rise when you want them to do and they must that day have given more than their due weight to such reasons for old Tyson’s solitary rise had to keep up our fishing ardour for many hours to come. But the changing beauties of the scene, the varying expression of Grassmoor’s grim face as he looked down upon us, under the ever changing influence of the sun and cloud, light and shade were enough to keep our interest alive. And as one looked now at the deeply furrowed countenance of the boatman, and then at the scarred face of the hill above, a curious resemblance became evident – the one to the other—as he told his stories of former exploits and of the by gone glories of the fishing.

Thirty years ago, he said, at one draw of the net, either eight or nine trout were taken with an average weight of three (?) pounds. “Are there any such fish in the lake now?” --- “They are scarcer” he said which I fully believed. Again he said -- “One day eight or nine years since a gentleman came to the house and wanted me to go out with him in the boat. He had had a good deal of drink and the wife said, “He’s hardly fit to go—I’ll go with you.” So she went and helped to manage the boat. After a time I hooked a large trout and I believe it was with this very rod, and it fought desperately. She says “Its two tails!” “I’ll give you a sovereign if you land it” says the gentleman. So I tried my best after that; but she had to pull the boat ashore and let me out before I could manage it and then he chucked her a sovereign. It weighed eight pounds and had a half pound trout in its mouth with the tail sticking out, “So who was right? It had two tails”

Raising his weather beaten face to old Grassmoor he told how once on a time a hunted fox went into a hole near the top. A couple of terriers went in after it, but did not return. Then a hound forced its way in, but none of them were ever seen again and he supposes that they were all submerged and died in the hole, for no one could get to the place. And all this time we were fishing away, with flies carefully selected he as he had done so for half a century or so, and I with as much skill as I was possessed of; but with no response.

It is as I have already said difficult to account for the unaccommodating moods of trout. The breeze was good and there was a fine bold ripple on the water. But it was hot and very hazy and the hill tops were scarcely to be seen at times, and more over there was a dead leaden line in the water that troubled old Tyson’s soul. Not a fish rose till quite dusk when suddenly they were rising all round us. For a minute or two they rose almost as if they were in a shoal of mackerel. There was one here—another there—a third somewhere and one wanted to cover them all at once. Tyson got one, I landed another and all was over. It is of course on of the peculiarities of lake fishing that you do not know where to have them.--- In a stream it is different but in the former the boat is drifting, often far too fast, over the rising fish, and you make your cast here or there and it does not matter much where.

We had for some time seen a man fishing by himself a little lower down the lake and saw him take one or two fish. He was as is the custom there wielding a long two handed rod powerful enough to kill the biggest salmon that ever took a fly and looking out of proportion to the half pound trout he had taken. Tyson hailed him and a brief conversation in what I presume was English; but it was a language I had not acquired. I could distinguish “Yan” which means me; but that was all. He was a pleasant spoken Blacksmith of the neighbourhood who talked in good English such as I can understand as we shortly walked up from the lake together.

Monday was wet and stormy so the old man and I had the boat to ourselves. We manfully stuck to our duty but the trout did not reciprocate and never a fish was hooked. At dusk however we sited three rises—one at my fly, but most likely they were all from the same fish. But still there were sights and sounds interesting to lovers of nature and therefore to most fishermen. A cormorant was seen from time to

time, the hoarse croak of the raven was heard though we did not see the bird itself. A big stone near the water's edge is a favourite resting place for the cormorants and Tyson showed us where he lies in ambush and now and then shoots one.

"I dare say it is pretty enough here in winter?" "Aye and the rougher it is the better I like it" "How is that?" said I thinking of his seventy winters, "I get more wild drafts in rough winters than mild ones"

The next day, Tuesday, was stormy in the forenoon the wind blew up the lake. In the afternoon it blew down it in violent squalls. You heard a loud rushing noise to windward, and on looking you see that beyond a line across the lake; or only a part of it, the water is violently agitated, as the fierce gusts beat down on its surface and that this line is rapidly approaching. Just enough warning is given for the boats head to be brought round and no more. "Fish are curious things" say I, "Yes and it's more curious that they are of one mind" says he. "They must be feeding at the bottom"—"Aye and I partly know what they are doing." What's that? "Feeding on little shells I have often found them in their stomachs." "I think we should try bottom fishing." But to this he is averse, and as the depth is 132 feet, perhaps with reason. And so we look on as fishermen do, while the old man beguiles the time with stories of the past of how a trout of 11 pounds was once caught in the lake, and how the river Cotter that runs out of the lake, used to hold trout of good size. Sometimes one of the monsters of the lake would venture down and be caught for its pains. He pointed out a spot one day on our way to the lake where he took one of 10-15 lbs. weight. He once hooked a twenty pound salmon in the Cotter when his rod broke; but the line still held and in the end the man was victor.

The late Dr. Davy, in his "Angler in the Lake District" compares unfavourably the trout of Crummock Water with those of Derwent Water. So far as I could judge their quality is fairly good and the flesh inclined to be pink. You will think a half pound trout scarcely enough to found an opinion on; but as some of you may know the lake is netted for the Inn at Scale Hill and I believe for those at Buttermere also. The netted fish are put into a cage in the Cocker and used as wanted. It is said on account of its depth only a small part can be netted. From what I have said you may well deem the rod fishing worthless; but according to the boatman last September was exceptionally bad, while on the other hand it is often a good month. Spring is however the best time in the year. It is curious that though so deep the best fishing is in the middle and not between the deep and the shallow and a friend, who often fishes Crummock in the spring, suggests that the trout may have learned that they are safer there from the nets than they would be at the sides. The fish taken with the fly seldom exceed half a pound—though no doubt there are some large fish in the lake. Char are there and are probably abundant; but not often taken—Tyson says the season closes a month too soon and that there would be a chance of getting them if it extended through November.

Next day Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> we left Crummock and drove to Ennerdale. The first part of the drive is pleasant as you pass by Loweswater and through Lamplugh. But before reaching Ennerdale Bridge you through a long, dreary, hard looking mining village called Kirkland, from which place the road rapidly descends to Ennerdale Bridge where the Enen, which flows out of Ennerdale is crossed. It was deeply stained with iron ore and looks unfishable; but it has a good reputation for salmon and sea trout and I believe brown trout also. "The Anglers' Inn" is at the lower- the north western end of the lake. It is quiet and comfortable, and close to the water. Ennerdale is much the same size as Crummock Water—about three miles long and a mile wide in the widest part. It is deep and rarely freezes. As Davy says it owes much of its beauty to its irregularity of form, and the hills around as you look up the lake, recall to ones mind the scenery of Crummock Water. Both are beautiful but which the more so I would advise you to go and decide for your selves. There is one point, however, in which Ennerdale is inferior – at all events in my eyes. As you look down the lake over the flat country towards the sea, tall chimneys in the distance remind one of the workaday world; while at Crummock Water you have nothing that carries you back to everyday life. The wind was high and the lake was rough, but about four I went out for an hour or two, and had a few rises but no fish.

Next day, Thursday, promised to be fine and we went to the head of the lake. I took a few smallish trout as we skirted the wide bay at the north-eastern extremity of the lake. Beyond this it is too deep for much fishing till near the head with the exception of a shallow running across the lake, which I intended to fish later in the day. This shallow is marked in the centre of the lake by a small islet of stones, supposed by Dr Davy, with much probability, to be a portion of an ancient moraine. At the upper end the Lissa runs in and just where the stream and lake join the Char are said to spawn in great numbers. Though the night had been very wet the Lissa was low and as clear as crystal, and it was said by the boatman never to become muddy. We landed and I fished up for some distance but took nothing fit to carry away. On our way down the lake the wind rose and it became very stormy too much so to fish across at the old moraine. Before getting to the Inn we had to put my wife ashore; but we went on and after a tossing got in safely. It was fine to see the crests of the waves stripped by the wind and carried off in clouds of spray.

The Inn, though small, is very comfortable and Mrs Weeks the wife of the land lord most kind and attentive and withal a good cook. Mr Weeks junr. can give every information which is much better in the spring than the autumn. In the parlour was a well painted portrait of a trout over 11 pounds in weight caught in a net two or three years ago at the upper end of the lake. Young Weeks says he believes there are many of these trout in the lake but they are not fished for. Netting is now quite given up and there seems no reason why the trout fishing should not improve. It is said however not to be so good as it used to be. Whether this is so or whether it is only the result of the "good old times" feeling, I know not; but there are many things I should like worse than a week at Ennerdale in the spring. A crude speculation has crossed my mind as to whether there may not really be an increase in the number of the monster trout, which never fished for, may be giving heavy toll among their smaller relations. I think in consequence of our talk over these matters that Young Weeks is inclined to try for the big ones more systematically than he has done and it may be worth while for any one going there to take a trolling rod and fish late for them. We were sorry to leave Ennerdale next morning 26<sup>th</sup>; but our time was limited. We drove to Woodend Station and booked to Drigg, a ride from Holmrook our next stopping place. Here we put up at the Lutridge Arms. The river Irt flows close by on its way from Wastwater to Ravenglass where two other streams the Mite and the Esk pour with it their united waters into the sea. The Irt is a beautiful stream and contains salmon and sea trout as well as brown trout. In the afternoon I went up the river and saw two salmon rise; but caught nothing. We were joined in the morning by my friend Dr Hodgkinson, and next morning had a beautiful drive of six or seven miles to Wastwater. We went to the lake intending to go up to Wastdale Head at the upper end; but it was so stormy that we could only accomplish about a third of the distance. We fished as we went but with no success, a few misguided spratlings only showing there were any fish in the lake. The view up the lake is very fine the greater part of its right or southern boundary being formed by the precipitous side of the hill called The Screes, which rises sheer out of the lake and gives a sombre and gloomy character to the scene. Some years ago I spent an autumn day at Wastwater with Mr Charles Nevill when we were not more successful as regards the fishing as on this last visit.

In his Angler in the Lake District Dr Davy gives some particulars which are interesting. It is said to be 282 feet in depth. It is very cold but seldom freezes. Owing, apparently, to the coldness of the water, the early fishing is not good and the fish are late in getting into condition. July is considered the best month. It contains trout, char and perch as constant residents, while salmon and sea trout are said to go up into the lake. Large trout of from 4 to 12 pounds locally called "botting" are occasionally taken—Dr Davy says. From all I have heard I have got an impression that the fishing in Wastwater is poor. The river Irt as I have already said is a beautiful stream in the midst of scenery often fit to charm the most fastidious taste and always pleasant. The upper part is rapid; but the lower lengths are deeper and not so swift. From its appearance you would say that there a trout is sure to be lying—that the pool yonder must hold a salmon and so on. There is a pleasant looking little Inn at Stanton Bridge, three miles below the lake where anyone might enjoy a short stay if the fishing were good. But I do not think it is and I will tell you why. As far as I could make out it is netted unmercifully all through the season and that not only at its mouth; but also along the whole length. The trout have therefore but a poor chance. It was said one day "The nets at Muncaster have done well this season" which means of course that the sea fish were prevented from getting up the streams falling into the sea down there. When we there last autumn the conditions were, on the whole fairly good for fishing; but on the Sunday when we went down the stream from Holmrook my friend Dr H. only got one fish a sea trout of about one and a half pounds and I nothing. He was much cheered however by the sight of a fisherman with the tail of a salmon sticking out of his bag and I had seen a sea trout of about one and a half pounds on the Friday or Saturday that had been caught with the spoon. This indeed is the favourite local lure. The natives use a long 18-20 foot rod which passes through the air with a "swish" and away goes the spoon splash into the water.

Some years ago another mode of getting fish, which certainly had the merit of ingenuity, was in vogue. On my former visit I saw several of the curious structures I am about to describe, though they were falling into ruin I am glad to say. If you will allow me I will quote from paragraphs from Dr Davy's book as he describes what actually took place:--

"Amicus; Pray what were those small projecting platforms, which I saw by the margin of the stream, in several places?

Piscator: They are deserving of attention being a contrivance, and I am sure you will think a poaching one, for the capture of fish. Be on your guard how you step on them for they are of feeble structure and will not always support the weight of a man especially on part on opening, which is only lightly covered. They are here called "hods" and are made of Wicker sticks thrust into the overhanging bank and crossed with others

and covered with turf. Their intent is to produce deep shade, a tempting visiting place during the day for the larger fish, which I have before mentioned, when speaking of the evening angling, shun the garish light. There is one, I know, close by. Ha! I see the landlord is going to the garden with a lister that three pronged spear in his hand. Let us follow him; I dare say he is about to look into his hod, with the hope of getting a fish in part for his supper fare and in part for our dinner.

Amicus: You were right, what a strange proceeding. He throws himself down with his face to the earth over the hod.

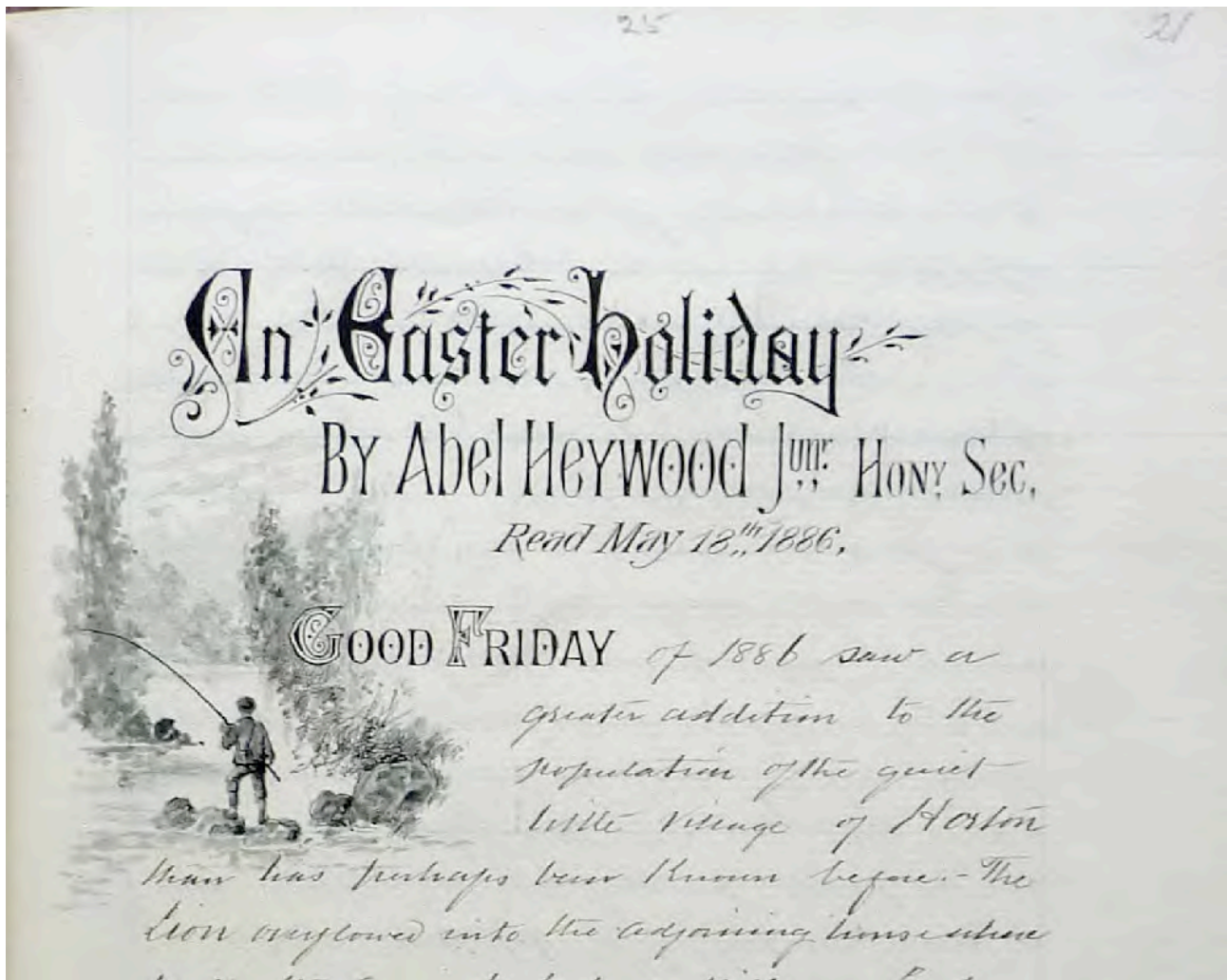
Piscator: See he removes some dried ferns, and now through the opening he has made, he looks into the water. Now he clutches the spear and carefully introduces it without raising his head. Be sure there is a fish there. He strikes and with effect! Behold the prize "A trout" of at least three pounds-- a fresh run fish and in excellent condition.

Amicus: A most easy and crude way this of fishing and well deserving the name of poaching; yet truly on the part of the man, it is a prostration with profitable effect! If there be many of those hods, and they are well attended to, the angling can not be good.

Piscator: Indeed there are too many of them, every small proprietor having one or more, spoiling the river for fair angling except shortly after a fish & etc."

This method of angling is I am glad to say abolished; but the fishing can never be as good as it should be until some greater restrictions are placed on the use of the net. With my present incomplete knowledge of the whole state of the case, it would be improper to speak too strongly; but it does seem as if the Conservators of the District might use more active measures for the preservation and improvement of the fishing. If netting were prevented and the river properly protected its natural advantages would in time be seen to tell. The fishing might be immensely improved and Holm Rook would become as pleasant a resort as an angler of reasonable tastes could desire.





**An Easter Holiday was written by Abel Heywood and read to the anglers May 18<sup>th</sup> 1886.**

“Good Friday of 1886 saw a greater addition to the population of the quiet little village of Horton than has perhaps been known before. The Lion overflowed into the adjoining house where dwells the ancient but mellifluous Cooper and the accommodation there provided still being insufficient, the premises of the ungenial proprietor of the Crown were brought into requisition.

Part of the company arrived on Thursday, the rest having slept the night at Settle, drove up in style in carriage and pair before the latest breakfasters had finished their morning meal. --- All told there were twelve members of the M. A. A. whose visages may be recognised in the photo which will be presently passed round, four visitors whose features may with one exception be traced in the same picture, and one other, also a member who cannot figure in the group which will become historic, from the fact that he was engaged in securing the fleeting image which will in due time be seen.

*(This picture used to live in the club shed at Billy Garth in the early 1940s. It last resided in Mark Thompson's house and just before he died he was asked about its whereabouts, since it had lately disappeared off the sitting room wall; but he could not recall where it had gone. Hopefully some angler now has it and is aware of its historic interest)*

Of the members of the Association it is not necessary for the Chronicler to speak at present; they are our brethren, their good qualities are known to us all, as their bad ones would be if they had any. Of the visitors, one must, should he be attended to again in these presents, be styled the Prince, since his store of fine, jokes and stories, to say nothing of the natural eloquence of an Irishman of German parentage, placed him in the fore front position, not only among the guests, but among the whole Horton company. Of the other friends it may be said that two were sons of their fathers, and the fourth probably has a mother who is proud and happy in her son.

When it is written that a bright sun shone on that fine Good Friday morning and that a sharp East wind blew across the waters, the fate of the fisherman is told. But spite of experience, every man set out to brave the worst, and one at least this chronicler can aver, fished every likely inch of water, for hour after hour, without finding any necessity to raise the lid of his creel, and indeed without a rise. Evening found the jolly company together for dinner; but they brought with them few fish, the best and nearly the only brace being taken from the Tarn and weighing about three quarters of a pound each. One of them was undoubtedly a Loch Leven fish and the other a brook trout.

To tell of the merry tales that went round the dinner table, would be as impossible as to recall the bottles that circulated at the same time. Stories lose in re-telling too, let it suffice, the dinner over, an "Angler's Evening" set in which did not end till next morning had appeared.

What shall be said of him that bears the name of the most killing of flies? No peace rests in the house in which he dwells, surely he doth not give sleep to his eyes, or slumber to his eyelids and by the grey dawn breaks, in his sleeping garments he is rousing the weary and inviting them to regale on milk and ----- honey. Oh young men who go out in health, seeking excursions, is this the way to find it?

Saturday, so far as fishing went, was no improvement on the previous day. Some went up, some went down, some fished the Tarn, some did not fish at all, and caught as many as those who did. Perhaps half a dozen trout left the water.

The joys of the expedition and spite the lack of sport, they were not few, culminated on Sunday, when after a visit to the fish breeding house, where Walker with paternal pride, shewed his thousands and thousands of troutlets, The more active members set out to walk to Lynn (*Ling*) Ghyll, leaving the venerable President, certain Medical men, who thought it well that they should look after him! and the Prince, to follow in the one horse shay provided for the occasion by the host of the Crown.

Lynn Ghyll lies up the water some six or seven miles, and the rough up and down road that leads to the picturesque spot crosses wild moorlands, over which the breezes blow as fresh and pure as are to be encountered anywhere. The weather was brilliant as even a photographer could desire, the spirits of the pedestrians, as also their appetites, rose as the ground became higher and the grateful sun tanned their town-bleached faces.

Newhouses is walked through, the curious press of great power, but which cannot possibly press anything, if it ever did so, is carefully noted and discussed. The Tarn on which the trout are rising here and there is passed on the left, and then, what is pretty nearly the wild open wilderness is reached. After a few exhilarating miles during the passage of which, one stalwart member informed his friends a hundred times of his intentions to marry "Yum yum, Yum yum," a stone wall is reached, on the other side of which a considerable stream is seen, whose waters never pass the place. Climbing over the wall the reason is soon discovered; into a huge rent in the limestone, the stream suddenly disappears, with a noise which though not profound now, becomes almost thunderous when the floods come down the hill sides. One can see dimly the bottom of the chasm, which is some forty or fifty feet down, and stones rolled over the side of the rock fall with hollow booms into a black pool of water. The place is a fearful one to behold and makes everyone stand at a respectable distance from the awful mouth of what is called Dry Lathe Cave. One of the members of the party is, this chronicle believes, the sole surviving member of the photographic department of the association. With a fidelity which must be commendable, he has stuck to his post, while all the others (if the truth be told, there never was but one other) have deserted; and on this occasion being provided with a small camera, he was able to secure some sort of a representation of this place and bring it before you.

After an up hill walk of two miles or so further, the Ghyll begins to come in sight. It is a deep rent in the hills, down which the stream, Cam Beck, rushes and tumbles, and the head of this romantic place, which is imperfectly shown in another photograph secured on this eventful occasion, where a stone bridge crosses the stream, is the point the pedestrians sought, and at which, having found, they came to a halt. Here they were soon joined by the President, the Prince of Doctors, who brought with them (and joyful was the sight of those who first arrived) provisions in abundance, and bottles containing both noxious and innocuous beverages. Such a picnic, such a spread as was there set out, such a joyful company; such good humour; such merry laughter; no man, who was not present at that happy meeting, ever saw. The prince shone resplendent, the President spoke with his usual solemnity, and blessed his fellows with more than his usual cheerfulness; the Doctors forgot their stately manners; the Irishman declared himself more desperately than ever in love with "Yum-yum"; the most sedate and reserved gentleman, who may be picked out in the photo, unbent to the occasion and looked much better tempered than the picture would leave the observer to suppose; which the countenance of the photographer, though hidden beneath a suffocating black cloth, beamed with happiness, if his features truthfully told the happiness of his heart. The sun shone merrily, the stream

murmured softly; the lark sang sweetly; the spirits of the party like the birds rose higher and higher, the good cheer disappeared quickly and all things conspired to make the picnic at Lynn Ghyll such a picnic as never, never was seen before.

When the party broke up, that is, when every crumb of the provisions had disappeared and every bottle was emptied, all but the more sedate ones, descended into the abyss. No trifle is the same, as one big man can tell if he will, and if he is here to tell it tonight. The boys and two of the younger men, found their way to the foot of the Ghyll, while the four men who are shewn in an other photograph. (Three of them represent with great propriety, as will be observed, the three graces) and the fifth who again is left out of the scene by force of circumstances as before; not being possessed of the agility of their juniors, were able to find their way only a little lower down than the site of the picture, a precipitous fall of 15 or 20 feet stopping their further progress. The gorge in which the photo is taken, is as rough a bit of stuff as is to be found here and there, but the photograph when viewed through the stereoscope renders any attempt at description superfluous.

The walk home was only less joyous than the journey out, and if the occasion had any draw back attending to it, it is expressed in the sentiment given out by one of the juniors, who complained that he had scarcely a sufficiently large appetite for his dinner.

And now gentle hearer let us recall for a moment the looks of abstraction that were to be observed now and then to steal over one of the most genial of our company. Every now and then the careful observer might have noticed his eyes to be, so to speak, in fine frenzy rolling; and before dinner was quite over, it became evident to this observer aforesaid, that something unusual was afoot. Mysteriously from the prandial board arose two gentlemen, with mutterings concerning "writings" and fears would have beset the company that all was not right, had they not been firmly convinced that nothing was wrong. After a lengthened absence returned our friends and in the same mysterious way, one of them explained, that under a stone searching for he knew not what, drawn to the spot by some power he could not comprehend, he had found the "writings" to which the mutterings had referred; and in the deepest voice he could, did one of them read the lines which he has placed in our hands and here follows:-

#### AN EASTER IDYLL

In Horton's little inn, by Ribble's banks,  
Where anglers love to rest their weary shanks,  
And find the Nicholsonian homely cheer  
Washed down with flowing jugs of home-brewed beer,  
A goodly crew of fishermen had met,  
Each had his rod, his flies, his creel, his net,  
Some, too, had waders, others were without,  
Then some of them were lean, while others, stout.  
Of one thing all in common were possessed,  
Nor did one have it more than all the rest---  
"Good humor"—'tis the Angler's honest pride,  
Tho' other virtues shone out clear beside.

Chorus           Who's for the life of a fisherman, boys?  
                    Who's for a fisherman's life?  
                    Here's to the health of a fisherman, boys!  
                    And here's to the health of his wife!

Tho' few and far between the trout they dished,  
From early morn till dewy eve they fished;  
Some tried the pools, then others took the runs;  
Some fished with "Palmers" some preferred the "Duns"  
Some cast their flies the rippling shallows o'er;  
One said "The river has been fished before."  
"Young man," the President at once replied,  
As up and down the fisherman he eyed,  
"I know that what you say is honest truth:  
"No matter! He who speaks, but speaks in youth!  
"This time I fairly say, the Court's with you,  
"Would'st have a river, like yourself, brand new?"

Chorus:           Whose for the life of a fisherman etc.

All fished their hardest and with **mighty** skill,  
 But ne'er a one with fish his creel could fill,  
 Except that genial, angling glutton,  
 The Kingfisher! Whom, you ask? Why, Hutton!  
 Both Tarn and river to his rod respond,  
 While some of taking e'en **one** fish, despond.  
 Yet, Watson, too, a word of praise deserves,  
 For patient work in fishing the preserves;  
 'Till rising to his fly, **his** wily trout  
 In size beats all the others---out and out!  
 And what if Heywood brought no fish to table!  
 It surely was not that he was not "Abel!"

Chorus: Whose for the life of a fisherman etc.

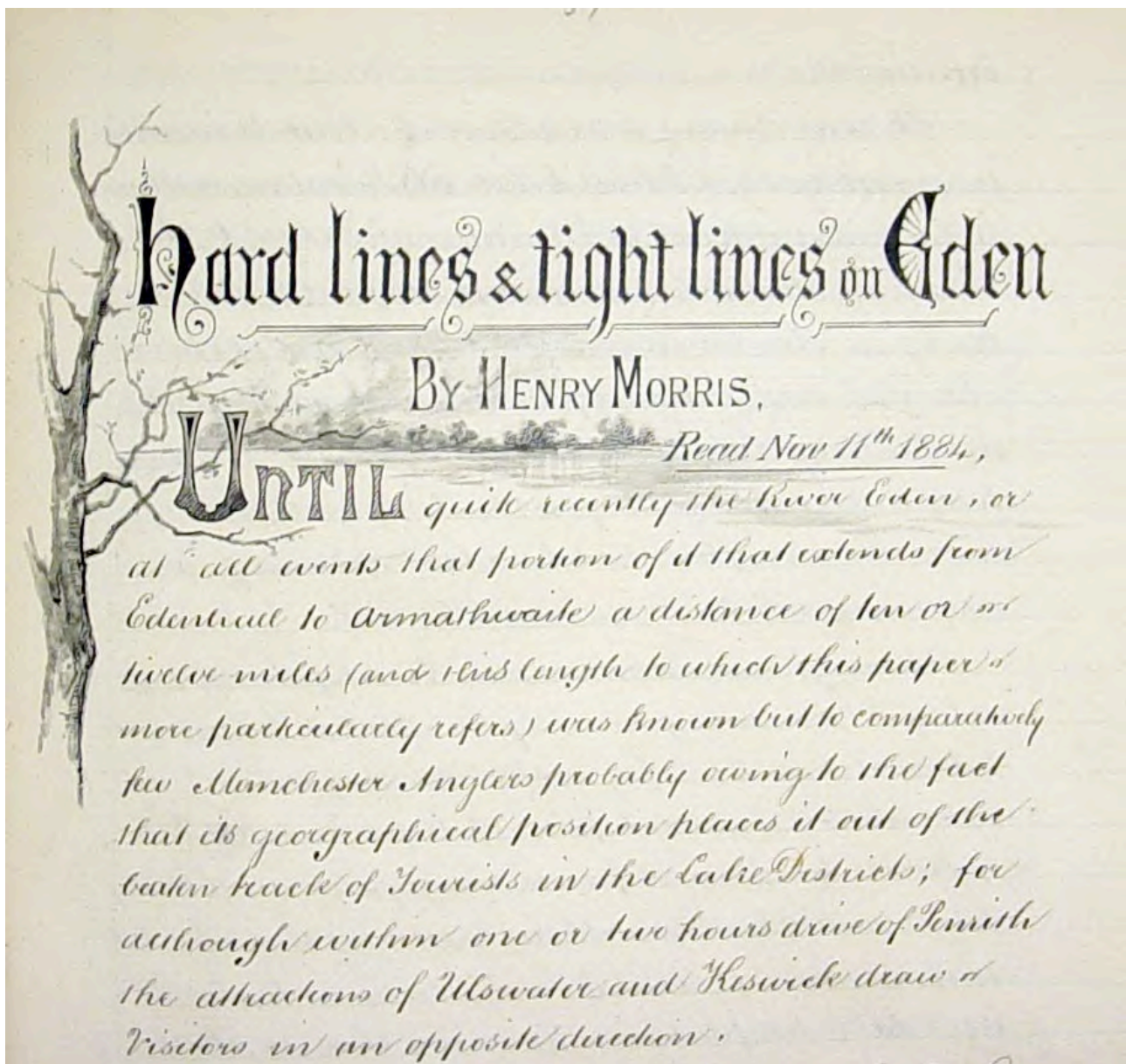
Of doctors, with the party, there were twain:  
 God fellows! Caring nought for wind or rain.  
 The silvery hairs that cover Simpson's crown,  
 Blend hap'ly with the youth's, whose locks are brown.  
 True index, that we all have common aim,  
 The object both of youth and age—the same.  
 Then, there's Hodgkinson, from whom we gain  
**Vast** knowledge, flowing from his well-stored brain;  
 If trout refuse his rod's enticing bend,  
 Did not earth her choice jewel to him send?  
 An opal! Of uncommon hue and size,  
 Is justly claimed by him as nature's prize.

Chorus: Whose for the life of a fisherman etc.

Ere closing think of "Yum Yum's" would be spouse,  
 Who did, with milk, and whiskey, lazy sleepers rouse.  
 If here the names of some are passed, fear not,  
 Their faces ne'er by me shall be forgot.  
 Yet stay! One still must find a place in verse,  
 The chief! Fishers, go further, fare ye worse!  
 Let's toast him, then—"May Harker's reign be long!"  
 Who follows him can ne'er be going wrong.

Chorus: Whose for the life of a fisherman etc.

Great was the applause with which these remarkable verses were received, great the wonderment at this remarkable discovery--- but time goes on and this chronicle must close. Let us hasten then to say that the last day Monday, had there not been a day before it, might have been a subject for more eloquence than this pen is capable of, but it palls before the glory of the most memorable occasion. Before the sun set, joy had deserted the lair of the Lion, the Manchester Angler's had departed and never again will any of those Anglers spend at Horton a happier time in finer weather than their Easter Holiday in 1886."



### "HARD LINES AND TIGHT LINES ON EDEN by HENRY MORRIS

Until quite recently the river Eden, or at all events that portion of it that extends from Edenhull to Armathwaite a distance of ten or twelve miles (and this length to which this paper more particularly refers) was known but to comparatively few Manchester Anglers probably owing to the fact that its geographical position places it out of the beaten track of tourists in the Lake district; for although within one or two hours drive of Penrith the attractions of Ullswater and Keswick draw visitors in an opposite direction.

Within the last few years, however, the new Midland line from Hellifield to Carlisle has been opened and the banks of the Eden Valley have become more generally known, for the Railway may be said to run almost parallel with the river from Appleby to Carlisle, and the frequent glimpses obtained by the passengers of its lovely pools and streams are sufficiently seductive to any enthusiast in the "Gentle Art" to tempt him, even though he should be bound further north, to descend at one or other of the stations en route under the decided impression that he might go further and fare worse. I well remember my first visit to the Eden about 20 years ago, for it is associated in my mind with the bitterest disappointment of my angling experience.

It was during a residence of about four months in a cottage that I had taken at Stainton within a mile and a half of Ullswater and close to the Eamont that I heard of some new run salmon being in the Eden and the lower part of the Eamont and I therefore determined to drive over to Langwathby, or Langanby as the Country people called it, and try the killing qualities of some salmon flies that had been specially recommended for these waters.

Although an enthusiast in trout fishing from a boy I had never previously handled a salmon rod but as I found a "big water" on my arrival at Langwathby I started full of hope and for three or four hours tried most perseveringly the most likely pools and streams with out receiving the slightest confirmation of what I had heard as to the irresistible temptations offered by this or that particular fly. I found too that the work with an eighteen foot two handed rod was, to say the least of it, becoming monotonous, and began to think I could have passed a pleasanter day with my trout rod and was casting in a rather careless and hopeless manner, when suddenly I saw a "roll" felt a tug and heard the music of the reel. I can scarcely believe the fish on feeling the hook experienced a greater transition than I did myself when I felt I had him. I thought no more of the trout rod; the question was now whether the two handed rod which had suddenly become as light as a feather and the gut would be strong enough to turn him, about ten minutes of intense excitement followed and every thing was sound, the rod well up and the length of line reduced to eight or ten yards, bringing it to occasional view the side and tail of a twelve pound fish and I began to think about gaffing him when I suddenly experienced the strange sensation of having a slack line, and on winding up, out came the fly disgustingly visible as it rose to the surface minus the fish.

After one or two interjectory remarks that were scarcely sotto voce I examined the hook and found it all right, and I had to console myself with the idea that the fish had been lightly hooked.

In my experience as a fisherman I have lost some hundreds of trout from this cause especially when I have had to bring them across a strong stream, and some few salmon, but I have never felt the intense disappointment that was this first fight with a salmon.

After trying in vain for another "rise" for about an hour I walked back to Langwathby and on crossing the bridge I met one of the fishermen of the District. He also had a salmon rod and was on his way to the river I forget whether he spoke to me or whether I spoke to him but some how we got into conversation and I would remark in passing that whatever one may say of a pipe, cigar or snuff box there is nothing so likely to bridge over the difficulties of introduction as the meeting of two rods at the River side. He first looked at my fly and then examined the guy and I can almost see him now as he expressed his appreciation of its quality in the words "Eh mon it would hod a Bull."

He told me that a few days before a Gentleman from the South of England who was staying at Pooley Bridge on Ullswater, had been over to try the Eden for the day. He fished nothing but the minnow and he got in a clear water fourteen pounds of trout and a nineteen pound salmon much to the astonishment of the Natives, for at that time they never thought of trying the minnow except the water was slightly coloured and what they call a "minnow water."

Close to Longwathby the Eamont, which flows out of Ullswater, joins the Eden in the fine park at Edenhall the seat of the Musgraves the names of which is no doubt familiar to all through Longfellow's poem "The luck of Eden Hall" from the German of Ludwig Uhland. I may mention in passing that "The Luck of Edenhall" has furnished a theme to several poets, but Uhland has used the legend to the full limit of poetical licence in a realization of the breaking of the Goblet and the consequent fulfilment of the prophesy in the downfall of the house of Musgrave whereas the Goblet, which is of Venetian glass and said to be one of the oldest glasses in England, is to this day most jealously guarded and preserved at Eden Hall in a case that was made for it in the fifteenth century.

How it came into the possession of the Musgraves appears to be a mystery, but the legend has it that many centuries ago the butler went one evening to draw some water at St. Cuthbert's Well close to Eden Hall and surprised a number of fairies dancing on the sward; that he found the cup that belonged to the fairies at the well and that on refusing to give it up to the Queen of the fairies exclaimed

"If e'er that glass should break or fall  
"Farewell the luck of Edenhall"

After my first visit I drove over several times to Langwathby or the Village of Edenhall and got some good baskets of trout, but had not the luck to hook another salmon during that season. With the exception of one day, however, which was a blank I confound my attention to the trout.

With regard to this particular part of the fishing I found the trout in the Eamont better than those in the Eden both as regards size and quality. I may mention that although I have taken some thousands of trout from the Eden during the last twenty years and have scores of times relished them for breakfast or dinner I scarcely ever remember one that "cut pink"; where as in the Eamont it is quite the exception to take one in good condition, over five or six ounces, that does not.

The best fishing I have found in the Eamont was near Edenhall from Nine churches down to its meeting place with the Eden. I remember being rather struck with the peculiarity of the name "Nine Churches" when I first heard it and was still more astonished when I obtained while fishing a view of a diminutive church of the simplest architecture standing in a field near the river, without a suggestion in the shape of a farm or cottage near it as to the where abouts of the Congregation. It was a puzzle to me why this Edifice should receive such a high sounding name as "Nine Churches."

One explanation I afterwards received was that the church I saw was the ninth built on the same spot and that the other eight had all been washed away by the floods. Although I have heard this explanation more than once, I believe that the real is that the church is dedicated to St. Nanine which name has been corrupted to Nine.

From the nine Churches to the meeting of the Eamont with the Eden there are some fine pools and streams which are after a flood at the right time of the year, say after June or July offer a very fair chance for salmon.

During one of my first visits to this length of the Eamont I remember meeting a man who had hooked three fish one morning and had been broken each time, though what I thought and still think is a great mistake viz., fishing

with two flies. It is not uncommon there to use a drop fly with a smaller hook and the consequence is that if the salmon takes the "drop" there is almost a certainty that the end fly will get fast on some rock or boulder, and if it takes the end fly there is a chance of the drop catching in a similar way unless you hook the fish in a stream or pool where there is nothing but gravel. I suggested this to the fisherman I met, but if being broken three times in one morning from this cause be not sufficient to convince a man I could scarcely expect any advice of mine would convince him of the errors of his ways.

It was near this spot that I first met "Old Broughton" a well known professional fisherman in Cumberland who used to make a living by selling his trout to the Hotels and private houses and by going out occasionally with Gentlemen to fish and who gave the name of "Broughton's Point" to a fly he fished all through the season; one very much resembling the Hawthorn fly, that is still a favourite and that can be had from any of the Cumberland fly dressers.

I well remember meeting the old man and while enjoying a quiet pipe on the bank watching him throwing his fly with a rough looking two piece rod, spliced in the middle and evidently of home manufacture, in a manner that I have seldom seen equalled.

As the fish were not rising he came and sat down for a smoke and chat and we talked over the new Salmon Act. He said he often used to wonder whether Isaac Walton was right in saying it took as long for a Smelt to become a salmon as for a gosling to become a goose and that he with another fisherman had determined to test the theory in a practical way. They therefore came down to the Eamont one day at the end of April or the beginning of May a year or two previously, and between them caught about 250 smelt and after carefully inserting a piece of wire in the tail of each put them back into the river. After a flood of several days in the following August they went to watch the netting at a place on the Eden (Armathwaite I believe) and Broughton said three salmon were taken with the identical wire in the tail of each that had been inserted three months previously. I understood him to say that the heaviest was nearly nine pounds and the other two seven and six pounds, which means that each smolt had become from 60 to 90 times heavier during its trip of three months to the sea. It strikes me that if our babies grew in the same ratio from a visit to the sea side we should not find all our watering places so inconveniently crowded as they have been this season.

I have said that my first visits to the Eden and the lower portion of the Eamont were made during a residence of a few months in a cottage at Stainton near Ullswater and I may mention incidentally that the best fishing I have had in that lake to which I used to go when the Eamont was in flood or when it was too low, was on dark windy and even stormy days. I have had excellent sport there when the lake has been lashed into big waves and when it has been difficult to manage the boat. The worst of fishing in such weather is that you get over the ground too quickly and pulling up against the wind is heavy work for the boat man. The following list of flies that I take from notes in an old fly book, for Ullswater may be of service; Partridge with red body or tied with red silk, a capital point fly; Woodcock both inside and outside feather (especially the former); Dun (inside of Starling); Dotteral Plover and Landrail all with yellow body or tied with yellow silk and a black hackle. I prefer them hackle dressed, as I do also for stream fishing.

During this season I had one days fishing in Haweswater, which belongs to the Earl of Longsdale and I remember my disappointment on arriving at the lake, after along and very rough drive to find it as smooth as a mirror. A breeze, however, sprang up and I had good sport for a few hours concerning which I have a note in my fly book stating that I killed three dozen and eight trout and char. The char, however, run very small about the size of a well grown Smelt.

Haweswater being so difficult of access I contented myself with this single day and was very satisfied to vary my sport between the Eamont and the Lowther, with an occasional day in the Petterel or in Ullswater. The Petterel which is a sluggish river as compared with the Eamont or Lowther has the best trout in Cumberland and it is said to be a month in advance of any other river in the County as regards the condition of the fish. The longest fight I ever had with a fish was in the Petterel and was with a trout I "hooked foul" when fishing with a single hair. Fortunately it was in a pool free from rocks or stumps and I succeeded in landing him in about half an hour. It weighed two and a quarter pounds and was the finest I have taken in that river although I have often taken them a pound or even a little over. Although the trout are smaller in the upper part of the Eamont than they are about Nine Churches and near its meeting with the Eden, I have had some very good fishing there especially in the Park of Dalemain where I had permission to fish through the courtesy of the late Colonel Hazel, and with whose son, the present owner, I had occasionally some excellent sport in evening fishing in the length in front of the Hall.

The impression left on my mind from the occasional visits I paid to the Eden during my stay at Stainton was so favourable that in the following March I took a cottage at Lazonby seven miles from Penrith and as I fished almost every day, with the exception of Sundays for a little over four months I became thoroughly aquatinted with the River between Great Salkeld and Armathwaite a distance of about eight miles. I believe there is some nice water between Longwathby and Great Salkeld but as I have only fished that length once, and that twenty years ago, I can not speak definitely about it. Although I am a thorough believer in the advantages of fishing up stream for trout, as I have of necessity brought you from Ullswater down the Eamont to the Eden and onto Great Salkeld I may as well continue to move down stream in any description of the river.

At Great Salkeld there is a ----- across the river over an extensive gravel bed where there is some good fishing when the water is right, and there is some nice water both for salmon and trout just below Hanwick Hall where I have occasionally spent a pleasant day with Mr. Saunders. Mr. Saunders has however left the property and I understand the present tenant of Henwick Hall, who farms the Estate is willing to accommodate one or two anglers with rooms and board.

A little lower down you come to the viaduct of the Midland Railway, but about 200 yards above it you have one of the best streams in the Eden. there is a gravel bed at one side of the River while mid stream there are some rocks and a very rough bottom extends to the other side, so that it is impossible to net it. I had capital sport the first time I fished it, I had been lunching with Colonel Sanderson at Eden Lacey half a mile lower down and commenced at this point. I had not been fishing more than an hour and a half when Col. Sanderson rode up to see how I was getting on when he was rather astonished to see my basket which holds about fourteen pounds, all but full. I had not fished more than about a hundred yards from the place I commenced.

I have always had such faith in this stream that I have often loitered about or rested on the bank for an hour or two waiting for the "rise" and excepting on those days, with which most anglers are acquainted, when you never see a fish move, I have seldom been disappointed. There are always salmon here and in the pool below from June to the end of the season.

A rather curious incident happened here once when I was in the neighbourhood. James Hogg who is a very good local fisherman was fishing one day near Eden Hall about four miles up the river when he hooked a salmon, and after playing it some time owing to a rotten place in his reel line the fish broke him and went away with about twenty yards. A day or two afterwards the salmon was found on the gravel bed I have mentioned with the line all entangled in its gills, having no doubt died from suffocation and much to his delight James Hogg recovered his fly. I also remember an otter weighing 23 pounds being taken in a trap here a few years ago.

The fishing from this stream down to the rocks a few yards below the weir and fall belongs to Mr. Thomas Nelson who farms his own land and is owner of the Mill. Although no fisherman himself he takes a pleasure in knowing that to any one to whom he has given permission to fish has good sport and he is most liberal in granting this permission to visitors. Many a good basket have I made in his short length of water and many a pleasant chat I have had with him during the last twenty years, and am therefore glad on this occasion to express my appreciation of his invariable kindness when ever I have been in the neighbourhood. A few yards below the weir there is a fall of five or six feet when the river is at an average height, and on the opposite side of the Mill a portion of the rock over which the river flows has been cut out, the oldest inhabitant does not know when, for the placing of eel traps and it is said that formerly great numbers of lampreys were taken here.

Below the fall there is the ruined buttress of an ancient bridge supposed to be Roman and within a few minutes walk on the opposite side from the place where this bridge spanned the river, are the individual stones known as Long Meg and her daughters, which I believe are considered second only in importance to those of Stone Henge although not to be compared in grandeur. From the rocks at the Mill down to what is called the Willow Bed Stream (so called from its flowing over a gravel bed upon which there are a few small Willows) the fishing belongs to Eden Lacey which until recently was the property of Colonel Sanderson what is known as the "Caves Stream" gives very good sport when the water is right, and many a good dish of trout I have taken from it in Evening fishing when I have been staying at Eden Lacey. The "Caves Stream" is so called from its running below rocks in which a number of Chambers or caves were cut at great expense many years ago. Immediately under the Caves and on a level with the River a Bathing House was cut out of the solid rock, but this is now destroyed, a portion of the rock having fallen away into the River. One of these caves is as large as a fair sized dining room, and in Colonel Sanderson's Grandfather's time picnics used to be held here and what Newspaper Reporters call "sumptuous repasts" were served in the "Dim religious light" of coloured lamps opposite the caves, and on the Eden Lacey side under an overhanging rock a number of seats (twelve I believe) are cut out of the old red sandstone in the form of a semicircle, which are known as the "chairs" and by some as the "Apostles seats", and there is a large piece of rock with a level surface in the centre that serves as a table, at which I have enjoyed many a good luncheon sent down by the hospitable Colonel.

During my first visit to Lazonby the poachers had been at work at Great Gaskeld and I remember assisting Colonel Sanderson in certain preparations for their reception in case they should come a little lower down and pay him a visit. We selected a number of boulders and after they had been unearthed we had a stone mason at work for a day or two inserting a triple hook or a grapnel made out of half or three quarter inch iron, into each of them, the shaft of the grapnel being leaded into the stone. We then carted them down to the river and dropped them into the places that could be most easily netted taking care that the hooks remained upper most. An uglier thing for a net to encounter it is impossible to conceive; the disadvantage, however, was not all on the side of the poachers, for on several occasions afterwards i have lost both trout and casts on these same hooks. The Willow Bed Stream is also a good one and between this and Lazonby there are two or three fair streams, but there are some long stretches of dead water that do not offer much chance of sport except after a flood and when there is a breeze when you may often get trout close to the side.

During the last twenty years I have frequently stayed at the little inn at Lazonby called "The Joiners Arms" formerly kept by Mrs. Dixon and after her death by her daughter, Mrs. Sewell to whom I should certainly award the Gold Medal in any competition of Angler's quarters of a primitive type, for spotless cleanliness and determination to make one comfortable. Mrs. Sewell is moreover an excellent "plain cook" and her piece de resistance, the "Lazonby Pudding" suggests to those who are fond of sweets that she is even an artist. Unfortunately for anglers they can no longer stay at the "Joiners' Arms" as the two good bedrooms have been converted into a dining room to meet the requirements of the farmers and the cattle dealers who attend the Cattle Market that has been started at Lazonby since the opening of the line. There are two comfortable Inns at Kirkoswald "The George" and "The Feather". Stonhaugh Arms about a mile from Lazonby on the other side of the river, but since the Baron Wood fishing, which was included



in the Penrith Association water until the death of Sir Richard Musgrave has been let with the shooting, there is not much inducement to make Kirkoswald one's headquarters.

Mr. Frank Parker of Fremington Penrith who has been the Honorary Secretary of the Penrith association from its formation, I believe, and who is most obliging in replying to any enquiries, informs me that the association still has the fishing to the commencement of Baron Wood, about a mile below Lazonby, on the Kirkoswald side the fishing belongs to the "College" property. The College is a charming old red sandstone residence, irregular in architecture but exceedingly picturesque on the side fronting the river and with its old tile roof, when lighted with the glow of the setting sun, is especially rich in colour as it stands on a commanding Terrace,

"In a glossy bower of coolest foliage,  
Musical with birds."

In the grand old trees about the house and in the woods adjoining are rooks innumerable and to me there is always music in their cawing in concert. "The College" I believe is supposed to have been a Monastic Institution a few hundred years ago and is the seat of the Cumberland Featherstonhaughs, but has been let for the last few years with the shooting and fishing to Mr. Thorburn of Liverpool who is an excellent sportsman.

The church which was built in the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century was made Collegiate in 1523 and contains the tomb of a Featherstonhaugh who was beheaded in 1651. The church belfry is placed on a hill behind the church. Close by is an old ruined castle that belonged to Hugh de Morville one of the Murders of Thomas a Becket. I have a very pleasant recollection of the afternoon tea that used to be served in the Hall with its open door on a fine Summer' day to the accompaniment of the cawing rooks and the murmur of Raven Beck which flows past the house through the park into the Eden, and also of an occasional dinner with half an hour or an hours fishing afterwards at dusk. When Mrs. Featherstonhaugh resided there some years ago there was a custom that you find in some of our old North Country houses of serving with the cheese after dinner a small glass of a very old strong and dark coloured ale which was "brewed on the premises" as the sign boards used to say. Very good it was but a little of it went a long way as it was remarkably strong.

I have frequently had capital sport in front of the "College" and I remember one evening getting 16 trout, which averaged six ounces, in half an hour without moving more than a yard or two from one of the buttresses of Lazonby bridge. About half a mile below the bridge where the river widens there is a good deal of broken water with boulders dotted over the whole width and which is a good place for fishing the creeper mayfly and running worm in their respective seasons. I once, on a bright June day, sat on the bank watching a Mr. Wilkinson fish the running worm here. He was from Scotland and fished with consummate skill and thought. I had had a very good day considering the time of year as I had by hard work taken twenty five trout, some of them small, but I met Mr. Wilkinson at dinner the same evening and saw his basket or rather his "catch" for he had more than he could put in the basket and although he had thrown a number of small ones in again he had kept 44 trout that weighed twenty two and a half pounds. This broad stretch of water narrows at the bend in the river and descends over a gravel bed into a fine pool which is at the commencement of Baron Wood. A stranger would scarcely recognise it by its name for during the last few years most of the timber has been cut down and a good deal of the land put under the plough, but its just at the end of a long wall that has been built to protect the bank of the River.

Practically there are three streams here in the width of the river in each of which I have had good sport. I managed to land three trout at once in the nearest one some years ago, the only time I have ever done this, although I have often enough taken two in a fair water. The stream is very strong, which tells in two ways against the angler for as he can not move more than a yard or two down stream, the gravel bed being a small island and he can only fish down stream, it follows of course that he has to play his fish across and against the stream and if lightly hooked the odds are it is lost; and secondly when the fish are rising, as it takes much longer to land your fish you loose a lot of time. An amusing incident occurred here once although it might easily have been serious and even fatal. A friend of mine a director of one of our Manchester Banks who had never thrown a fly in his life conceived the idea that he should like to learn the art of fly fishing and went with me for a few days to Lazonby. I had carte blanche to provide him with all the requisites and furnished him with a rod, reel, pannier, landing net, a fly book well stocked and wading stockings and boots at the cost of a few pounds. He is a very pleasant companion and I was particularly anxious he should have some sport on his first attempt—and so acquire a taste for fishing. I commenced with him at this stream and having shown him where to stand by wading in myself and having wet his line for him went a few yards further up so as to cross to the stream in the middle of the river. I had not made sufficient allowance for the fact that it was the first time he had ever attempted to wade and that what was so easy to me became to him a serious difficulty. He had seen me wade confidently into the position I told him to occupy with the water rushing past above my knees, but when he tried to do the same he was startled by the weight of the stream and completely lost his head, for when I happened to turn round to look at him he was gradually getting down stream into the pool with the water at the top of his fishing stockings and trying to steady himself with the help of his landing net, which considering he had the net in the water and the spike in the air only added to his difficulties. Without losing a moment I rushed to his assistance and reached him in the nick of time for I believe in another minute he would have been carried off his legs down into the pool where drowning would have been a certainty owing to his wading stockings and boots. The fright he received had such an effect on him that he has never even attempted to throw a line from that day to this and his fishing outfit might have been had at "an alarming sacrifice."

From the commencement of Barrow Wood which extends almost to Armathwaite, a distance of about four miles, there is a constant succession of streams and pools through lovely scenery. It is, however, much rougher work wading and even walking along the river side than it is higher up where you find little else than gravelly bottom in the river and pastures and meadows along the river side. The roughness of the ground in Baron Wood is probably the main reason why the fishing is better as owing to the rocky bottom. There are a few places where netting can be accomplished whereas higher up the poachers have made frequent raids. About half a mile from where the wood begins, or used to begin I ought rather to say, the Crozlin flows through the "Nunnery" grounds on the Kirkoswald side, in a series of cascades and waterfalls into the Eden, and I strongly recommend any of you who may be in the neighbourhood to pay a visit to these grounds.

In an old book I recently came across the following description of the Crozlin;--  
"It traverses some wild scenery and plunges in the lower part of its course in the neighbourhood of the Mansion called the Nunnery, on the grounds of an ancient convent, into a deep dark romantic ravine. There it first leaps through a cleft over a precipice forty feet, next boils with tumultuous eddy in a deep rocky caldron, next shoots off at a corner through a narrow gorge, next rushes furiously in a succession of leap and cataract through a chaos of obstructing rocks. The faces of the ravine are cliffs rising to the height of from 100 to 200 feet partly bare, partly stained with lichens and mosses partly shagged with parasitic wood. A wild path goes along one side, on rude timber galleries, at a giddy height now shaded with trees now standing blank out on the precipice enabling a visitor to look right down on all the series of Waterfall and Cataract. The floods are roused, and will not soon be weary down from the Pennine Alps how fiercely swoops the Crozlin, the stately Eden's tributary." "He raves, or through some muddy passage creeps, plotting new mischief. Out again he leaps into broad light and sends through regions avey. That voice that soothed the nuns while on the steeps they knelt in prayer"

I have however omitted to mention that, about a hundred yards before you come to the Crozlin, there is a peculiar formation of rock which extends in smooth slabs at a slight angle to beyond the middle of the river, where they terminate abruptly and the water is of great depth. The river narrows here to about one fourth of its ordinary width. On one portion of these rocks, which is covered with moss and which is always dry except in a big water there is an enormous boulder of many tons weight which the Natives call the Chuckystone. I suppose from some old legend of its having been thrown or "chucked" there by some Giant or demon. The Chucky-stone used to be a favourite and very convenient rendezvous for luncheons which we had frequently sent down from "The Joiners Arms". The river is so narrow here that you can only easily talk across it and I remember on one occasion when I had been trying for salmon the keeper of Mr. Charles Featherstonhaugh of Stafffield Hall, was on the opposite side and suggested crossing a portion of the pool that we could not fish with the rod. While he went for his tackle which was in a summer house close by I thought I would try the spoon bait, as the fly was no good, when he came back in two or three minutes I was playing a salmon which I managed to land and which weighed over ten pounds. We afterwards tried the cross line but with without result. There is a grand stream and pool about two hundred yards below the Crozlin opposite what is known as the Red Rock where I have frequently taken from eighteen to two dozen trout on a good day. A little below Red Rock you come to Sampson's Chambers where the rocks rise perpendicularly from the bed of the river in stately grandeur to an enormous height. It is here necessary to climb the hill and go over the top a detour of about half a mile unless the water is low, in which case if you are pretty active you may venture to use the means provided by some beneficent angler many years ago, which consist in a few ledges just large enough for one foot at a time, cut into the rock about a yard apart, with bars of iron inserted in the rock overhead to which you can cling and steady yourself in making your stride with one hand, while you carry your rod and landing net in the other. I don't think there is any chance of drowning, but there is a certainty that you would be overhead in the river if you missed your footing and came down. Although I should scarcely like to negotiate the passage now, I did it frequently years ago, and I remember once nearly coming to grief through one of the irons being loose. It is therefore as well to make sure the iron is firm before trusting to it.

At the beginning of the rocks of Sampson's Chambers there is a stream that flows into a pool about a quarter of a mile in length, which requires very great care in wading as the flat rocks which are covered with a dark moss and therefore very difficult to see under water just out into mid stream and terminate abruptly and it would be a very easy thing to step over the ledge into deep water. I once met a keeper of Sir George Musgrave's here and he told me of a narrow escape he had from drowning the previous winter. He had shot a duck which fell into the stream and in wading in at the edge in order to get it, his feet shot from under him and he was carried into the pool. The rocks were covered with ice and in consequence of a thaw, which brought down some fresh water he was walking on ice that was under water without knowing.

Here is excellent fishing between the "Chambers" and Armathwaite but this paper has already become so much longer than I ever contemplated that I must omit any special description of its features and I will only just allude to the weir and fall at Armathwaite which forms such a serious obstacle to the salmon in their attempts to reach the upper waters. Except in a heavy water it is almost impossible for the fish to get over the fall and the weir above it as there are only one or two very small resting places in the hollow of the rocks at the foot of the weir into which if the fish luckily leaps he can save himself from being carried back into the pool, and for one leap that is successful you may see fifty that are not. The fall is very fine and it is an interesting sight, which I have enjoyed for hours after a day or two's flood with a good run of fish watching their plucky and persevering efforts to get over this almost impracticable barrier to have further advance. You occasionally see one successfully accomplish the feat in a way that is simply marvellous

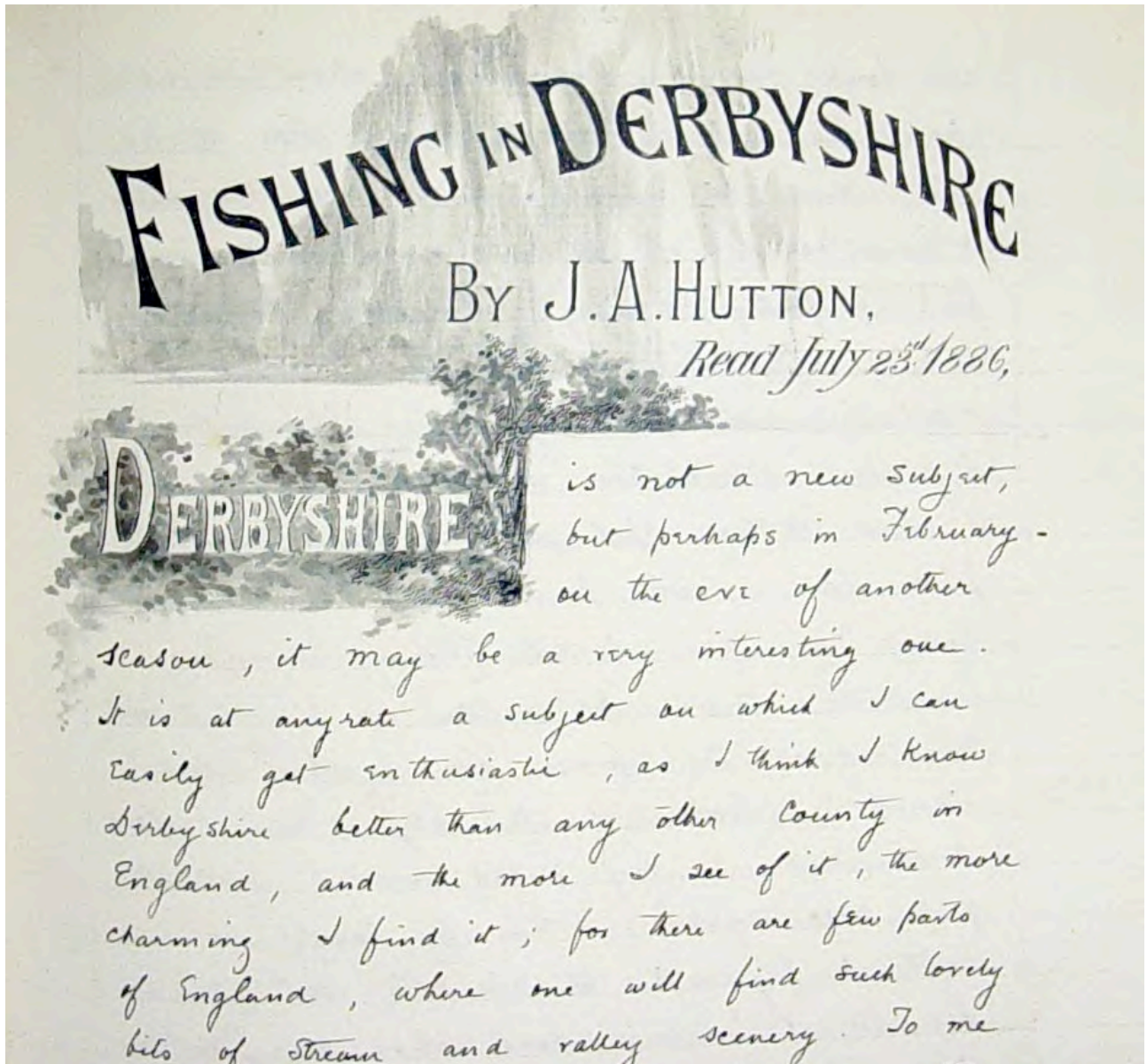
and that sounds incredible to those who have no idea of the enormous strength of a fresh river salmon. On one occasion I saw three get over in this manner. The fish in each case was lucky enough to leap into one of the small hollows, I have mentioned, and managed to get his head into the almost perpendicular sheet of water that was coming over the weir. There was sufficient body of water to cover him, and he slowly and quiveringly worked his way by a tremendous effort through a height of about four feet until he toppled over into the dam so completely exhausted that I believe anyone within reach could easily have taken him out of the water. Each fish that I have seen get over has remained for some time motionless on the very edge of the weir.

As the stones of the weir can easily be seen through the clear falling water the fish is distinctly visible for at least half a minute as he makes his ascent. There is a salmon ladder near the Mill but I think most of the fish that go up stream get over the fall when there is a very heavy water, as the channel and the greatest body of water are on the opposite side. There is a comfortable Inn at Armathwaite the Red Lion kept by Mrs. Stevenson.

With regard to obtaining flies for the Eden and the other Westmoreland and Cumberland rivers I can with confidence recommend Mr. Knight the tackle maker of Penrith, who married the daughter of Mr Thomas Hope and succeeded to his business. Mrs Knight has dressed flies for me for years, in fact ever since she was about twelve years old and she now knows as much about the different flies as her father who is an old fisherman.

In conclusion I would remark that although the fishing in Baron Wood is no longer available there is still plenty of choice of water in that belonging to the Penrith Association from whom half guinea weekly tickets may be obtained. I have spent many happy days in the beautiful country round Penrith and if any of you should be induced by what I have said this evening to visit the neighbourhood I have every confidence you will think the time has been well spent and even though you should meet with a scarcity of sport and "tight lines" should be few and far between through not finding the water right or of the numerous reasons that trout find for not taking your fly whenever you may choose to offer it, the Country will have charms for you; and to those of you who are artists I may say you may console yourself, on bad fishing days with your sketch book for which you will find an abundance of material in the fine bits of Wood ----- and river that you will meet with at every turn.

My memories of the past on Eden are so bright that I retain few that would come under the category of "Hard times" These I am afraid you will consider as having been contributed yourselves in so patiently listening to this long paper.



**Fishing in Derbyshire**  
by J.A. Hutton

Read July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1886

"Derbyshire is not a new subject, but perhaps in February on the eve of another season, it may be a very interesting one. It is at any rate a subject on which I can easily get enthusiastic, as I think I know Derbyshire better than any other county in England, and the more I see of it, the more charming I find it; for there are few parts of England, where one will find such lovely bits of stream and valley scenery. To me it is the more attractive, because on the Wye I took my first lessons in trout fishing---- a very liberal education too---- and caught my first trout and my first grayling; the latter being caught by a fluke a not uncommon occurrence.

I was stopping some months close to a mill on the Wye, in Monsal Dale, in a pretty spot and one not overrun with cheap trippers and I shall always look back on those months, as some of the most pleasant I ever spent; more so perhaps because there I learnt a few of the intricacies of the Contemplative Man's recreation. The particular spot where I learnt more about trout and their habits was in the Mill tail there, between which and the main river there was a long narrow triangle, about four feet above the water and about ten feet wide at the end; and by lying quietly on this, owing to the clearness of the water one could see the fish perfectly and every movement they made. I have often sat there half an hour with a rising fish and got him at last by trying fly after fly. My first introduction to fly fishing was when I went to this spot with a friend --- a good fisherman--- who pointed out two nice fish lying in the smooth stream running from the mill. He made up his cast and threw over the lower one, which just turned and looked at the fly and then

dropped down again; my friend waited until the fish rose again and then he caught a natural fly with the landing net, I believe it was a dark olive dun, but in those days I hardly knew the difference between a dun and a black gnat. After a search through his fly book, he picked out a fly to match the natural one and in a few moments one of the trout lay gasping in the net, and a few minutes later I held the rod while my friend landed the second fish. Ever since that spring morning I have belonged to the noble army of enthusiastic anglers, there was something so enchanting in the whole thing and the odds so much against the angler that took my fancy at once.

I should weary you if I were to tell how day after day I went out, in rain or sun, usually unsuccessfully. I most carefully kept a diary, which I have by me still and I find that I used to chronicle the capture of monsters of 2 and 3 ounces. I always keep a diary now and it only takes a few minutes every day to jot down the number and weight of fish and notes on the flies. It is very useful for reference and possibly prevents exaggeration, for we all know that fish have a peculiar habit of growing more rapidly out of water than in.

There is one great advantage of fishing in Derbyshire--- and of course to a certain extent in most fly fishing--- if you do not catch much at any rate you can enjoy the lovely scenery, and in the Derbyshire streams the fish run a good size. I should think on a fair day the fish should run three quarters of a pound---- at Bakewell the limit is 10in ---- and here and there you come across monsters. I myself never killed anything over one and a half pounds but I saw one of three pounds killed and in a large mill reservoir I saw one hoary old monster guessed to be between six and eight pounds, and I have seen many grayling in the Dove between two and three pounds. I believe at Bakewell there are numerous legends of monster trout being choked by puppies, kittens etc. I dare say the hope of catching one of these monsters is what bears one up on that frequent occurrence, a bad day.

However what I suppose will be more useful to you is not so much my experiences as some information where to fish in Derby shire. There are three principal rivers the Derwent, the Wye and the Dove. The two latter run almost entirely through the limestone district and this probably accounts for the clearness of their waters and the quantity of weed, food, and well fed fish; but the Derwent runs only partly through limestone as the upper waters drain from the moors lying between the Peak, Sheffield and Chesterfield. I do not think the fish run so large as in the Wye of Dove until you get down to Baslow. There is a pleasant little inn at Ashopton, about ten miles from Sheffield or Glossop and by paying 3/- a day any one stopping there can fish about ten miles of water. There are some very pretty streams and a good variety of water; you can fish the upper Derwent and the Ashop and also the main river formed by the junction of these two streams. There is also some accommodation at the Snake Inn, between Ashopton and Glossop lying in the moors over the Ashop. Following the river down from Ashopton you come to Bamford where the river Noe, which runs from Castleton and Hope, joins the Derwent and there the character of the stream changes entirely from a comparative brook in a narrow valley to a river in a broad open vale. Close by the junction is the breeding house of the Sheffield Club, whose water is lower down. It is hardly necessary to say anything about private waters and I believe there is no open water between here and the Chatsworth fishery, which can be fished from the Wheatsheaf or Peacock at Baslow or the Chatsworth Hotel at Edensor. The best station to get out at, coming from Manchester is Hassop; but don't do as I once did --- go to the Peacock at Rowsley and find that they are only given permission for a very short stretch of the Derwent, and of course tickets for the Bakewell water; though as it happened it was one of the best days I ever had at Bakewell. I got five brace of trout of which six fish were each a pound or over. It is not a big basket, but I never really had a really good day at Bakewell, possibly because most of my fishing there is done on Saturdays and those who know Derbyshire will also know that Saturday is a bad day on the Wye, because of the water being shut off at various mill dams. There are some very nice Grayling reaches on the Chatsworth water and better baskets of trout and grayling are made there than at Bakewell; but wading and deep wading too is necessary, and I believe that one of the most successful frequenters of Edensor is generally to be seen up to his armpits.

The Derwent is much more liable to floods than the Wye or the Dove, the reason being, I suppose, that it is principally fed by surface water, whereas the peculiarity of the two latter is that the feeders are mostly underground; though when a heavy flood does come it is most disgusting, as the lime washings from the roads and the quarries completely sicken the fish. In the spring of 1886 there was a most disastrous flood, which carried a lime tip at Millers Dale bodily into the river and killed many fish down to Bakewell. There were some killed at Bakewell also, but there are----- (guillotined of the bottom of the page)

Below Rowsley I have never fished and do not know whether there is any open water, but George Eaton of Matlock Bath, the tackle maker, could give any information required.

The Wye is a different style of river altogether the trout are larger but more difficult to catch as a school inspecting friend of mine once remarked "The Wye trout have passed the Sixth Standard" The

Buxton length is the first fishable and also the first open water; the charge is 1/6 per day. Until recently the whole of the Buxton drainage--- a pretty considerable amount in the season---ran into the river; but a good deal of money has been spent, large settling tanks have been built and a small stream running from Axe Edge utilised for its precipitating properties; and according to all accounts the river is now as "clear as crystal" Curiously enough the Buxton trout used to run very large, there was one of three and a quarter pounds killed last year. This does not sound as if ordinary sewage was very detrimental to the fish.

I am sorry to say as far as my experience goes the horrible fungus disease is more prevalent in the Wye than in other Derbyshire streams, and I am very much afraid from recent reports that it is shewing itself again this year (Feb. 1886). Now the Dove is very similar to the Wye, with the exception that in its upper lengths it is entirely free of pollution and has no lime quarries on it and I have never seen a single diseased fish in the Dove; not even in 1880 when dead fish were to be found all along the banks of the Wye.

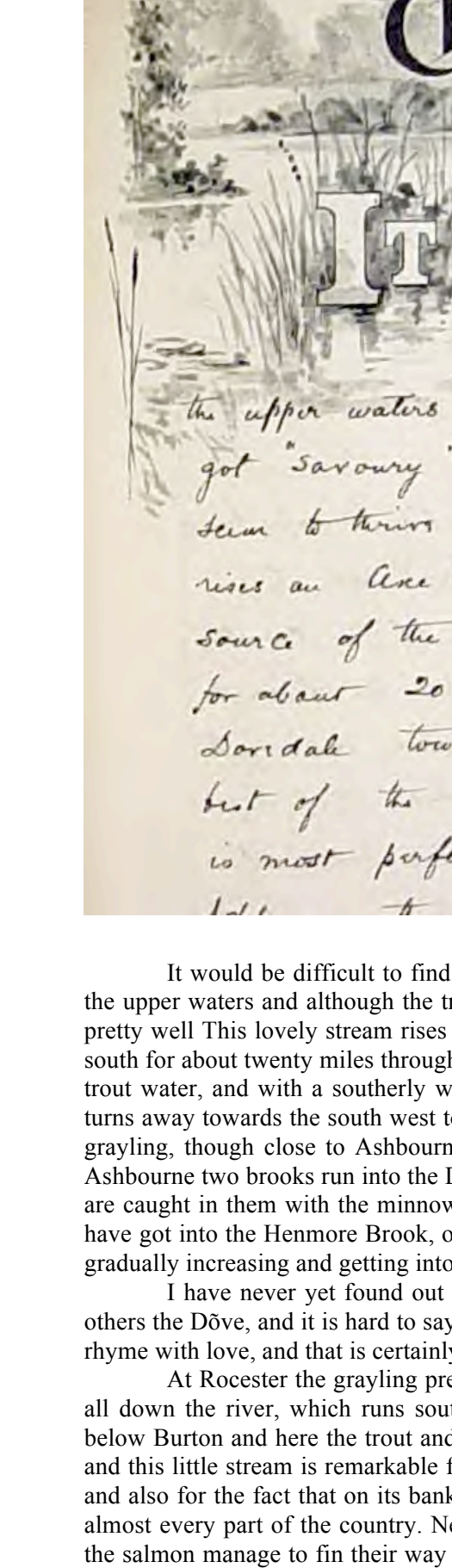
Below Buxton comes the Millers Dale Association water, I suppose about the best situated fishing near Manchester; and from here down to Bakewell the fishing is in private hands. The Bakewell water extends from Bakewell Bridge to Fillieford Bridge a mile below Haddon. Tickets can be got at the Rutland Arms at Bakewell or at the Peacock at Rowsley for 2/6 per day, but to any one stopping at the hotel no charge is made. Only fly fishing is allowed and very pretty fly water it is BUT they are about the most highly educated fish near Manchester and I dare say that most of you know the theory that many of the despairing Bakewell anglers hold, that these learned trout can tell the difference between different makers tackle, and discriminate between the respective merits of Hansbergh, Chambers, Mitchell or Ramsbottom. I never had a really good day at Bakewell, but when every fish there I always consider it as a liberal education; and any fisherman who can regularly kill a good basket at Bakewell, should not find much difficulty elsewhere. I was informed by a Clergyman, I met there once, that the only way he could relieve the exasperation of his feelings was by uttering the short and pithy sentence "Godfrey Daniels blasting Mills". The fish know a very great more about flies than I do, but sometimes I have found dry fly fishing will tempt them when nothing else will. You want a stiffish rod with plenty of spring in it and a long fine cast, and of course only one fly, and between each cast you whip the fly dry, by making two or three false casts in the air, and it goes or should go floating down like a natural fly, with the wings cock up on the surface of the water. But it is very hard work and the flies must be well and honestly made, with the wings tied well upright. I can thoroughly recommend flies tied by George Holland of 96 Crane Street Salisbury for this fishing. In my opinion he ties the most perfect flies in England, either in eyed hooks or gut, though he is not nearly as well known about Manchester, as he deserves to be. For dry fly fishing the eyed hooks are far superior, as they stand the whipping well and when the gut gets frayed it can be easily changed, in addition the flies wear longer, can be changed quicker, you can use fine or coarse gut to suit the wind and water, and they take up very much less space in the fly book. In fact the advantages will repay getting the difficulty at first of tying them on.

From the Bakewell water down to the junction with the Derwent, the Wye is preserved, though permission can be obtained of the Lathkill and Bradford and their swarms of fish; it is needless to say anything as the fishing is most strictly preserved.

As regards the Dove it is not so much fished as the Wye, not being so accessible. The only open water in the upper river is the Berisford fishing at Hartington, which is about 11 miles from Buxton, Bakewell or Leek. The best place to stop is the Charles Cotton at Hartington and I believe at times very good baskets are made. Lower down comes the Dove Dale fishing, which is one of the most charming fishing spots near Manchester. It is about five miles from Ashbourne and takes an awful time to get to, but once there is well worth the trouble, notwithstanding the tedious crawling of the Churnet Valley trains from Macclesfield to Ashbourne. A pleasanter way is to take the train to Matlock and to drive over from there. The Isaac Walton is an exceedingly comfortable house to stop at and the fish in the Dale are numerous, though also pretty well educated, and it is not everyone who can catch them; but as yet they are not quite up to the Bakewell standard as I myself once caught 10 brace there. There are some capital grayling in Dovedale and I should like to see some of these fish in the Ribble, as there are some stretches of water between Horton and Helwith Bridge, which look very suitable for grayling, though it is doubtful whether the water would really suit them. I know of no fishing so charming as when on a bright dry frosty day in November the grayling rise all round you and "pluck" them as you may, refuse to be put down. I once killed seven brace in an hour---fish that ranged on three quarters of a pound. They are very capricious risers but once really rising, and at times the only way of stopping them seems to be by putting them in your basket. You may pluck a grayling a dozen times running and get him at last. They are beautiful fish in October and November and I think when just caught almost more beautiful than trout.

From Dovedale to Rocester the water is in the hands of three fishing clubs, the Okeover, Birdsgrove, and Norbury; below Rocester I think most of the fly water is in private hands. I believe there is some open water near Uttoxeter where some very good baskets of grayling are made in the autumn, Messrs. Foster Bros. of Ashbourne would probably be able to give all information required.

Below Rocester the grayling predominate largely, and at times exceedingly good baskets are made. There is some fly fishing to be got on the Churnet at Froghall, but that is out of Derbyshire, and beyond my subject. I think I have mentioned nearly every open fishing ground in Derbyshire of any importance and I hope others may spend as many pleasant days in Derbyshire as I have done.



# The Dove.

BY J. A. HUTTON.

Read April 19<sup>th</sup> 1887.

**I**t would be difficult to find a clearer and less polluted stream than the Dove, at any rate as regards the upper waters, and though the trout have not got "savoury" morsels to feast on, still they seem to thrive pretty well. This lovely stream rises on Axe Edge near Buxton, close to the source of the Wye & runs nearly due south for about 20 miles through Hartington and Dovedale towards Ashbourne, & this is the best of the trout water, & with a southerly wind is most perfect upstream fishing. Just short of Ashbourne the river turns away towards the South

It would be difficult to find a clearer and less polluted stream than the Dove, at any rate as regards the upper waters and although the trout have not got "savoury" morsels to feed on, still they seem to thrive pretty well This lovely stream rises on Axe Edge near Buxton, close to the source of the Wye and runs due south for about twenty miles through Hartington and Dovedale towards Ashbourne, and this is the best of the trout water, and with a southerly wind is most perfect upstream fishing. Just short of Ashbourne the river turns away towards the south west to Rocester and here the trout begin to loose their predominance over the grayling, though close to Ashbourne the trout are perhaps larger and better fed fish than higher up. Near Ashbourne two brooks run into the Dove, Bentley Brook and Henmore Brook, and sometimes very good fish are caught in them with the minnow, fish of two or three pounds not being uncommon. Unfortunately pike have got into the Henmore Brook, owing to the bursting of a weir higher up stream, and worse still they are gradually increasing and getting into the main river.

I have never yet found out the correct pronounciation of the name Dove, some call it the Döve and others the Dōve, and it is hard to say which is right; it is at any rate note worthy that Charles Cotton makes it rhyme with love, and that is certainly the prettier name.

At Rocester the grayling predominate largely and sometimes very good baskets of these fish are got all down the river, which runs south east from Rocester through Uttoxeter and Tutbury to join the Trent below Burton and here the trout and grayling fishing ends. A little higher up the Blythe runs into the Trent and this little stream is remarkable for the quantity of Green Drake, which makes its appearance her in June and also for the fact that on its banks Ronald lived and wrote his book, which is invaluable to fly fishers in almost every part of the country. Near Rocester the Churnet joins the Dove and it seems extraordinary that the salmon manage to fin their way through the Humber and up the Trent and lower Dove as far as the weir at Rocester; and I have no doubt that they might tell some strange stories of the hosts of difficulties--- such



as weirs and pollutions – they have passed. I have caught numbers of salmon parr when fishing at Rocester for trout or grayling. There used to be a salmon ladder up the weir across the Dove at Rocester which was luckily entirely useless, as the nuisance of salmon parr when trout fishing would hardly be compensated for by getting a few unhappy fish that had toiled up the Trent.

There are some lengths open to the public near Uttoxeter, but as I have never fished them I can not give particulars though I believe in the autumn very good baskets of grayling are got with the fly and also bottom fishing and Fishing Brothers of Ashbourne would, no doubt, give all the necessary information; but about Rocester the fishing is in private hands. A good deal of the Dove is taken up by clubs; just below Dovedale there is the Okeover Club, with about three or four miles of water and about five members who seldom fish themselves and I believe give permission to hardly anyone else. It is very nice water and well stocked with fish and has made my mouth water, or rather my hands itch many a time.

The Norbury club have a very nice length between Ashbourne and Rocester and it is very difficult to get into; Norbury lies about the centre of their water, and on the opposite bank of the river is Ellaston, a pretty little village and especially interesting, as George Elliot was born there and being the scene of Adam Bede; the original joiner's shop is still in existence. Between the Norbury and Okeover clubs lies the water of the Birdsgrove club, which latter has lately been reconstituted and promises to rival its neighbours. Mayfield about one and a half miles from Ashbourne lies in the centre of the water, this little village is also interesting for there is a Cottage where Moore wrote "Lalla Rookh"; there is also a large cotton mill close by which perhaps is hardly so interesting.

The highest waters of the Dove I have never fished, but at Hartington there is a very good length of open water, for which the charge is 2/6 per day, but the water is not open in June. There is a nice hotel there the Charles Cotton, which is about a twelve miles drive from Leek, Burton, Bakewell or Rowsley. I do not know who named the Charles Cotton and Isaak Walton Hotels, but the titles are certainly appropriate as commemorating the friendship of these brothers of the angle of 200 years ago, and reminding us of the classic ground we are treading when fishing on the Dove. It is certainly a relief from the Anglers Rest and the Golden Lion and such like sign boards. It is exactly 200 years ago since Charles Cotton died and if the angler strolls along the banks of the Dove he has plenty of room to exercise his imagination; perhaps where has just caught a large trout or grayling there on the same spot Charles Cotton once landed one, which his friend Isaac Walton had risen and played; or perhaps where he sat down on the bank to have a talk over flies and other matters piscatorial; or to discuss some Whiskey; there perhaps these two friends did the same 200 years ago, though the Whiskey might be an anachronism as according to Isaac Walton, the "juice of the red can" was the popular drink of the period. At any rate it is recorded that Cotton had his friend up from the south to try his hand on the wily inhabitants of the Dove. I suppose every fisherman has read the "Compleat Angler", but Charles Cotton's short additional chapters to it, are not in all editions, and these are well worth reading and contain information and instructions that are really useful in these days of school boards and technical and higher education, both of man and fishes. I don't suppose Charles Cotton could catch many fish now with the tackle he used then; he speaks of a rod 15 to 18 feet long and the bottom end of his cast consisted of two horsehairs; nowadays on the dove a ten foot rod is long enough and unless the angler uses the finest drawn gut he won't kill many of its inhabitants; but unfortunately the education of the trout has advanced in accordance with the improvement of our tackle, and the question is, what sort of tackle will our grand children have to use, probably an invisible rod and an invisible line, as suggested by "Amateur Angler". Still for all that, the true principles of fly fishing are to be found in Charles Cotton's writings; and although written 200 years ago it is still true that:

"to fish fine and far off, is the first and principal rule for trout fishing"

He also tells us to make the cast so that:

"your rod and tackle will in a manner be taper from your very hand to your hook"

though personally there is nothing I object to so much as a whippy rod, which I suppose is carrying out this principle; but opinions differ and I know some anglers who fish with nothing else. Those who are desirous of carrying out this principle to the extreme should read "The Angler and the Loop Rod", a book written by a scotch angler.

Unfortunately Charles Cotton's residence, Berisford Hall, is now in Complete ruins, and only the lines of the foundations and a few stones are to be seen; but the fishing house, which he built, though I believe it has been restored, is still standing with its motto over the door:

PISCATORIBUS SACRUM

And the initials IZ and CC intertwined. However owing to the mania of cutting and writing his name everywhere, which takes possession of the cheap tripper when he is on the rampage, the owner has been

compelled to keep this historical little house locked up, but one can peep in through the window and wonder if their ghosts frequent the place.

The Hartington length is very nice water, more especially the short length through Berisford Dale, a most charming little bit of scenery, where, if such a thing can be, art has stepped in and assisted nature; But I am one of those unfortunate fishermen who seldom, if ever, get the water right, and have never killed a basket worth speaking of at Hartington; but I feel sure that at times good sport can be had and I should think good fishermen could make good baskets here, as it is well stocked and owing to its comparative inaccessibility, very little fished.

Between Hartington and Dovedale the water is all in private hands and full of fish, and though few anglers have the opportunity of fishing there, at any rate the general body benefit from this stock, which must find their way both up and down to the open waters at Hartington and Dovedale.

I now come to the last and best of my subject--- Dove Dale-- - a veritable fisherman's paradise; but much has been spoken and written on it, and no words of mine can describe the charming variety of scenery in this beautiful dale; partly smooth grassy slopes, partly fantastic limestone crags whose rich colour is shown out by the contrasting vegetation; in one part the hills will show their beauty of their out line through the scrub, and in other parts they are clothed with trees down to the water's edge and at the bottom of this gorge like valley flows the Dove, the clearest of the inland streams, broken here and there with little weirs, which both add to the beauty of the scene and afford protection to the trout, and broken water and sport to the fisherman.

The entrance to Dovedale is about five miles from Ashbourne station, and they will send over a trap from the Isaak Walton to meet you; but anyone objecting to the slowness of the North Staffordshire trains, could go by the Midland to Matlock and drive over from there--- a charming drive of about twelve miles--- and once at the Isaac Walton you will be very sorry to leave it.

The stream is full of trout and grayling but they are not to be caught by every one, still they are not quite up to that aggravating standard of education of their relation's at Bakewell. But catching fish is not all of fishing at at the Isaak Walton they look well after the inner man, so what with comfortable quarters and charming scenery it is a pleasure to fish in Dovedale whether you catch fish or not. I should strongly recommend anyone thinking of visiting Dovedale to read that charming little book "An Amateur Angler's days in Dovedale" they are sure to go then, and if they only go once they will go again. But perhaps from a piscatorial point of view, the beauty of Dovedale is its disadvantage, as it attracts crowds of cheap trippers who will persist on walking on the very brink of the river, and as I said before the trout are shy and wary, owing to the clearness of the water and the quantity of natural food; still perhaps the difficulty of catching them adds to the charm when you do get them. The trippers too are very anxious you should catch fish, and often come up in a state of great excitement they have seen "such a big fish" and "you must come and catch him", and it is no use entering on an explanation that if they have seen the trout he has probably seen them too, and also taken his hook. However I suppose it is a case of the greatest happiness of the greatest number and the best thing to do is to avoid Dovedale during Whit week and Bank holidays. But there are occasions when the fish are to be caught and I quite imagine anyone getting sick of catching fish where every one else can do the same; but in Dovedale the odds are on the fish and the greatest skill is required. Any one thinking of fishing the Dove should certainly study Ronald's book and also David Foster's "Scientific angler".

There has been so much written about fishing in Dovedale that I can't add very much to the subject, but on every available opportunity I go there, which unfortunately is not very often; and though I have not often been successful, it is my own fault and not because the fish are not there. The Reddest letter day in my fishing diary was when I once managed to catch ten brace in Dovedale; it was at the end of September and after a week of cold east wind and snow, the wind changed and blew a hurricane from the north west. There are some days when any fly seems to be the right one and this was one of them and if I remember right I never changed a fly the whole day; but the difficulty was to keep the line in the water, and to see and hook the fish when they rose; I don't suppose I landed one fish out of every three that rose to my flies. The flies that did the most execution were a small blue dun and that great September "medicine" the Honey Dun Bumble, dressed fairly large; but as a rule on the dove it will be found advisable to use the smallest flies and the finest of casts.

There are some charming walks too, around Dovedale to fill up the Sundays, and plenty of scope for artists of the easel or camera. Close to the Isaak Walton is Ilam a pretty little "model" village, and further on the grounds of Ilam Hall. About four miles from Ilam two streams the Manifold and the Hamps disappear into the ground, and bubble up from their underground course close to Ilam Hall; it is said that they have separate courses underground which cross one another and that these underground courses are increasing in

length. In flood time they can not take all the water and consequently there is an underground course where the two streams run together, but this is entirely dry the greater part of the year.

Perhaps a few notes about flies taken from my diary might be useful to those who have not fished the Dove before, but I only offer them for what they are worth, as I have not the experience nor the skill to lay down the law on this much vexed question. Perhaps the most important thing to remember on the Dove is that the gut must be the finest you can get and the flies small. Those I pin my faith in most are the blue, olive and yellow duns in various shades; I do not know who stated the theory that duns are all one fly changing colour with the season or the weather, blue in early spring, olive later on, yellow in summer, olive in autumn and so back again. Of course they vary from day to day with the weather, but by keeping a good stock of various shades in my fly book I can generally manage to match the shade on the water. I don't know of a pleasanter sight than a nice hatch of duns floating cockily down the stream and the fish feeding on them. I almost always fish a dun as point fly and I certainly kill more fish with the duns than with any other fly, though this may possibly be owing to the fact that there is gut on only one side of the point fly and also one unconsciously fishes at a rise with the point fly. Quill makes a first rate body as fur and wool are apt to fish heavily, and silk is not to be depended on in Derbyshire as the limestone water is very hard upon the ordinary dyes. Of course if you go in for dry fly fishing Quill of condor are infinitely better, as they dry with half the whipping that the silk and fur take; and the former can be dyed to almost any requisite shade. The Iron Blue is a wonderful little fly, and almost the only time I don't use a dun as point fly is when the Iron Blue is on. It is a very difficult fly to imitate but when on the fish will hardly look at anything else; and what also adds to the difficulty is that you can not easily see this fly on the water and discover what the fish are rising at. It is generally hatched on cold dull mornings but it is not a safe thing to lay down a rule about water flies or any thing connected with fish and their habits.

The Red Spinner is of course a good evening fly all through the year varying in shade as the duns do, the Jenny Spinner I have never done much with. The Needle fly will be found a very useful fly in April and September both for trout and grayling, but I have not yet seen a satisfactory dressing of this fly. The little Chap is another favourite Derbyshire fly and is very good in hot weather; I once killed a capital lot of fish with it between five and seven in the morning, when the fish were picking up the dead flies in the back eddies. I generally fish a bumble fly as a dropper; there are several of them, but the ones I have found most useful are the claret, furnace and Honeydun; the last one is a capital fly for grayling in October and September.

The last fly I need mention is the Red Tag, and a better grayling fly I don't know. I once got nine and half brace of grayling at Rocester, all with this fly and the Honeydun Bumble, it is also a good trout fly in August and September. Of course there are plenty of other flies used with effect in Derbyshire, but those I have mentioned are the ones I have found most killing, though I should be glad to learn more of other flies suitable to the Dove.

# Grayling Fishing

BY J.A.HUTTON.

Recd Sep. 20<sup>th</sup> 1887.



I DON'T

think the grayling is at all a properly appreciated fish, most probably because very few anglers fish for them during the best season. There is as much difference between a grayling in March & one in October, as there is between a trout in February & in June; and grayling ought to be especially interesting to Manchester Anglers, as we live in the midst of the haunts of these delicate fish. I often think it does not come home to us how well we are situated in Manchester, in being surrounded by so many open fly-fishing waters within <sup>easy</sup> reach. Compare the position of the London angler, who has to pay possibly £25 a year for his share in a club water—three or four hours rail from London, and if he wants open fishing must go still further a field, perhaps even up to the waters round Manchester, which we have any amount of open waters with in about a couple of hours railway journey; for instance, you can leave Manchester at 9-40 and be fishing at Bakewell at 11-30--- of course amongst open waters I include those that are open to the public by payment.

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Grayling are to be found in most if not all of the Derbyshire and Staffordshire streams; the Bakewell water has hardly recovered yet from the disastrous flood of 1886, as the grayling suffer more than the trout; but there is the Chatsworth water open to anglers, and the Matlock Association water, both very good. Anyone thinking of visiting the latter, should read an article in the *Field* of September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1887 by Mr Senior. Then again we have Dovedale open to us, and here there are some very fine grayling; the largest fish I have taken myself with a fly in Dovedale weighed one pound six ounces; but I had of one taken bottom fishing that weighed close on three pounds. A friend of mine once caught a basket of grayling in the Dove with a small Artificial Devon Minnow, and a better lot of fish I never saw, running from three quarters of a pound to two and half pounds.

I believe there are grayling in the Dee; and the Yorkshire streams teem with them, though there are other members who can tell us more about those waters than I can, but as far as I am aware there is open water on the Wharfe at Burnsall and Bolton and on the Yore there is also very good grayling fishing to be found. It is hardly necessary to say that by going further a field other waters are to be found with grayling in their streams such as the Herefordshire and Shropshire streams and also the chalk streams of the south of England, where grayling are caught up to three and four pounds weight; and the Clydd too now has grayling in the waters, these having been recently introduced.

The charms of grayling fishing can only be appreciated by those who have experienced them; I dare say most anglers are now thinking with regret of putting their fly rods and tackle away; perhaps the luckier ones are exchanging the rod for the gun; but the grayling fisher is now looking forward to pleasant days fishing to come, in fact trout fishing merges into grayling fishing and when the latter is ending the trout are coming on again. I have never fished for grayling with anything but fly and to my mind there is nothing more delightful than on one of those bright dry frosty days in October or November to be on the banks of a grayling stream with a fly rod in one's hand, and the fish rising "like mad" all around one and refusing to be put down pluck them as you may. I remember all these conditions being perfectly fulfilled on the Yore at Ripon, with one exception however, I had not got my rod with me and also had the pleasure (?) of watching a novice trying to get his flies over the rising fish, but all he could do was get his flies into a tangle. Another charm too of grayling fishing is the beauty of the fish when caught; its slender graceful shape would appeal to the artistic sense of any one, and the bright silvery sides and purple dorsal fin, and what one of our members calls the "nacreous sheen" would make a picture, especially when the picture is formed by a grayling of a pound or so of one's own catching. The triangular shaped eye and large dorsal fin are the peculiarities of the fish, but what particular use the latter is I have not heard explained. I don't think many anglers are aware of the beauty of the grayling, possibly because the only time they have caught them has been after they have spawned; as sometimes they come very readily to the fly then. I remember once in April catching in less than half an hour four grayling that would have weighed as many pounds and had, of course, to turn them all into the river again, much to the astonishment of some of the locals who had been watching from a bridge close by. The cool fragrant smell of the fish just caught I leave to each angler to decide for himself whether it be like cucumber thyme; I have heard it stated that some fishermen can detect nothing but a "fish like" smell, and after the fish have been caught some little time it would no doubt be "ancient" as well.

Grayling fishing legally commences on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June; but they do not come well onto the fly until August and the large fish seldom rise until the end of September; about October and November is the best time for fly fishing, though I have caught grayling with the fly in December and January.

Some anglers fish upstream for grayling but you want a very quick eye and hand to strike them, as lying at the bottom and having a long distance to rise to the fly they often miss it or only take a light hold. You want the finest tackle and small flies and a delicate touch, as their mouths are tender and will stand no rough handling. Often and often I have lost grayling after playing them and when just about to put the net under them. Though their peculiar shaped eyes do not seem to have much power in distinguishing objects on the bank, they are very quick to turn short of a coarse gut or large flies and you can not fish too fine for them.

Others fish down stream and with success and personally I have been more successful fishing across and down, than upstream; but which ever way you fish, you can not fish too fine nor play your fish too lightly, though sometimes a large fish unless netted at once will get up a sort of second wind, and go flopping around on the surface of the water, with the spines of its huge dorsal fin standing up rigid with rage, and give a lot of trouble to land. Charles Cotton said the grayling is the deadest hearted of fishes, but I sometimes venture to think that either the fish have changed their nature since then or that he was mistaken; though certainly the grayling has not the bold dash of the trout.

Grayling flies should be dressed small and firm, small trout flies will do, but the two flies I have killed most fish with are the red, yellow tags fished sometimes wet and sometimes dry. The Yellow Dun, Blue Dun, Iron Blue, Green Insect, and the Needle fly and last but not least the Derbyshire Bumbles will make up all the flies that are necessary, at any rate for Derbyshire to which my experience has been mostly confined. Of the other flies the Honeydun is a most useful fly at this time of year.

Three of the reddest of red-letter days in my fishing diary were spent amongst the grayling. I remember one day at Rocester on the Dove in August the water was low the sun bright and I toiled all day for one and a half brace of trout; and in the evening after dinner with my rod hardly intending to fish; but I found the grayling rising all over the stream. I tried small flies and large flies and wet flies and dry flies but ne'er a one could I rise, until at last I discovered a small brown sedge fly on the water a putting on a

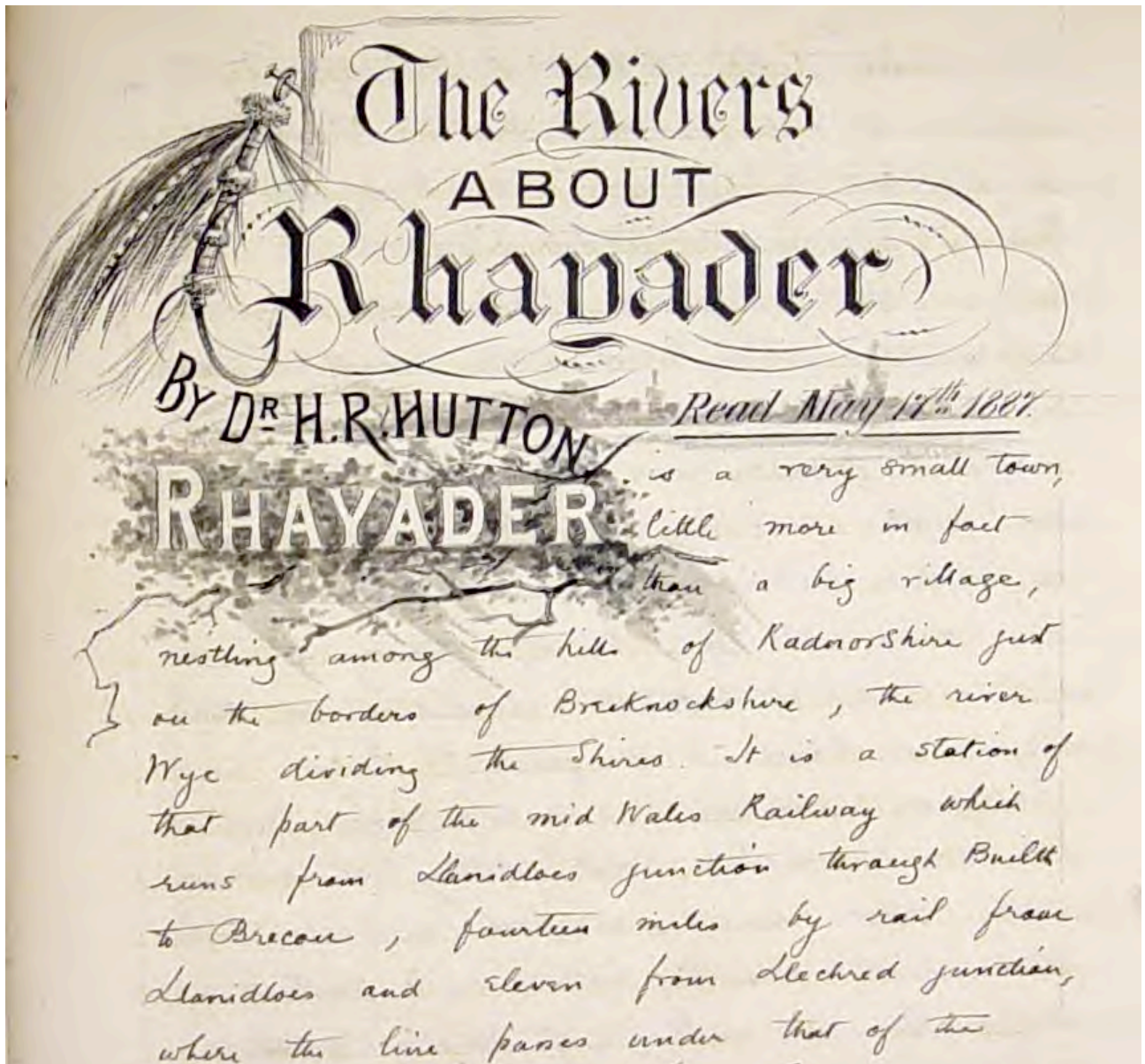
cinnamon on my cast I wound up with seven brace of grayling weighing seven pounds; all caught between 8-30 and 9-30 and I should probably had more but for those troublesome salmon fry.

The second day was on the same water but later in the year; and I went to see one of our members who had been in ill health and was trying to recruit (sic recoup?) by aid of a little grayling fishing in Derbyshire. It was in late October and I only got on the water at 12-30 and had to give over at 4-00 to catch the train back to Manchester; the flies I used were the red tag, honeydun and white Bumbles and when I came to count up I found I had nine and a half brace of grayling, a pretty a lot of fish as one could wish to see the regular Derby size from a quarter to thee quarters of a pound and weighing altogether nine and a quarter pounds. I mention this to show what fishing can be got within easy reach of Manchester and at a time of the year when fly fishing is supposed by most fishermen to have ended.

The third day was at the end of last July, also on the Dove but higher up the stream on the Birdsgrove Club water; I commenced fishing at two and between then and four o'clock basketed fifteen grayling weighing eight pounds. I might have caught more if I had only been content to stay where I was, and had not wasted a lot of time in going down to what I thought would prove better water, but instead found the wind dead against me and fly fishing impossible. We all know what condition the rivers were in last July—dead low--- and this day showed the advantage of grayling in a river. I had heard that the water was lower than ever known before, but was tempted to go down there by a Bank Holiday, and some heavy rain that fell in Manchester, but which as I found out later on carefully avoided the dove; consequently but for the grayling I might have had to toil all day for perhaps a brace of trout as it was one of those days of which the saying is that "you might as well chuck your hat at them". I admit they took a lot of catching as I had to use the finest drawn gut and a small yellow tag fished perfectly dry as they would not look at it when sunk; and the fly dropped from the mouth of every fish, directly it was in the net, so gingerly did they take hold.

There is just one more day I should like to mention; one Friday last December I got permission for myself and a friend for a day on the Dove. I called on several Manchester Anglers, some of those present may recollect it, I could not promise good sport nor could I lend the beauty of autumn tints etc. as a temptation, and I received almost one answer from all, "What go fishing in this weather, you're more likely to catch a cold than a fish". However I managed to find one enthusiast or maniac—like myself and we met at London Road station on Saturday morning, but unfortunately on arriving at our destination, instead of finding the bright frosty sky we left behind in Manchester we were greeted by a cold raw north east wind; but we managed to get between us five brace of very good fish and returned home quite satisfied with our days fishing.

Grayling in a trout stream add another three or four months to the season, and not only that, afford sport when trout fishing is almost impossible, for, though possibly not generally known, they rise best when the water is low and clear. I don't think the prejudice some people have as regards grayling feeding on trout spawn is at all well founded; I think it is the other way about. We all know that the majority of trout go up the tributaries to spawn, whereas the grayling's inclination does not lead him upstream; but on the contrary they may have a tendency to gradually drop down stream and a fact which is proved by the lower reaches of a river generally having the best grayling water. I have no doubt that the grayling feed on the spawn deposits in the main river, but I should think it very doubtful whether this spawn comes to any good. But fact is better than theory and it will be found that most of the grayling streams afford excellent trout fishing for instance the Derbyshire streams and the yore and Wharfe in Yorkshire. I myself should like to see trout in every trout stream with suitable water, as adding a vast amount of sport and pleasure to the angler also adding to the length of the season for fly fishing.



Rhayader is a very small town, little more, in fact, than a big village, nestling among the hills of Radnorshire just on the borders of Brecknockshire, the river Wye dividing the Shires. It is a station of that part of the mid-Wales railway which runs from Llanidloes Junction through Builth to Brecon, fourteen miles by rail from Llanidloes and eleven from Lleched junction, where the line passes under that of the North Western running from Craven Arms junction to Llandrindod, Carmarthen and Swansea. It is about a five hours' journey from Manchester and the alternative routes are by Whitchurch, Oswestry, Welshpool and Llanidloes, London and North Western and Cambrian or by North Western and Craven Arms and Builth Road and thence back to Rhayader by the mid Wales line. In any case the journey is a lovely one. In the one case from the Craven Arms you travel along the valley of the Clun and Onny (full of trout and good grayling) and beside the river Teme to Knighton, and thence down the valley of the Ithon to the junction of that stream with the Wye at Builth, and then back along the Wye valley itself, crossing and recrossing the broad stretch of the river with its salmon pools and trout streams. By the other route after passing Oswestry, you would cross the Vyrnwy and soon reach the Severn following that river almost to its source past Welshpool, Montgomery, and Newtown to Llanidloes. This latter is the route I have generally taken sometimes varying it by getting to Oswestry via Chester and Ruabon. On neither railway are the trains numerous or rapid, and more than once when I have got off late on Saturday afternoon I have had to sleep at Llanidloes at the Trewythan Arms. When I first knew Rhayader, now some seven years ago, this was a dreary hotel to stay at, and an early start meant at best a cup of tea and some bread and butter in a fireless coffee room, reeking of the last night's smoke. Now it is changed, and under new management the place is

bright and cheery. Still no trains run on Sundays, and now, as then a little scheming has to be done to get on on a Sunday morning. Leaving Llanidloes the line climbs up to the watershed and then follows the Marteg stream to its junction with the Wye, some three miles above Rhayader, sometimes tunnelling through the heather covered hills to emerge in another part of the winding valley with its bright stream running now in meadow land, now tumbling over rocks in the bottom of a wooded dingle.

If any place is fitted to restore the mental balance and repair the mischief done by long continued anxiety, the worry of business or the confinement of a town life it is Rhayader --- a picturesque and sleepy country town nestling among hills, down whose every valley flows a trout stream, and whose sides are clothed with oak and fir tree, it affords a variety of scenery so great that almost every taste can be here satisfied. The very name is suggestive—Rhaiadr-Gwy--- the waterfall or cataract of the Wye—though less true in description now than formerly it was. The town itself is little more than two short irregular streets at right angles to each other with an old quaint church, one good inn—The Lion, and innumerable little inns. The people though Welsh by descent, name and accent mostly speak English, many of the better class being absolutely ignorant of their native tongue; though the hill folk still speak Welsh only. The Wye as it passes the town runs from N. W. to S. E. and just on the west side of the river rises the handsome tower of the village church of Llan St. Fraid cwm daw ddwr commonly known as Cwm daw ddwr or “The glen of the two streams”; the one being the Wye and the other a small stream rising in a tarn in the hills near. The Wye is spanned by a small but shapely single arched stone bridge, and just below it the river falls over some ledges of rock from the pool above to the pool below, thus forming the cataract of the Wye. The fall was much more considerable formerly, for, when in 1780—the old bridge having been carried away in a flood—the new one was built to prevent a recurrence of this disaster, part of the rock was cut away to give a freer flow to the flood water. Below this cataract the salmon come, but try in vain to leap it. The church stands on the rising ground overlooking the quiet reach of the river as it comes towards the town, and when the moon is up the view from the church yard of this reach of the Wye is indeed a lovely one. Just outside the church yard, at the angle of the high ground over looking the bridge are the very scanty remains of what was once a castle commanding the passage of the river, which must have seen many a stubborn fight in the old days of border warfare.

To the North West of the town runs the Wye with the Gamallt hill to the right, round the further side of which comes the Marteg to join the larger stream. This stretch of the river is comparatively dead water, broken here and there by streams between the long still pools for some two miles up, then for the third mile, it is one succession of lovely pools and rapids. Here the trout are of fair size, a quarter to three quarters of a pound, and often more, and are beginning to be more numerous. Some years ago the waters from the mines in Plynlimmon, near the source of the Wye, killed nearly all the fish in the river down to its junction with the Elan below the town, but when the mines were closed the trout from below and from the Marteg began to repeople the Wye, but even yet this river does not yield good sport though it is a charming length to fish. On the right rises the Gamallt with its grassy slope and its rock covered top; on the left rise low hills covered with woods, while just a few meadows in the bottom of the narrow valley stretch along the river's banks. Above its junction with the Marteg the Wye becomes a true mountain stream, rushing down its narrow bed over great boulders, and forming deep pools with overhanging banks, with here and there a not inconsiderable water fall; then follows some still water for a short distance, and then again a course more and more wild and mountainous, until near Llangurig it crosses the boundary of the shires and turns abruptly to the west of the side of Plymlimmon. But here, alas, the evil effects of the mine water have not been effaced, and few fishermen would fish this length, beautiful though it is. The new Aberystwith road follows the river for all this distance and a fine road it is, and beautiful are the views obtained from it, as it rises higher and higher mile after mile. Cyclists who have come by that road from Aberystwith tell me that having left Llangurig they have scarcely put their feet on the treadle until they reached Rhayader. Very different is the more direct old Aberystwith road that in imagination we shall shortly travel together. But before returning to the town there is the little stream, the Marteg, to speak of. It has but a course of some eight or nine miles, and rising by small springs in the hills is almost entirely dependent on the rain fall for its immediate daily supply in summer. Consequently in a dry summer it runs down to a mere thread, and then the pools are poached by the lads and farm men of the neighbourhood. In the wet season it is a good stream, and the trout here are, for the size of the stream, larger than in any of the other tributaries of the Eye hereabouts. As I have said, it joins the Wye at right angles, and forms in it a most glorious pool, mingling its browner waters with the limpid water of the main river. For a few hundred yards from the bridge and pool it runs a quiet course of small pools and shallows along a bit of rough common land--- the Gamallt hill rising on the left bank (the right as you ascend the stream) immediately from the stream bed. Very soon the ascent becomes steeper and the sides wooded, and here, as it tumbles over big rocks in a very narrow dingle there are deep



shady pools innumerable in which good trout lie, some big enough to throw a careful fly over, others only to be fished with worm and minnow. After a mile or so the narrow gorge ends, and the river runs along a shallow hollow between the hills, beside the railway up to St. Harmon. Above this it is usually too small a brook to be much worth fishing, The scenery, though quieter than elsewhere about here, has beauties of its own not the least being the smooth heather covered sides of Gamallt.

I would advise no one to spend much time in fishing this stream who has not ascertained from a local fly fisher whether the fishing is good just there or not. And this leads me to speak of the local fisherman – let us call him Brown. I say the local fisherman because though there are many who fish and fish well and successfully, he stands head and shoulders above his fellows in knowledge of the art as in everything else. He is a man of superior education, and hence a capital companion and a most keen sportsman. He knows every inch of the thirty or forty miles of fishable water about, ties a good fly, and sells good flies tied to his patterns by a leading firm of tackle makers. Many are the miles that he and I have tramped together, and many the things that he has taught me about birds, beasts and fishes. Anyone will point out to you the little cottage where he lives with his two children and his setter dog of the rough Llanidloes breed.

The Lion is the Inn to stay at, and very comfortable they make you there, and now and then the landlord can get leave for a day's fishing in one or other of the few short lengths preserved water in the district. If you happen to light on a good fishing day in one of them, you will have sport in plenty. One of these, but the least good of the three includes the Wye for a mile below the town, and the first mile of the river Elan. This is the one piece of the river that is most carefully watched and most successfully poached, and the reason is not far to seek. Where the fishing is free the hand of every honest fisherman is against the poacher; but where the fishing is preserved the poacher knows that few fishermen will take the trouble (such is the frailty of human nature) to help to protect interests in which they have no share. Below the town the Wye makes two turns at right angles, and then runs nearly south west for a mile, with the high road running parallel to it just in the skirts of the oak wood that clothes the side of Gwasladen Hill as it rises steeply on the S. E. From even a short distance of the side of Gwasladen the view of Rhayader is most picturesque, while from the summit it is beautiful beyond measure. Down in the hollow at your feet lies the little town, with the square tower of its own church and the graceful spire of its neighbour's, the river, like a silver streak, winding among the meadows, and then turning along by the wood side at the foot of the hill to join its sister stream the Elan, flowing from the west. Then walk to the west end of the hill. Below lies the great pool where the rivers join like the two arms of the letter Y; the main river forms the stem as it flows onwards to the south down a narrow fertile valley, hemmed in on either side by lofty hills, wooded below, but bare and rocky above stretching away mile after mile as far as the eye can reach.

Here are the salmon pools, and this the scene of affrays between the salmon-spearers and the water bailiffs. The poachers are still known as "Rebecca" the name originally given to those who took part in the "Rebecca" riots. Great is the sympathy of the common people with them (I speak of several years ago) and very systematically they do their work. A dark still night is chosen for a raid and all the members of the gang are summoned. Somewhere in the fields they meet at nightfall and decide by lot who shall do the work, the rest acting as sentries. They then separate, each one only knowing whether his is to be the hand that shall spear the salmon that night. Shortly they reappear three or four of them now disguised beyond recognition. No word is spoken and none knows who his neighbour is as they silently ascend the shallows and fords, the lantern bearer in the centre, the spearmen one on either side. I myself have seen the will-o'-the-wisp-like glimmer of their light on the water as I returned late ay night from shooting on the hills. "Are they not very rash?" said I "suppose we had been keepers, instead of harmless sportsmen with empty guns?" "If we had been keepers" replied my companions "there would have been no light for us to see; we would have heard a long low whistle, and that would have been all. You do not know how many pairs of eyes have watched us from behind hedge and tree, as we came down the wood and over the footbridge."

But to return to the salmon pools. The first is the big one where the streams join (aber-dau ddwr as the Welsh poetically call it, "the meeting of the two waters"), best fished from the railway side, throwing the fly over towards the Elan; the second (mentioning only the well-known salmon casts) some 300 yards lower down, just by a stretch of gravely beach. This is really in private ground and very jealously guarded. Then follow some smaller ones under the right bank above the Llanwrthwl bridge. To reach the lower pools you must cross the wooden bridge at Llanwrthwl and turn sharp to the left as soon as you pass the first house in the village. Pass the little inn and follow the cart road beyond the mill, then turn down through the bushes to the river on you left, just opposite Doldowlod station. Here is about the best salmon catch. The water comes tumbling down between big rocks in a narrow channel and pours itself into a deep still pool, making in the head of the pool a long seething eddy. The left bank is a rough meadow, the right is a steep wall of black rock against which the current runs in many feet of water. Beyond the jutting rock the pool expands to treble

its size, and into it you can cast your fly by carefully creeping along the ledge of the out-jutting rock when the river is only moderately full. This is to me a spot of many associations. In this pool, as I fished from the upper rocks I first saw the salmon rise at the fly. I had never before made war against the King of fishes, having contented myself with doing battle with the Princes of the Blood Royal, the trout and grayling; and as my arms began to ache with wielding the heavy rod, I was beginning to think that after all the labour of salmon fishing could not be compensated for by the sport it afforded, when suddenly the waters at my feet divided, and a mass of silver, gleaming in the sunlight, flashed along the surface of the pool. In another second the waters had closed over it, and I had missed my first salmon, and was standing on the slippery rock with shaking knees, trembling hands, and a heart that seemed to be striving to break down the walls of its prison. Had my views of salmon fishing undergone any change? I believe they had and so thought my companion as he watched the huge fly cast with unwonted vigour farther and farther across the dark pool. But all to no purpose. Though I saw fish again that day, none volunteered to try a fall with me. And in my calmer moments I believe that my first opinion was the right one, that though in the first rush of a salmon a man experiences a supreme excitement scarcely to be produced by other means, yet that all things considered trout fishing is the more delightful sport. But "Chacun son gout!" Had I ever had really good salmon fishing perhaps I should sing a different song. But I have another association with this spot. Just at the top of the wall of rock among the alder and the hazel bushes, I flushed and killed my first woodcock, one bright October morning. My third association with this rock is a very different one. The river was in high flood, a roaring torrent. From the miller's cottage above a little crippled lad—only able to earn his living by such gentle occupations as minding little children and the like, had gone out, unknown to the miller, to gather fire wood among the bushes. Dinnertime came but not the little boy. Then the country folk turned out to seek him, for he was great favourite with one and all. High and low they searched, up the dingle and down the river's bank, but without so much as seeing a footprint. Evening was coming on when some lads, with perhaps keener instincts than their elders, turned their steps to the bushes above the rocks. There in the soft earth were his footprints leading them nearer and nearer to the fatal brink. There on the very edge was the dead branch that he had tried to reach and the scar of freshly turned earth where the sod had given way beneath his feet. Last and most pitiful of all, there growing from a cranny out of the face of the rock, was the little tree whose broken branch bore witness, mutely but so eloquently, to the last scene in this village tragedy. Many miles further down the river there was washed ashore, some three days later, the body of a child, so crushed and mangled in its stormy passage down the river that but for the crippled limb, recognition would have been impossible.

I have spoken only of salmon pools in the part of the Wye below the town, but it must not be thought by that that there are no trout. On the contrary, the fish there are larger, though less numerous than the Elan and the Claetwen soon to be described. More over the fishing is better here when the river is low and clear---in fact, just when it would take you all your time to fill your basket up in the hills. I need scarcely say that in this state of the river no gut can be too fine. You must wade whether you fish for trout or salmon. Now and then a grayling is taken, mostly in the big pool at the "meeting of the two waters". Here too are chub innumerable. Now and then they rise madly, and it is on record that two local fishermen finding them in this mood, took from that great pool alone what it required a barrow to bring home. About Builth the salmon fishing is good, but I do not know anything about it personally. It is mostly in private hands and preserved strictly. The preserved water on the Doldowlod side is capital for trout, and is, or was, one of the lengths in which a day's fishing might now and then be obtained.

I should weary you if I were to describe in detail all the rivers—the little Whefry and the Claerwen, with its ten miles of water, in which trout rise freely; and so now I come to speak of what is to me the most attractive stream, the Elan. So varied is the character of the country it passes through that it is like fishing first in one river and then in another, rather than in different parts only in the same stream. After crossing the bridge over the Wye in Rhayader the road passes under the railway and then turns sharp round to the left to reach the river just at the shallow ford above the preserved water. At first there is only a long reach of still water; then follows what is known as the "caban", a rocky river bed in a narrow gorge, shut in by steep rock covered hills on either side, and at the farther end. This is considered to be the hardest length to fish successfully, and here again the best sport is to be had when the water is like gin and the river low. Wading upstream with a light rod and fly or minnow, good trout in fair number are to be taken but only by those who really are fishermen. In heavy water too the minnow is very deadly here. Now and then really good trout are taken, one of over five pounds having been captured only a few days ago. Brown tells a good story of how he outwitted an old fellow of two pounds, just below the wire suspension bridge that crosses the river where the rough bit of open land begins. From behind a rock he had watched the fish dart out from his lurking place and suck in flies and other food brought down by the stream, and saw at once the impossibility of

approaching him unseen. So picking up a stone he flung it into the pool. Like a flash of lightening the fish darted under a rock, and brown made haste and baited a hook with worms, tied his rod to the rail of the foot bridge, and dropped his baited hook just where the trout had been feeding. Having done this he crossed the bridge, and in the shade of the wood sat down to eat his lunch and smoke a quiet pipe. He had not long to wait for the twitching of his rod told him that the trout had recovered from his fright and was also taking his lunch—alas, for him, his last! He was soon safely landed and stowed away in Brown’s fishing basket, and a splendid trout he was.

A little higher up where the Claerwen joins the Elan are two houses, Cwm Elan and Nant Gwyllt the one in the valley of the Elan the other that in that of the Claerwen—both large mansions standing in their own grounds, their lawns stretching down to the river, and both alike memorable for their associations with the poet Shelly. It was to Cwm Elan that he came to stay with his cousin Thomas Grove in 1811 after his expulsion from college and his quarrel with his father; at the being, hopelessly he thought, in love with Harriet Westbrook. In Dowden’s life of Shelly appears for the first time a poem written in 1812 when staying with his young wife at Nant Gwyllt, in which Shelly contrasts the feelings experienced in these two visits, and the lines:-

Woods, to whose depth retires to die  
The wounded echo’s melody  
And wither this lone spirit bent  
The foot steps of a wild intent

Seem to indicate how nearly the poet’s own hand robbed English literature of one of its greatest ornaments. Here to Cwm Elan, came also the Rev. William Lisle Bowles “poet, parson, scholar and musician” to stay with his friend Grove, and here in 1798 he wrote his long blank verse poem in praise of the scenery of “The romantic vale where Elan winds”—a poem full of charming and minute description of all the sights and sounds of the country side.

For about a mile above and a mile below these mansions the fishing in the river is kept for private use of those whose generosity is so great in permitting fishing every where else that no honest angler would knowingly trespass here. Above Cwm Elan in the rocks, is a waterfall, well worth going to see even in dry summer weather. It was after visiting this fall early one cold spring that I got caught on the hill top in a snow storm more dense and blinding than I was ever in before or since; and I would warn anyone who does not know these long ranges of rolling hills, not to venture to make short cuts over them in misty weather or at nightfall.

The best points to join the stream in its upper parts are Dol-y Folan and Dol Faenog one and two miles respectively from Cwm Elan and Pont ar Elan. The first two are reached by roads and foot paths across the spur of the hills round which the Elan winds, and these bring you to the river in its grandest and most rocky part. Standing on the rude bridge of undressed tree trunks that is here thrown across the chasm, you are some twenty feet or more above the water, as it gurgles along between high walls of solid rock the surface of which is worn as smooth almost as polished marble, and hollowed out to form innumerable basins—some little, some immense. There must have been a flaw in the geological formation, or rather in its upheaval, a cleft must have been formed and filled with rock of softer texture, which the river has washed away. Many of the pools are very deep with rocky or gravelly bottom, and delicious have been the swims and dives that I have taken in these baths of nature’s making. Full of good trout they are too, most of them half a pound to one and a half pounds in weight, but how to get them to leave their cool retreat is a puzzle. I have risen them one after the other in pool after pool—great dark black fellows, with brilliant golden bellies—but hook one (except by merest accident now and then) I never could, and my experience is that of others also. Nor have I succeeded better with the minnow. Whether it is merely the difficulty of keeping out of sight, and preventing the shadow of rod and line from falling on the water, I can not say. I know that, like the serpent of old, I have crawled on my belly to the edge, having carefully considered the position of the sun and shadow, and with equal care have thrown a fly up stream and down, now dry upon the surface, now sunk several inches beneath it, but all to no purpose. I often say to myself I will some day study more carefully the habits of these fish, and learn how and when they get in these rock bound pools and the food that makes them so shapely and plump. No one who sees these pools can resist their fascination. Even Brown who knows them of old, can not pass them by quite unmoved; and I have watched his expression, at first merely puzzled and amused, change to one almost of anger, as trout after trout rolled over and showed his dark sides and orange belly as he sank back quietly to his lurking place. Mr advice then would be to walk up as far as Pen-y-Garreg or the “top of the rocks” before beginning to fish. Thence for some three miles up, the stream, though rocky, is full of pools and rapids, and here and there a farm house stands on its banks.

Another plan is to go direct to Pont-ar-Elan by the old Aber ystwith road, past the little pool Glyn llyn, ascending rapidly for nearly five miles along a rough road cut out of the steep hill side, until the open land above is reached, and then turn down the steep path to the river on the left where the bridge crosses it, and fish some three miles of the lower stream before turning to that which lies above the bridge. This point is the best to make for if you are going to the "Pools of the Grey Rocks" (Llyn Carreg Lleuidion) or the further larger pool of Llyn Gunnon at the head of the Claerwen valley. Rough windy weather is best for sport in these tarns, and you should be at the water's edge as the first streak of light appears in the eastern sky. To do this you must either sleep at little Claerwen farm, or start from Rhayader soon after one o'clock at night. It was to do this that a young Welshman, whose wife strongly disapproved of these nocturnal fishing expeditions, when in good time to bed one night in the early spring, his wife promising to sit up and call him for an early breakfast at half past one. Starting at two a. m. there would then be enough light to enable him to find his way across the hill from Pont-ar-Elan to the pools. Eleven o'clock came and the young wife, reflecting that the night was dark and all Rhayader safely asleep, bethought her of a plan for securing for herself a longer night's rest and a severe lesson for her husband. So turning the hands of the kitchen clock until they pointed to half past one, she made ready the breakfast and dutifully called her lord and master, "Indeed I am not feeling the night very long" remarked the unsuspecting man, as he hurried over the meal and buckled on his basket. The rest of the story I must give in his own words, and I only wish that I could convey some idea of the Welsh accent, and the vigour of his speech and actions as he told it. "After leaving the road at Pont-ar-Elan and turning to the hill I am wondering how dark it is, and falling all the time on the stones and sinking to my knees in the bog, and not a bit of light in the sky. After coming to the pool I'm sitting down and waiting and waiting and waiting for the dawn; and after I am sitting there for hours, and no sign of day, I'm getting frightened and trembling all over, and saying to myself "indeed is the last day gone, and we come to the Day of Judgement". For a long time this little episode in his life was a sore subject with him, and those only who knew him intimately could with impunity say "Well Robert are you going to make an early start for the Pools tonight?"

To come once more to the stream below the bridge. The character of the scenery changes here entirely. The valley, though still a narrow one is much shallower, and even the highest parts of the hills (some 1,750 feet) do not seem to be far off. The hills too are changed; no longer steep with wooded sides and rock covered summits, but long, rolling, round topped hills, grass covered from foot to summit, with short rushes near the stream's side and patches of long red grass where springs exist on the higher parts, with only here and there a mass of grey rock rising from the grassy slopes. Secondary valleys open up to the main one on either side, each with its own stream and its own miniature valleys. At Pont-ar-Elan this is seen in greatest perfection, every bend in the river revealing fresh hills, and valleys, all alike yet all different. On the sloping hill sides are seen long parallel lines, said to have been the marks of the plough, made by the old monks who founded the abbey of Cwm Hir in 1143; and that these monks did cultivate the land is proved by some of the names of the farmhouses, such as Dol Mynach, or the Monk's meadow, and Coed-y-Mynach, or the Monks wood. Such names, again, as, Llanerch Cawr bear witness to the legends about giants so common among these superstitious people. Up in these hills I have seen more ravens than I have seen in all the other parts of England and Wales that I ever visited put together. Once I saw the pretty sight of a pair of old birds teaching a young pair to fly, and coaxing them out farther and farther across the valley, until at last the bolder one flew right across to the opposite rocks, while his more timid sister turned back to the nest, though to return was then was really much harder than to go forward. I have nowhere experienced a greater sense of loneliness than I have here by Elan on Hill. It seems natural for there to be no human beings up in the mountains and on the great moorlands, but here, within a few short miles of the town and railway, with their attendant life and bustle, surrounded by such smooth and gently sloping hills, somehow the loneliness seems greater, and at times even oppressive. Yet in this very loneliness lies for me the great charm of these hills. I remember once when I and my brother went up to fish "the Pools" as the little hill tarns are called, that we walked to Pont-ar Elan by the old Aberystwith road, a distance of five miles, and thence six miles over the hilltop to the water shed of the Elan and Claerwen, fished there that evening (sleeping at a tiny farm house), and the next day walked the eleven miles home again. Yet in those twenty two miles in thirty six hours we spent from leaving the outskirts of the town to returning to it, we saw but two human beings besides ourselves, a man on horse back on the road and a shepherd far up in the hills, a mere dot on the sky line. All the way along the river above Cwm Elan there is nothing but a little farm house, or a tiny shepherd's cot, at intervals of a mile or two. In the autumn or winter in the wet season the rivers, which in summer are but small streams running in well defined channels, overflow the banks and cover the low lying round, converting the valleys into great lakes; and then the cottages on the hill are cut off from all communication with the outer world save by circuitous hill paths almost as impassable in such weather as the broad flood

itself. To one who has not seen these hills it is hard to realise the immense surface from which the rivers receive their water; and even to see them in the summer gives but a faint idea of what the scene is "in winter and rough weather!" The valleys are turned to lakes; the shallow fords, over which nimble feet could pass dry shod, are now torrents through which neither man nor horse can stagger. The quiet river no longer runs deep down between the walls of the rocky gorge, but fills it, rushing along boiling and seething, with a roar that is perfectly deafening. Such a great flood swept down the valleys of the Elan and the Claerwen eight or ten years ago. Carrying destruction and ruin for miles. Every bridge, whether of wood or stone, was swept away –fourteen in all – sheep pens and garden walls were destroyed, trees torn up by the roots, cottages and peat stacks thrown down, whole stacks of hay borne away and strewn for miles along the valleys, and sheep and cattle swept away and drowned or dashed against the rocks. Those who saw it say they can never forget the sight, nor the look of desolation in the valleys when the flood subsided as suddenly as it had risen. I have never seen these rivers in a real flood, but I have seen enough to make me realize how grand and terrible such a sight must be.

Though I have been there sometimes when the storm has been rising, when mist and rain clouds have filled the valleys and concealed the hills, and the wind has begun to shriek and roar among the rocks on the hilltops, yet my association with these streams are chiefly of cool mornings, brightening in to warm sunny days, when I have been glad to bathe in the clear pools, or have basked in the sun shine on the rocks and smoked a quick pipe; and of cool evenings when I have drunk refreshing tea by the peat fire of some friendly shepherd before starting to regain the beaten track while yet there is light enough to see my way. I cannot have hoped to have aroused in your minds feelings or recollections as pleasant as I have recalled to my own; even if I have succeeded in any way in picturing to you these streams and valleys, I have paid only a small part of the debt of gratitude I owe them for the store of health and happy memories that they have afforded me."

# CANE-RODS

AND THEIR CONSTRUCTION

—BY E. R. AUSTIN—

*Read Oct: 18<sup>th</sup> 1887.*



**THERE**

is no doubt but we have to thank our ingenious American Cousins for the invention of the "Split Cane Rod" Wells in his excellent work "Fly Rods & Fly Tackle" is the only writer who gives a practical description of the making of Cane rods, drawn from his own experience Our English writers only touch upon the Subject, but Wells after describing 20 different varieties of woods, more or less suited to rod making, places bamboo at the head as



## THE CONSTRUCTION OF SPLIT CANE RODS.

BY E. R. AUSTIN.

**C**REDIT has generally been given our American cousins for the invention of the split cane rod, and there is no doubt that they were the first to bring it into general use. Wells, in his "Fly Rods and Fly Tackle," gives a capital account of its qualities, and it was his description that fired the ambition of the writer and some of his friends to try and improve on the rather primitive style of construction which Wells suggests.

Any amateur possessed of ordinary deftness of fingers and a considerable stock of patience may hope, in the light of my experience, to turn out a creditable weapon, and thus to secure to himself the feeling of pride that all anglers have in using tackle, flies, or rods made by their own hands.

The general tendency of professional makers of these rods, particularly the Americans, is to make their productions too limber; and one of the greatest difficulties the writer had with his first attempts was the production of the happy combination of lissomness and stiffness necessary to a perfect rod. It was only by repeated trials, and more than one failure, that this was accom-

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plished. If the rod be made with a uniform taper from butt to tip it will be too lissom; the cane rod should follow what are considered to be the best lines of an ordinary fly rod, namely, a slight increase in the middle of its length beyond the uniform taper. On the other hand, to follow the sizes of an ordinary rod throughout will result in the cane rod being too stiff. The tyro must get the proper scantlings from a cane rod which he finds to work properly to his mind.

That there are elements of superiority in the cane rod can easily be shown. Take a piece of cane, and it will be found, even after removing the silica, that the outside fibres are exceedingly hard, much harder than any known wood used for fly rods. It has been mathematically proved that in a beam acting as a cantilever, which is what the rod is when in action, the maximum breaking stresses are in the extreme outer fibres, in the direction of the bending strain, and decrease towards the middle to nothing.

By cutting the cane into sections and gluing them together with the rind outside, all the strongest fibres are where the strength is most required. From this it will be seen that the beneficial effect of putting steel in the core of the rod, as advocated by some makers, is purely imaginary, as at this point the bending stresses are absolutely nil. Experiments made by Hardy show that split cane is far and away of greater ultimate

latter quality which, at close quarters, gives the cane rod its power over fish. From 10½ to 11 feet is the best length for general purposes.

CANE.

Considerable care is required in the selection of cane. So far, the "Calcutta cane" is the only one that has been found generally reliable, and even this often proves deceptive. This cane, known by the black markings on a yellow ground, can be obtained in sixteen-foot lengths, but as a rule, the butt is the only really serviceable part, the upper portion being too soft. There is little in the outside appearance to guide one as to the quality of the cane, beyond the brightness of the yellow portion, a grey-looking cane generally proving unfit for use; and a good look-out must be kept that it is not spoiled by the burns. Choose, however, the heaviest canes. It is only on splitting the cane up that its real quality can be ascertained. The eyes out of which the leaves spring are on opposite sides alternately; the length should be split directly through these eyes. Then subdivide the cane, keeping for use only those portions not affected by the eyes, which, on trial, will be found to be short and rotten at these points. The rejected portions between the eyes may be used to test the quality. If, on breaking a piece across finger

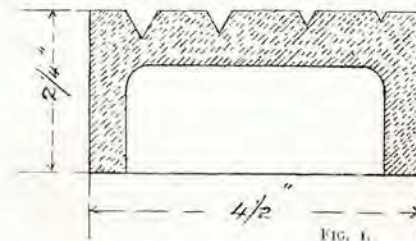
general guide; if bright and yellow it may be serviceable, but if blue it will be found rotten. It is a good plan when splitting up a number of canes to put the splints in bundles and label them, "good," "medium," and so forth. When splitting up, regard must be had to the size of section required, whether for butt joint or upper joints. It will be found a good plan to scrape off the silica before going far in trimming to shape. This trimming is best done with a knife, and, owing to the extreme hardness of the outer fibres, not many blades will stand the work. Trim the sections roughly to width and wedge-shaped, file down the projecting knots, and the splint will be ready for planing up. It may be thought that the silica is a source of strength, but this is a mistake; this covering is often scratched in the cane, and once marked can never be brought to a good finish. Besides, it is most destructive to the keen edge of a plane, and more often to the fingers, imparting an almost razor-like edge to the planed strip.

The amateur must beware of Japanese cane—the beautifully mottled and coloured kind used for flower-stands, etc. Nothing is more deceptive. Compare a piece of this with Calcutta cane. The fracture is perfect; a test of strength under bending load shows it quite the equal of the other; there is no trouble about leaf eyes, and it works perfectly in spite of the frequent knots; yet in spite of all this, for some unknown reason it will not make rods. The writer took infinite pains with a top joint, and to all appear-

ance succeeded perfectly; that joint, however, will bend to any curve and remain so, there being apparently no resilience in the material.

#### PLANING TABLE.

A perfect rod must be absolutely true to shape, and only by a perfect means of planing the strips of cane true to angle and taper can this be attained. Wood is of no use for a planing table, as the moment the plane has reduced the strip to near its proper size it bites into the bed, and all possibility of making the pieces alike in shape is lost. Here we must call in the aid of the engineer to make first a wood pattern of a suitable planing table for a casting; then to plane it absolutely level on its face and cut the grooves in it. It is rarely that a joint is required more than 5 or 6 feet long. Get the casting made 6 feet long of the following section:  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches deep, cored out on the underside to reduce the weight (see Fig. 1) with cross-bars at intervals to stiffen it.



The most perfect practical form for a cane rod is a hexagon, since in it the angles of all the strips are equal, and consequently all the sides of equal width. After having



got the top surface planed smoothly, raise one end about a tenth of an inch on the bed of the planing machine, and, with a tool ground true to an angle of  $60^\circ$ , plane four grooves in the surface, the deepest about  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch deep, and graduating in size till the least runs out to almost nothing. Great care must be exercised in keeping the planing tool ground true to angle and fixed perfectly vertical. Then follow with a sharp-pointed tool to clean out the bottom of the grooves. Nothing more is required. Each strip planed in these grooves will be absolutely true in shape and taper; and, above all, when put together, perfect glue joints will be formed without any adjustment being required. The whole virtue of the rod depends on the sides of the strips being in perfect contact through their whole length and width.

Knowing the size required for a joint of the rod, say at the bigger end, plane a short piece of soft wood as a trial piece, cut it up into lengths and tie together. If this proves too large, try another piece further up the groove until the right size is attained; then mark the place on its side as a guide for planing. Take the roughly trimmed strips, lay them in the grooves, rind uppermost,

and with a smooth file level the knots off. Sometimes there is a hollow above and below the knot, which it is best to warm and press outwards, or there will be ugly depressions on the face of the rod, marring its appearance. There is no necessity for fastening the strips down while planing; the slight roughness left by the planing tool in the metal, and the downward pressure, are quite sufficient to prevent slipping.

The only plane that will deal effectually with such hard material is the American plane, which has the bevel of cutter the reverse way of the ordinary plane, and is capable of very fine adjustment by its screw feed. It might be expected that the iron planing bed would, after very few cuts, take the edge off; but as a matter of fact, as long as the strip of cane under operation projects in the least above the surface of the bed the blade cannot come into contact with it. It is only at the final cut that it is necessary to guide the plane by the fingers travelling along the plate, to keep one part of the cutter at work on the strip, that to right and left of it naturally touching the plate. It is this certainty of each strip being cut down to the surface of the bed that makes them absolutely alike and true. Some canes will be found very troublesome to plane at the joints, the plane picking up the grain above and below in a most annoying fashion. To get over this a smooth file must be used to reduce the part of the joint first, afterwards planing up the spaces between. When you begin planing, watch must be kept over the regularity of angle, so that one side does not come out longer than the others (see Fig. 3), or





Fig. 3.

the result will be a distorted hexagon and an eyesore that cannot be afterwards adjusted. A word must here be said as to the necessity of so arranging the strips, that no knot in any one comes opposite that in another. To this end cut the lengths of cane at least a foot longer than the finished joint is required, and as soon as they are trimmed up, lay the six strips side by side; there being about twelve inches from knot to knot, it is very easy to arrange for a space of two inches between.

GLUEING.

The best and strongest glue only must be used. Some fish glues are very good, but the writer has found "kid" glue answer the purpose. Only a small quantity must be melted at a time, and it must never be heated more than three times.

This is the most disagreeable and troublesome process of all. Having numbered the planed strips for the best disposition of knots, warm them before a fire, lay them on a board side by side, lay the glue liberally on straight from the fire with a wide flat brush for about one-third the length, bunch them together, and wrap spirally with some strong fine twine. It is best to secure the end of the twine at the other side of the room and turn the joint round in the hands, keeping a steady strain all the time. The glue squeezes out over the hands

and does its best to cover the fingers and string, but this cannot be avoided. As soon as wound up near to the end of glueing, and whilst still warm, straighten by the eye with finger and thumb. Then lay in more glue for another third, and proceed as before. On finishing the joint it will be found that the winding in one direction and the pull of the twine have twisted it; warm before the fire, and wind a wrapping in the opposite direction, crossing the first wrapping. This will take out most of the twist, but if any is left, lay the joint in one of the grooves of the planing plate and weight it till the glue is set. All this has to be done before the glue is set, but a little practice makes the process easy, and three lengths or a whole rod may be glued in a morning. Twenty-four hours should be allowed before unwrapping, and one anxiously scans the result the moment it is possible, for any bend or twist must now be permanent, and a source of vexation for all time to the possessor of the rod. Happy the maker if he finds nothing more than a regular bend in only one plane—a good point, as in arranging the rings the concave side can be placed uppermost to counteract the natural droop of the rod and the effect of the bending strain, mainly in one direction.

There is a better way of doing the glueing, but it requires more apparatus. The joints are glued up in halves and tied on to a perfectly true planed strip of iron having the same taper as the joint. By this means the piece cannot warp and twist. When the two halves are set, clean up the faces and glue together; it is necessary only to watch the possibility of bending in one direction,

and no twist is possible. This process requires three strips of iron of the various sizes.

HANDLES.

The simplest form of handle is that turned out of a solid piece of wood, maple or black walnut, with a ferrule let into the end (see Fig. 4), but the strongest, most

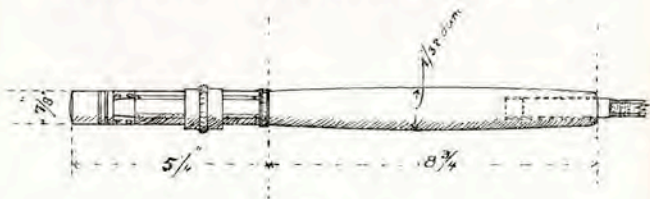


Fig. 4.

workmanlike, and best looking is that in which the strips of the butt joint are spliced into the handle. (See Fig. 5.)

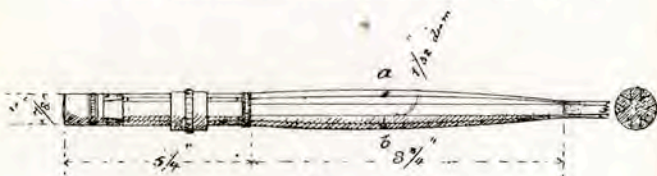


Fig. 5.

To make this perfectly a lathe is required, as great accuracy in the spacing and cutting the grooves is only attained by fixing the piece of wood between the centres

after turning to shape, and cutting the wood out by a diamond-pointed tool traversed by a slide rest, the handle being revolved one-sixth of a turn for the main cuts, and finished off by hand at the taper portions. A free working wood with straight grain, such as red cedar, is necessary, and great care is required to finish off the taper portion to a feather edge at the junction with the cane joint. Having glued the cane joint up to this point it must be warmed, and whilst hot the grooved butt must be forced in, the body of the joint being whipped round with copper wire to prevent it being wedged open. Take care to get the joint straight and true with the butt. When cold the pieces may be separated for final glueing. For choice, the cane need only be carried down to the first ring, which makes a good finish.

The handle should not be varnished with coach body varnish (so suitable for the rest of the rod), as it is always liable to be sticky to the warm hand; shellac spirit varnish is better, laid on with four or five coats as fast as they dry, an affair of a quarter of an hour. When it is well set after the final coat, rub it down first with powdered pumice and water, polish with rotten-stone and oil applied with an old silk handkerchief, and finish off with dry rotten-stone. This gives a brilliant polish; the varnish is always dry to the touch and very durable.

The most simple form of reel fitting is that composed of two narrow flat strips of brass set a suitable distance apart for the reel to lie between, and a V shaped heel-piece as shown by Figs. 4 and 5.

#### FERRULES.

No reliance is to be placed on the ordinary ferrules to be bought at a tackle-maker's. These are generally made with the male portion taper and depend upon their jamming when pushed home. This either results in the ferrule being jammed too fast to be separated without a good deal of force and twisting, about the worst thing for a cane rod; or after a little wear the joint works loose, and the angler is continually casting a part of his rod into the water with a great splash unless it is tied, a most miserable sort of contrivance and unworthy of this age. All that is necessary to avoid this is to make the male ferrule perfectly parallel, so that when pushed in it is in perfect contact, without shake, for its full length. When buying the ferrules, preferably of bronzed brass, select another ferrule the next size smaller and throw away the male ferrule furnished by the maker. Cut this to length and spin it in a lathe on a hard wood mandril, which for convenience may be turned in steps for the different sizes, then file and rub down with emery cloth till it is a perfect fit in the female ferrule, using the callipers freely after the tip will just enter. This ferrule requires no dowel or stringing to keep fast, and on taking down the rod the joints can be separated with the greatest ease.

A good deal has been made of bayonet joints, screws, and many other devices. None of them are necessary. I have made several rods, and none of them cast loose. A good test of a perfect fit is the pop-gun-

like sound when the joints are separated. After fitting the ferrule to your satisfaction, one end of each requires forming to a hexagon shape to fit the rod. The end of the cane joint is of course scraped perfectly round and fitted to the ferrule without distorting it; when pushed home the hexagon framed end corresponds with the body of the joint. Dowels are quite unnecessary, and in fact are a great evil, as the wood is cut away where the solidity is most required, inside the female ferrule. Above all do not put any pins through the ferrules; this is another source of weakness and only permissible to bad workmen. For fastening the ferrules use leaf shellac warmed over a spirit lamp, first inserting a portion into the bore and making thoroughly hot, then slightly coating the end of the joint but taking care not to overheat it, and pushing on the ferrule.

#### WRAPPINGS, RINGS, AND VARNISHING.

These are the finishing touches. The best silk for the wrappings is a loosely-spun kind, to be bought at a fishing-tackle-maker's; but for the top joint fine sewing silk will be found best. Having laid off the spaces for the rings, increasing in distance from the tip, sub-divide them, beginning about half-an-inch apart, and likewise increasing in the spacing. The upper half of the top joint will require only about five-ply of silk, and the width of the wrapping should increase towards the butt as the size of the joint increases. It is only necessary to wax the point of the silk to prevent it slipping, and to

finish off the last ply, which should be done by the invisible knot; then lay over the wrappings with weak glue, which fills the loose pores of the silk and makes them take the varnish better. The rings, by choice, should be fixed and graduated in size. The eyed tip can be of the ordinary wire kind, which, however, may be much improved, with a view to prevention of cutting by the reel line, by working in an ordinary boot eyelet, polished smooth. Coach body varnish is the best, used fresh, thinned down with turpentine, and laid on with a stiff short hog's-hair brush. If the weather be damp, warm the piece first. Allow a few days to dry, and repeat two coats.

In this paper I have endeavoured to give the amateur the result of my experience, so that he may avoid pitfalls and unnecessary experiments in finding the best means to his end. I hope that, having succeeded in turning out his rod, he will derive as much pleasure as I myself have done in watching its behaviour under the trying circumstances which sometimes befall the angler.