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The Experienced Angler

Colonel Robert Venables

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T H E

Experienced Angler:

O R

ANGLING

IMPROVED.

B E I N G

A general Discourse of Angling;

Imparting many of the aptest wayes
and choicest Experiments for the
taking of most sorts of Fish in
Pond or River.

L O N D O N:

Printed for *Richard Marriot*, and are to be sold
at his Shop in *St. Dunstan's Church-yard*,
Fleet-street. 1662.

PREFATORY ADDRESS

TO

THE READER.

FROM

THE EDITION OF

MDCLXII.

PREFATORY ADDRESS.

DELIGHT and Pleasure are so fast rivetted and firmly rooted in the heart of man, that I suppose there are none so morose or melancholy, that will not only pretend to, but plead for an interest in the same, most being so much enamoured therewith, that they judge that life but a living death, which is wholly deprived or abridged of all pleasure; and many pursue the same with so much eagerness and importunity, as though they had been born for no other end, as that they not only consume their most precious time, but also totally ruin their estates thereby: for in this loose and licentious age, when profuse prodigality passes for the characteristic mark of true generosity, and frugality, I mean not niggardliness; is branded with the ignominious blot of baseness. I expect not that this undervalued subject, though it propound delight at an easy rate, will meet with any other entertainment than neglect, if not contempt, it being an art which few take pleasure in, nothing passing for noble or delightful which is not costly; as though men could not gratify their sense, but with the consumption of their fortunes.

Hawking and *Hunting* have had their excellencies celebrated with large *encomiums* by divers pens, and although I intend not any undervaluing to those noble recreations, so much famed in all ages and by all degrees, yet I must needs affirm, that they fall not within the compass of every ones ability to pursue, being as it were only entailed on great persons and vast estates; for if meaner fortunes seek to enjoy them, *Actæon's* fable often proves a true story, and these birds of prey not seldom quarry upon their masters: besides those recreations are most subject to choler and passion, by how much those creatures exceed a hook or line in worth: and indeed in those exercises our pleasure depends much upon the will and humour of a sullen cur or *kite*, (as I have heard their own passions phrase them); which also require much attendance, care and skill to keep her serviceable to our ends. Further, these delights are often prejudicial to the husbandman in his corn, grass and fences; but in this pleasant and harmless Art of Angling a man hath none to quarrel with but himself, and we are usually so entirely our own friends, as not to retain an irreconcilable hatred against ourselves, but can in short time easily compose the enmity; and besides ourselves none are offended, none are endamaged; and this recreation falleth within the capacity of the lowest fortune to compass, affording also profit as well as pleasure, in following of which exercise a man may employ his thoughts in the noblest studies, almost as freely as in his closet.

The minds of anglers being usually more calm and composed than many others, especially hunters and falconers, who too frequently lose their delight in their passion, and too often bring home more of melancholy and discontent than satisfaction in their thoughts; but the angler, when he hath the worst success, loseth but a hook or line, or, perhaps, what he never possessed, a fish; and suppose he should take nothing, yet he enjoyeth a delightful walk by pleasant rivers in sweet pastures, amongst odoriferous flowers, which gratify his senses and delight his mind; which contentments induce many, who affect not angling, to choose those places of pleasure for their Summer's recreation and health.

But, peradventure, some may alledge that this art is mean, melancholy, and insipid; I suppose the old answer, *de gustibus non est disputandum*, will hold as firmly in recreations as palates, many have supposed Angling void of delight, having never tried it, yet have afterwards experimented it so full of content, that they have quitted all other recreations, at least in its season, to pursue it; and I do persuade myself, that whosoever shall associate himself with some honest expert angler, who will freely and candidly communicate his skill unto him, will in short time be convinced, that *Ars non habet inimicum nisi ignorantem*; and the more any experiment its harmless delight, not subject to passion or expence, he will probably be induced to relinquish those pleasures which being obnoxious to choler or contention so discompose the thoughts, that nothing during that unsettlement can relish or delight the mind; to pursue that recreation which composeth the soul to that calmness and serenity, which gives a man the fullest

possession and fruition of himself and all his enjoyments; this clearness and equanimity of spirit being a matter of so high a concern and value in the judgments of many profound Philosophers, as any one may see that will bestow the pains to read, *de tranquillitate Animi*, and *Petrarch de Utriusque Conditionis Statu*: Certainly he that lives *Sibi et Deo*, leads the most happy life; and if this art do not dispose and incline the mind of man to a quiet calm sedateness, I am confident it doth not, as many other delights; cast blocks and rubs before him to make his way more difficult and less pleasant. The cheapness of the recreation abates not its pleasure, but with rational persons heightens it; and if it be delightful the charge of melancholy falls upon that score, and if example, which is the best proof, may sway any thing, I know no sort of men less subject to melancholy than anglers; many have cast off other recreations and embraced it. but I never knew any angler wholly cast off. though occasions might interrupt, their affections to their beloved recreation; and if this art may prove a *Noble brave rest* to thy mind, it will be satisfaction to his, who is thy well-wishing Friend.

ANGLING IMPROVED:

OR

PROFIT AND PLEASURE UNITED.

CHAP. I.

WHEN TO PROVIDE TOOLS, AND HOW TO MAKE THEM.



OR the attaining of such ends which our desires propose to themselves, of necessity we must make use of such common mediums as have a natural tendency to the producing of such effects as are in our eye, and at which we aim; and as in any work, if one principal material be wanting, the whole is at a stand, neither can the same be perfected: so in Angling, the end being recreation, which consisteth in drawing the fish to bite, that we may take them; if you want tools, though you have baits, or baits, though you have tackle, yet you have no part of pleasure by either of these singly: nay, if you have both, yet want skill to use them, all the rest is to little purpose. I shall therefore first begin with your tools, and so proceed in order with the rest.

1. In Autumn, when the leaves are almost or altogether fallen, which is usually about the Winter solstice, the sap being then in the root; which about the middle of January begins to ascend again, and then the time is past to provide yourself with stocks or tops: you need not be so exactly curious for your stocks as the tops, though I wish you to choose the neatest taper-grown you can for stocks, but let your tops be the most neat rush-grown shoots you can get, straight and smooth; and if for the ground rod, near or full two yards long, the reason for that length shall be given presently; and if for the fly, of what length you please, because you must either choose them to fit the stock, or the stock to fit them in a most

exact proportion; neither do they need to be so very much taper-grown as those for the ground, for if your rod be not most exactly proportionable, as well as slender, it will neither cast well, strike readily, or ply and bend equally, which will very much endanger your line. When you have fitted yourself with tops and stocks, for all must be gathered in one season, if any of them be crooked, bind them all together, and they will keep one another straight; or lay them on some even-boarded floor, with a weight on the crooked parts, or else bind them close to some straight staff or pole; but before you do this you must bathe them all, save the very top, in a gentle fire.

For the ground angle, I prefer the cane or reed before all other, both for its length and lightness: and whereas some object against its colour and stiffness, I both these inconveniences are easily remedied; the colour by covering it with thin leather or parchment, and those dyed into what colour you please; or you may colour the cane itself, as you see daily done by those that sell them in London, especially if you scrape off the shining yellow outside, but that weakens the rod. The stiffness of the cane is helped by the length and strength of the top, which I would wish to be very much taper-grown, and of the full length I spoke of before, and so it will kill a very good fish without ever straining the cane, which will, as you may observe, yield and bend a little; neither would I advise any to use a reed that will not receive a top of the fore-mentioned length. Such who must commend the hazel-rod, (which I also value and praise, but for different reasons), above the cane; do it because, say they, the slender rod saveth the line; but my opinion is, that the equal bending of the rod chiefly, next to the skill of the Angler, saveth the line, and the slenderness I conceive principally serveth to make the fly-rod long and light, easy to be managed with one hand, and casteth the fly far, which are to me the considerations chiefly to be regarded in a fly-rod; for if you observe the slender part of the rod, if strained, shoots forth in length as if it were part of the line, so that the whole stress or strength of the fish is borne or sustained by the thicker part of the rod, which is no stronger than the stronger than the end of such a top as I did before direct for the ground-rod, and you may prove what I say to be true, if you hang a weight at the top of the fly-rod, which you shall see ply and bend, in the stiff and thick part, more or less as the weight is heavy or light. Having made this digression for the cane, I return to the making up of the top, of which at the upper or small end, I would have you to cut off about two feet, or three quarters of a yard at most; and then piece neatly to the thick remaining part, a small shoot of black thorn or crab tree, gathered in due season as before, fitted in a most exact proportion to the hazel, and then cut off a small part of the slender end of the black thorn or crab tree, and lengthen out the same with a small piece of whalebone, made round, smooth, and taper; all which will make your rod to be very long, gentle, and not so apt to break or stand bent as the hazel, both which are great inconveniences, especially breaking, which will force you from your sport to mend your top.

2. To teach the way or manner how to make a line, were time lost, it being so easy and ordinary; yet to make the line well, handsome, and to twist the hair even and neat, makes the line strong. For if one hair be long and another short, the short one receiveth no strength from the long one, and so breaketh, and then the other, as too weak, breaks also; therefore you must twist them slowly, and in the twisting, keep them from entangling together, which hinders their right plaiting or bedding. Further, I do not like the mixing of silk or thread with hair, but if you please, you may, to make the line strong, make it all of silk, or thread, or hair, as strong as you please, and the lowest part of the smallest lute or viol strings, which I have proved to be very strong, but will quickly rot in the water, you may however help that in having new and strong ones to change for those that decay; but as to hair, the most usual matter whereof lines are made, I like sorrel, white, and grey best; sorrel in muddy and boggy rivers, and both the latter for clear waters. I never could find such virtue or worth in other colours, to give them so high praise as some

do, yet if any other have worth in it, I must yield it to the pale or watery green, and if you fancy that, you may dye it thus. Take a pottle of allum water, and a large handful of marigolds, boil them until a yellow scum arise, then take half a pound of green copperas, and as much verdegrease, beat them into a fine powder, then put those with the hair into the allum-water, set all to cool for twelve hours, then take out the hair and lay it to dry. Leave a bought, or bout, at both ends of the line, the one to put it to, and take it from your rod, the other to hang your lowest link upon, to which your hook is fastened, and so that you may change your hook as often as you please.

3. Let your hooks be long in the shank, somewhat inclining to roundness, but the point must stand even and straight, and the bending must be in the shank; for if the shank be straight, the point will hang outward, though when set on it may stand right, yet it will after the taking of a few fish, cause the hair at the end of the shank to stand bent, and so, consequently cause the point of the hook to lie or hang too much outward, whereas upon the same ground the bending shank will then cause the point of the hook to hang directly upwards.

When you set on your hook, do it with strong but small silk, and lay your hair upon the inside of the hook, for if on the outside the silk will cut and fret it asunder; and to avoid the fretting of the hair by the hook on the inside, smooth all you hooks upon a whetstone, from the inside to the back of the hook, slope ways.

4. Get the best cork you can without flaws or holes, as quills and pens are not of sufficient strength in strong streams; bore the cork through with a small hot iron, then put into it a quill of a fit proportion, neither too large to split it, or so small as to slip out, but so as it may stick in very closely; then pare your cork back into the form of a pyramid, or small pear, and of what size you please, then on a smooth grindstone, or with pumice make it complete, for you cannot pare it so smooth as you may grind it: have corks of all sizes.

5. Get a musquet or carbine bullet, make a hole through it, and put in a strong twist, hang this on your hook to try the depth of river or pond.

6. Take so much parchment as will be about four inches broad, and five long, make the longer end round, then take so many pieces more as will make five or six partitions, sew them all together, leaving the side of the longest square open, to put your lines, spare links, hooks ready fastened, and flies ready made, into the several partitions; this will contain much, and will also lie flat and close in your pocket.

7. Have also a little whetstone about two inches long, and one quarter square; it's much better to sharpen your hooks than a file, which either will not touch a well-tempered hook, or leave it rough but not sharp.

8. Have a piece of cane for the bob and palmer, with several boxes of divers sizes for your hooks, corks, silk, thread, lead, flies, &c.

9. Bags of linen and woolen, for all sorts of baits.

10. Have a small pole, made with a loop at the end, like that of your line, but much larger, to which must be fastened a small net, to land great fish, without which, should you want assistance, you will be in danger of losing.

11. Your pannier cannot be too light; I have seen some made of osiers, cleft into slender long splinters, and so wrought up, which is very neat, and exceeding light: you must ever carry with you store of hooks, lines, hair, silk, thread, lead, links, corks of all sizes, lest you should lose or break, as is usual, any of them, and be forced to leave your sport in quest of supplies.

CHAP. II.

DIVERS SORTS OF ANGLING; FIRST, OF THE FLY.

AS there are many kinds and sorts of fish, so there are also various and different ways to take them; and, therefore, before we proceed to speak how to take each kind, we must say something in general of the several ways of angling, as necessary to the better order of our work.

Angling, therefore, may be distinguished either into fishing by day, or, which some commend, but the cold and dews caused me to dis-relish that which impaired my health, by night; and these again are of two sorts, either upon the superficies of the water, or more or less under the surface thereof: of this sort is angling with the ground-line, with lead, but no float, for the Trout, or with lead and float for all sorts of fish, or near the surface of the water for the Chub, Roach, &c. or with a troll for the Pike, or a minnow for the Trout; of which more in due place.

That way of angling upon or above the water, is with cankers, palmers, caterpillars, cad-bait, or any worm bred on herbs or trees, or with flies as well natural as artificial; of these last shall be our first discourse, as comprising much of the other last-named, and as being the most pleasant and delightful part of angling.

But I must here beg leave to dissent from the opinion of such who assign a certain fly to each month, whereas I am certain, scarce any one sort of fly continues its colour and virtue one month; and generally all flies last a much shorter time, except the stone-fly, by some called the May-fly, which is bred of the water cricket, creeps out of the river, and getting under the stones by the water side, turns to a fly, and lies under the stones; the May-fly and the reddish fly with ashy grey wings. Besides the season of the year may much vary the time of their coming in; a forward Spring brings them in sooner, and a late Spring the later. Flies being creatures bred of putrefaction, take life as the heat furthers or disposes the seminal virtue by which they are generated into animation: and therefore all I can say as to time is, that your own observation must be your best instructor, when is the time that each fly come in, ad will be most acceptable to the fish, of which I shall speak more fully in the next section. Further also I have observed, that several rivers and soils produce several sorts of flies; as the mossy boggy soils have one sort peculiar to them; the clay soil, gravely and mountainous country and rivers; and a mellow light soil different from them all; yet some sorts are common to all these sorts of rivers and soils, but they are few, and differ somewhat in colour from those bred elsewhere in other soils.

In general, all sorts of flies are very good in their season, for such fish as will rise at the fly, viz. Salmon, Trout, Umber, Grayling, Bleak, Chevin, Roach, Dace, &c. Though some of these fish do love some flies better than other, except the fish named, I know not any sort or kind that will ordinarily and freely rise at the fly, though I know some who angle for Bream and Pike with artificial flies, but I judge the labour lost, and the knowledge a needless curiosity; those fish being taken much easier, especially the Pike, by other ways. All the fore-mentioned sorts of fish will sometimes take the fly much better at the top of the water, and at another time much better a little under the superficies of the water; and in this your own observation must be your constant and daily instructor; for if they will not rise to the top, try them under, it being impossible, in my opinion, to give any certain rule in this particular: also the five sorts of fish named will take the artificial fly, so will not the other, except an oak-worm or cad-bait be

put on the point of the hook, or some other worm suitable, as the fly must be, to the season.

You may also observe, what my own experience taught me, that the fish never rise eagerly and freely at any sort of fly, until that kind comes to the water's side; for though I have often, at the first coming in of some flies, which I judged they liked best got several of them, yet I could never find that they did much, if at all value them, until those sorts of flies began to flock to the rivers sides, and were to be found on the trees and bushes there in great numbers; for all sorts of flies, wherever bred, do, after a certain time, come to the banks of rivers, I suppose to moisten their bodies dried with the heat; and from the bushes and herbs there, skip and play upon the water, where the fish lie in wait for them, and after a short time die, and are not to be found: though of some kinds there come a second sort afterward, but much less, as the orange-fly; and when they thus flock to the river, then is the best season to angle with that fly. And that thou may the better find the fly they covet most at that instant, do thus:

When you come first to the river in the morning, with your rod beat upon the bushes or boughs which hang over the water, and by their falling upon the water you will see what sorts of flies are there in greatest numbers; if divers sorts, and equal in number, try them all, and you will quickly find which they most desire. Sometimes they change their fly; though not very usual, twice or thrice in one day; but ordinarily they do not seek another sort of fly till they have for some days even glutted themselves with a former kind, which is commonly when those flies die and go out. Directly contrary to our London gallants, who must have the first of every thing, when hardly to be got, but scorn the same when kindly ripe, healthful, common, and cheap; but the fish despise the first, and covet when plenty, and when that sort grow old and decay, and another cometh in plentifully, then they change; as if nature taught them, that every thing is best in its own proper season, and not so desirable when not kindly ripe, or when through long continuance it begins to lose its native worth and goodness.

I shall add a few cautions and directions in the use of the natural fly, and then proceed:

1. When you angle for Chevin, Roach, or Dace, with the fly, you must not move your fly swiftly; when you see the fish coming towards it, but rather after one or two short and slow removes, suffer the fly to glide gently with the stream towards the fish; or if in a standing or very slow water, draw the fly slowly, and not directly upon him, but sloping and sidewise by him, which will make him more eager lest it escape him; for, should you move it nimbly and quick, they will not, being fish of slow motion, follow as the Trout will.

2. When Chub, Roach, or Dace shew themselves in a sun-shiny day upon the top of the water, they are most easily caught with baits proper for them; and you may chuse from among them which you please to take.

3. They take an artificial fly with a cad-bait, or oak-worm, on the point of the hook; and the oak-worm, when they shew themselves is, better upon the water than under, or than the fly itself, and is more desired by them.

Chap. III.

OF THE ARTIFICIAL FLY.

HAVING given these few directions for the use of the natural fly of all sorts, and shewed the time and season of their coming, and how to find them, and cautioned you in the use of them, I shall proceed to treat of the artificial fly. But here I must premise, that it is much better to learn how to make a fly by sight, than by any written direction that can possibly be expressed, in regard the terms of art do in most parts of England differ, and also several sorts of flies are called by different names; some call the fly bred of the water cricket or creeper a May-fly, and some a stone-fly; some call the cad-bait a May, and some call a short fly, of a sad golden green colour, with short brown wings, a May-fly: and I see no reason but all flies bred in May, are properly enough called May-flies. Therefore, except some one that hath skill, would paint them, I can neither well give their names nor describe them, without too much trouble and prolixity; nor, as I alledged, in regard of the variety of soils and rivers, describe the flies that are bred and frequent each: but the angler, as before directed, having found the fly which the fish at present affect, let him make one as like it as possibly he can, in colour, shape, proportion; and for his better imitation let him lay the natural fly before him. All this premised and considered, let him go on to make his fly, which according to my own practice I thus advise.

First, I begin to set on my hook, placing the hair on the inside of its shank, with such coloured silk as I conceive most proper for the fly, beginning at the end of the hook, and when I come to that place which I conceive most proportionable for the wings, then I place such coloured feathers there, as I apprehend most resemble the wings of the fly, and set the points of the wings towards the head; or else I run the feathers, and those must be stripped from the quill or pen, with part of it still cleaving to the feathers, round the hook, and so make them fast, if I turn the feathers round the hook; then I clip away those that are upon the back of the hook, so, if it be possible, the point of the hook may be forced by the feathers left on the inside of the hook, to swim upwards; and by this means I conceive the stream will carry your flies' wings in the posture of one flying; whereas if you set the points of the wings backwards, towards the bending of the hook, the stream, if the feathers be as gentle as they ought, will fold the points of the wings in the bending of the hook, as I have often found by experience. After having set on the wing, I go on so far as I judge fit, till I fasten all, and then begin to make the body, and the head last; the body of the fly I make several ways; if the fly be one entire colour, then I take a worsted thread, or moccoda end, or twist wool or fur into a kind of thread, or wax a small slender silk thread, and lay wool, fur, &c. upon it, and then twist, and the material will stick to it, and then go on to make my fly small or large, as I please. If the fly, as most are, be of several colours, and those running in circles round the fly, then I either take two of these threads, fastening them first towards the bend of the hook, and so run them round, and fasten all at the wings, and then make the head; or else I lay upon the hook, wool, fur of hare, dog, fox, bear, cow, or hog, which, close to their bodies, have a fine fur, and with a silk of the other colour bind the same wool or fur down, and then fasten all: or instead of the silk running thus round the fly, you may pluck the feather from one side of those long feathers which grow about a cock or capon's neck or tail, by some called hackle; then run [the] same round your fly, from head to tail, making both ends fast; but you must be sure to suit the feather answerable to the colour you are to imitate in the fly; and this way you may counterfeit those rough insects, which some call wool-beds, because of their wool-like outside and rings of divers colours, though I take them to be palmer worms, which the fish much delight in. let me add this only, that some flies have forked tails, and some have horns, both which you must imitate with a slender hair fastened to the head or tail of your fly, when you first set on your hook, and in all things, as length, colour, as like the natural fly as possibly you can: the head is made after all the rest of the body, of silk or hair, as being of a more shining glossy colour than the other materials, as usually the

head of the fly is more bright than the body, and is usually of a different colour from the body. Sometimes I make the body of the fly with a peacock's feather, but that is only one sort of fly, whose colour nothing else that I could ever get would imitate, being the short, sad, golden, green fly I before mentioned, which I make thus: take one strain of a peacock's feather, or if that be not sufficient, then another, wrap it about the hook, till the body be according to your mind; if your fly be of divers colours, and those lying long ways from head to tail, then I take my dubbing, and lay them on the hook long ways, one colour by another, as they are mixed in the natural fly, from head to tail, then bind all on, and fasten them with silk of the most predominant colour; and this I conceive is a more artificial way than is practised by many anglers, who use to make such a fly, all of one colour, and bind it on with silk, so that it looks like a fly with round circles, but in nothing at all resembling the fly it is intended for: the head, horns, tail, are made as before. That you may the better counterfeit all sorts of flies, get furs of all sorts and colours you can possibly procure, as of bear's hair, foxes, cows, hogs, dogs, which close to their bodies have a fine soft hair or fur, moccado ends, crewels, and dyed wool of all colours, with feathers of cocks, capons, hens, teals, mallards, widgeons, pheasants, partridges, the feather under the mallard, teal or widgeon's wings, and about their tails, about cock or capon's neck and tail, of all colours; and generally of all birds, the kite, &c. that you may make yours exactly of the colour with the natural fly. And here I will give some cautions and directions, as for the natural fly, and so pass on to baits for angling at the ground.

1. When you angle with the artificial fly, you must either fish in a river not fully cleared from some rain lately fallen, that had discoloured it; or in a moorish river, discoloured by moss or bogs; or else in a dark cloudy day, when a gentle gale of wind moves the water; but if the wind be high, yet so as you may guide your tools with advantage, they will rise in the plain deeps, and then and there you will commonly kill the best fish; but if the wind be little or none at all, you must angle in the swift streams.

2. You must keep your artificial fly in continual motion, though the day be dark, the water muddy, and the wind blow, or else the fish will discern and refuse it.

3. If you angle in a river that is mudded by rain, or passing through mosses or bogs, you must use a larger bodied fly than ordinary, which argues, that in clear rivers the fly must be smaller; and this not being observed by some, hinders their sport, and they impute their want of success to their want of the right fly, when perhaps they have it, but made too large.

4. If the water be clear and low, then use a small bodied fly with slender wings.

5. When the water begins to clear after rain, and is of a brownish color, then a red or orange fly.

6. If the day be clear, then a light coloured fly, with slender body and wings.

7. In dark weather, as well as dark waters, your fly must be dark.

8. If the water be of a wheycolor, or whitish, then use a black or brown fly: yet these six last rules do not always hold, though usually they do, or else I had omitted them.

9. Observe principally the belly of the fly, for that colour the fish observe most, as being most in their eye.

10. When you angle with an artificial fly, your line may be twice the length of your rod, except the river be much encumbered with wood and trees.

11. For every sort of fly have three; one of a lighter colour, another sadder than the natural fly, and a third of the exact colour with the fly, to suit all waters and weathers, as before.

12. I never could find, by any experience of mine own, or other man's observation, that fish would freely and eagerly rise at the artificial fly, in any slow muddy rivers: by muddy rivers, I mean such rivers, the bottom or ground of which is slime or mud; for such as are mudded by rain, as I have already,

and shall afterwards further, shew at sometimes and seasons I would choose to angle, yet in standing meers or sloughs, I have known them, in a good wind, to rise very well, but not so in slimy rivers, either the Weever, in Cheshire, or the Sow, in Staffordshire, and others in Warwickshire, &c. and the Black-water in Ulster; in the last, after many trials, though in its best streams, I could never find almost any sport, save at its influx in Lough Neagh; but there the working of the Lough makes it sandy; and they will bite also near Tom Shane's Castle, Mountjoy, Antrim, &c. even to admiration; yet sometimes they will rise in that river a little, but not comparable to what they will do in every little Lough, in any small gale of wind. And though I have often reasoned in my own thoughts, to search out the true cause of this, yet I could never so fully satisfy my own judgment, so as to conclude any thing positively; yet have taken up these two ensuing particulars as most probable.

1. I conjectured the depth of the loughs might hinder the force of the sun beams from operating upon, or heating the mud in those rivers, which though deep, yet are not so deep as the loughs; I apprehend that to be the cause, as in great droughts fish bite but little in any river, but not at all in slimy rivers, in regard the mud is not cooled by the constant and swift motion of the river, as in gravelly or sandy rivers, where, in fit seasons, they rise most freely, and bite most eagerly, save as before in droughts, notwithstanding at that season some sport may be had, though not with the fly, whereas nothing at all will be done in slow muddy rivers.

2. My second supposition was, whether, according to that old received axiom, *suo quaeque, similima coelo*, the fish might not partake of the nature of the river, in which they are bred and live, as we see in men born in fenny, boggy, low, moist grounds, and thick air, who ordinarily want that present quickness, vivacity, and activity of body and mind, which persons born in dry, hilly, sandy soils and clear air, are usually endued withal. The fish participating of the nature of the muddy river, which is ever slow, for if they were swift, the stream would cleanse them from all mud, are not so quick, lively, and active, as those bred in swift, sandy, or stony rivers, and so coming to the fly with more deliberation, discern the same to be counterfeit, and forsake it; whereas, on the contrary, in stony, sandy, swift rivers, being colder, the fish are more active, and so more hungry and eager, the stream and hand keeping the fly in continual motion, they snap the same up without any pause, lest so desirable a morsel escape them.

You must have a very quick eye, a nimble rod and hand, and strike with the rising of the fish, or he instantly finds his mistake, and forces out the hook again: I could never, my eye being weak, discern perfectly where my fly was, the wind and stream carrying it so to and again, that the line was never any certain direction or guide to me; but if I saw a fish rise, I use to strike if I discerned it might be within the length of my line.

Be sure in casting, that your fly fall first into the water, for if the line fall first, it scares or frightens the fish; therefore draw it back, and cast it again, that the fly may fall first.

When you try how to fit your color to the fly, wet your fur, hair, wool, or moccado, otherwise you will fail in your work; for though when they are dry, they exactly suit the colour of the fly, yet the water will alter most colours, and make them lighter or darker.

The best way to angle with the cad-bait, is to fish with it on the top of the water, as you do with the fly; it must stand upon the shank of the hook, in like manner with the artificial fly; if it come into the bend of the hook, the fish will little or not at all value it, nor if you pull the blue gut out of it; and to make it keep that place, you must, when you set on your hook, fasten a horse hair or two under the silk, with the ends standing a very little out from under the silk, and pointing towards the line; this will keep it from sliding back into the bend; and thus used, it is a most excellent bait for a Trout. You may imitate the cad-bait, by

making the body of chamois, the head of black silk.

I might here notice several sorts of flies, with the colours that are used to make them; but for the reasons before given, that their colours alter in several rivers and soils, and also because, though I name the colours, yet it is not easy to choose that colour by any description, except so largely performed as would be over large, and swell this small piece beyond my intended conciseness, which are easy and short, if rightly observed, are full enough, and sufficient for making and finding out all sorts of flies in all rivers. I shall only add, that the Salmon flies must be made with wings standing one behind the other, whether two or four; also he delights in the most gaudy and orient colours you can choose; the wings I mean chiefly, if not altogether, with long tails and wings.

CHAP. IV.

OF ANGLING AT THE GROUND.

NOW we are come to the second part of angling, viz. under the water, which if it be with the ground-line for the Trout, then you must not use any float at all, only the plumb of lead, which I would wish might be a small bullet, the better to roll on the ground; and it must also be lighter or heavier, as the stream runs swift or slow, and you must place it about nine inches or a foot from the hook; the lead must run upon the ground, and you must keep your line as straight as possible, yet by no means so as to raise the lead from the ground; your top must be very gentle, that the fish may more easily, and to himself insensibly, run away with the bait, and not be scared with the stiffness of the rod; and if you make your top of black-thorn and whale-bone, as I before directed, it will conduce much to this purpose: neither must you strike so soon as you feel the fish bite, but slack your line a little, that so he may more securely swallow the bait, and hook himself, which he will sometimes do, especially if he be a good one; the least jerk, however, hooks him, and indeed you can scarce strike too easily. Your tackle must be very fine and slender, and you will have more sport than if you had strong lines, which frighten the fish, but the slender line is easily broke; with a small jerk. Morning and evening are the best times for the ground-line for a Trout, in clear weather and water, but in cloudy weather, or muddy water, you may angle at ground all day.

2. You may also in the night angle for the Trout with two great garden worms, hanging a equally in length as you can place them on your hook; cast them from you as you would cast the fly, and draw them to you again upon the top of the water, and not suffer them to sink; therefore you must use no lead this way of angling; when you hear the fish rise, give some time for him to gorge your bait, as at the ground, then strike gently. If he will not take them at the top, add some lead, and try at the ground, as in the day time; when you feel him bite, order yourself as in day angling at the ground. Usually the best Trouts bite in the night, and will rise in the still deeps, but not ordinarily in the stream.

3. You may angle also with a minnow for the Trout, which you must put on your hook thus: first, put your hook through the very point of his lower chap, and draw it quite through; then put your hook in at his mouth, and bring the point to his tail, then draw your line straight, and it will bring him into a round compass, and close his mouth that no water get in, which you must avoid; or you may stitch up his mouth; or you may, when you have set on your hook, fasten some bristles under the silk, leaving the

points about a straw's breadth and half, or almost half an inch standing out towards the line, which will keep him from slipping back. You may also imitate the minnow as well as the fly, but it must be done by an artist with the needle.

You must also have a swivel or turn placed about a yard or more from your hook, observing you need no lead on your line, for you must continually draw your bait up the stream, near the top of the water. If you strike a large Trout, and it should break either your hook or line, or get off, then near to her hole, if you can discover it, or the place where you struck her, fix a short stick in the water, and with your knife loose a small piece of the rind, so as you may lay your line in it, and yet the bark be close enough to keep your line in, that it slip not out, nor the stream carry it away: bait your hook with a garden or lob-worm, your hook and line being very strong, let the bait hang a foot from the stick, then fasten the other end of your line to some stick or bough in the bank, and within one hour, you may be sure of her, if all your tackle hold.

The next way of angling is with a troll for the Pike, which is very delightful; you may buy your troll ready made, therefore I shall not trouble myself to describe it, only let it have a winch to wind it up withall.

For this kind of fish, your tackle must be strong, your rod must not be very slender at the top, where you must place a small slender ring for your line to run through; let your line be silk, at least two yards next the hook, and the rest of strong shoe-maker's thread; your hook double, and strongly armed with wire, for above a foot; then with a probe or needle, you must draw the wire in at the fish's mouth and out at the tail, that so the hook may lie in the mouth of the fish, and both the points on either side; upon the shank of the hook fasten dome lead very smooth, that it go into the fish's mouth, and sink her with the head downward, as though she had been playing on the top of the water, and were returning to the bottom; your bait may be small Roach, Dace, Gudgeon, Loach, or sometimes a Frog; your hook thus baited, you must tie the tail of the fish close and fast to the wire, or else with drawing to and again, the fish will rend off the hook, or, which I judge neater, with a needle and strong thread, stitch through the fish on either side the wire, and tie it very fast: all being thus fitted, cast your fish up and down in such places as you know Pike frequent, observing still, that he sink some depth before you pull him up again. When the Pike rises, if it be not sunk deep, you may see the water move, or at least you may feel him; then slacken your line, and give him length enough to run away to his hold, whither he will go directly, and there pouch it, ever beginning, as you may observe, with the head swallowing that first, thus let him lie, until you see the line move in the water, and then you may certainly conclude he hath pouched your bait, and rangeth abroad for more; then with your troll wind up your line, till you think you have it almost straight, then with a smart jerk hook him, and make your pleasure to your content. Some use no rod at all, but hold the line in links in their hand, using lead and float. others use a very great hook, with the hook at the tail of the fish, and when the Pike rises, then they strike at the first pull. Others put a strong string or thread in at the mouth of the bait, and out at one of the gills; then over the head, and in at the other gill, and so tie the bait to the hook, leaving a little length of the thread or string betwixt the fish and the hook, that so the Pike may turn the head of the bait, the better to swallow it, and then as before; after some pause, strike. Some tie the bait-hook and line to a bladder or bundle of flags, or bull-rushes, fastening the line very gently in the cleft of a small stick, to hold the bait from sinking more than its allowed length, half a yard. The stick must be fastened to the bladder or flags, to which the line being tied, that it may easily unfold and run to its length, and so give the Pike liberty to run away with the bait, and by the bladder or flags, recover their line again. You must observe this way to turn off your bait with the wind or stream, that they may carry it away. Some use, for sport, if the Pike be a great one, to tie the

same to the foot of a goose, which the Pike, if large, will sometimes pull under the water. Before I proceed to give you each sort of bait for every kind of fish, give me leave to add a caution or two, for the ground-line and fishing, as I did for the natural and artificial fly, and then we shall go on.

There are two ways of fishing for Eels, proper and peculiar to that fish alone; the first is termed by some, angling for Eels, which is thus: take a short strong rod, and exceeding strong line, with a little compassed, but strong hook, which you must bait with a large well-scoured red worm, then place the end of the hook very easily in a cleft of a stick, that it may very easily slip out; with this stick and hook thus baited, search for holes under stones, timbers, roots, or about flood-gates; if there be a good Eel, give her time, and she will take it; but be sure she has gorged it, and then you may conclude, if your tackling hold, she is your own.

The other way is called bobbing for Eels, which is thus: take the largest garden worms, scour them well, and with a needle run a very strong thread or silk through them from end to end; take so many as that at last you may wrap them about a board, for your hand will be too narrow, a dozen times at least, then tie them fast with the other two winds of the thread or silk, that they may hang in so many long bouts or hanks; then fasten all to a strong cord, and something more than a handful above the worms, fasten a plumb of lead, of about three quarters of a pound, making your cord sure to a long and strong pole; with these worms thus ordered, you must fish in a muddy water, and you will feel the Eels tug strongly at them; when you think they have swallowed them as far as they can, gently draw up your worms and Eels, and when you have them near the top of the water, hoist them a main to land; and thus you may take three or four at once, and good ones, if there be store.

1. When you angle at ground, keep your line as straight as possible, suffering none of it to lie in the water, because it hinders the nimble jerk of the rod; but if, as sometimes it will happen, that you cannot avoid but some little will lie in the water, yet keep it in the stream above your float, by no means below it.

2. When you angle at ground for small fish, put two hooks to your line, fastened together thus: lay the two hooks together, then draw the one shorter than the other by nine inches, this will cause the other end to over-reach as much, as the other is shorter at the hooks, then turn that end back, and with a water-knot, in which you must make both the links to fasten, tie them so as both links may hang close together, and not come out at both ends of the knot. Then upon that link which hangeth longest, fasten your lead near a foot above the hook; put upon your hooks two different baits, and so you may try, with more ease and less time, what bait the fish love best; and also very often, as I have done, take two fish at once with one rod. You have also, by this experience, one bait for such as feed close upon the ground, as Gudgeon, Flounder, &c. and another for such as feed a little higher, as Roach, Dace, &c.

3. Some use to lead their lines heavily, and to set their float about a foot or more from the end of the rod, with a little lead to buoy it up, and thus in violent swift streams, they avoid the offence of a float, and yet perfectly discern the biting of the fish, and so order themselves accordingly; but this has its inconvenience, viz. the lying of the line in the water.

4. Give all fish time to gorge the bait, and be not over hasty, except you angle with such tender baits as will not endure nibbling at, but upon every touch be struck at, as sheep's blood and flies, which are taken away at the first pull of the fish, and therefore enforce you, at the first touch, to try your fortune.

Now we are to speak next of baits, more particularly proper for every fish, wherein I shall observe this method, first to name the fish, then the baits, according as my experience hath proved them grateful to the fish; and to place them as near as I can in such order as they come in season, though many of them are in season at one instant of time, and equally good. I would not be understood, as if when a new bait

comes in, the old one were antiquated and useless; for I know the worm lasts all the year, flies all the Summer, one sort of bob-worm all the Winter, the other under cow-dung, in June and July; but I intimate that some are found when others are not in rerum natura.

CHAP. V.

OF ALL SORTS OF BAITS FOR EACH KIND OF FISH, AND HOW TO FIND AND KEEP THEM.

THE SALMON takes the artificial fly very well; but you must use a troll, as for the Pike, or he, being a strong fish, will hazard your line, except you give him length: his flies must be much larger than you use for other fish, the wings very long, two or four, behind one another, with very long tails; his chiefest ground-bait a great garden or lob-worm.

2. The **TROUT** takes all sorts of worms, especially brandlings; all sorts of flies, the minnow, young frogs, marsh-worm, dock-worm, flag-worm, all sorts of cad-bait, bob, palmers, caterpillars, gentles, wasps, hornets, dores, bees, grasshoppers, cankers, and bark-worm; he is a ravenous, greedy fish, and loveth a large bait at ground, and you must fit him accordingly.

3. The **UMBER, OR GRAYLING**, is generally taken with the same baits as the Trout; he is an eager fish, biteth freely, and will rise often at the same fly, if you prick him not.

The **BARBEL** bites best at great red worms, well scoured in moss; gentles, cheese, or paste, made of cheese with suet, maggots, and red worms; feed much for this fish.

4. **CARP** and **TENCH** love the largest red worms, the [Tench] especially if they smell much of tar; to which end you may, some small time before you use them, take so many as you will use at that time, and put them by themselves in a little tar, but let them not lie long lest it kill them; paste also of all sorts, made with strong-scented oils, tar, bread, grain boiled soft, maggots, gentles, marsh-worm, flag-worm, especially; feed much and often for these fish.

The **PIKE** takes all sorts of baits, save the Fly, Gudgeon, Roach, Dace, [Loach,] and young frogs in Summer. You may halter him thus: fasten a strong line with a snare at the end of it to a pole, which if you go circumspectly to work, he will permit you to put it over his head, and then you must by strength hoist him to land.

EELS take great red worms, beef, wasps, guts of fowls, and the minnow. Bait night-hooks for him with small Roach, the hook must lie in the mouth of the fish, as for the Pike; this way takes the greatest Eels.

7. The **GUDGEON, RUFF, and BLEAK**, take the smallest red worms, cad-bait, gentles, and wasps. The **BLEAK** takes the natural or artificial fly, especially in the evening.

8. The **RUFF** taketh the same baits as the **PEARCH**, save that you must have the lesser worms, he being a smaller fish.

9. For **ROACH** and **DACE** take small worms, cad-bait, flies, bobs, sheeps-blood, small white snails, all sorts of warms bred on herbs or trees, paste, wasps, and gnats. The **BLEAK** is an eager fish, and takes the same baits as the **ROACH**, only they must be less. You may angle for him with as many hooks on your line at once, as you can conveniently fasten on it.

10. The CHEVIN or CHUB, all sorts of earth-worms, bob, the minnow, flies of all sorts, cad-bait, all sorts of worms bred on herbs and trees, especially oak-worms, young frogs, wasps, bees, or grasshoppers, on the top of the water; cheese, grain, beetles, a great brown fly that lives on the oak, black snails, their bellies slit that the white appear; he loves a larger bait, as a wasp, colwort-worm, and then a wasp altogether.

11. The BREAM takes red worms, especially those that are got at the root of a great Dock, it lies wrapped up in a knot, or round clue; paste, flag-worms, wasps, green-flies, butter-flies, or a grasshopper, his legs being cut off.

12. FLOUNDER, SHAD and MULLET, love red worms of all sorts, wasps, and gentles.

As for the MINNOW, LOACH, BULL-HEAD, or [MILLER'S THUMB] being usually children's recreation, I once purposed to have omitted them wholly, but considering they often are baits for better fish, as Trout, Pike, Eel, &c. Neither could this discourse be general, if they were omitted; and though I should wave mentioning them, yet I cannot forget them, who have so often vexed me with their unwelcome eagerness; for the [MINNOW] will have a part in the play, if you come where he is; which is almost every where, you need not seek him: I find him much oftener than I desire, it is only in deep still places which he least frequents, and is not over curious in his baits; any thing will serve that he can swallow, and he will strain hard for what he cannot gorge: but chiefly likes small red worms, cad-bait, worms bred on trees, and wasps.

The LOACH and BULL-HEAD are much of the same diet; but their principal bait is small red worms.

Having spoken before of pastes, I shall now shew how you may make the same; and though there be as many kinds as men have fancies, yet I esteem these best.

1. Take the tenderest part of the leg of a young rabbit, virgin wax, and sheep's suet; beat them in a mortar till they be perfectly incorporated, then with a little clarified honey, temper them before the fire into a paste.

2. Sheep's-kidney suet, as much cheese, fine flower or manchet, make it into a paste; soften it with clarified honey.

3. Sheep's blood, cheese, fine manchet, clarified honey; make all into a paste.

4. Sheep's blood, saffron, and fine manchet; make all into a paste.

You may add to any paste, coculus-indiæ, assafoetida, oil of polipody of the oak, of lignum vitæ, of ivy, or the gum of ivy dissolved: I judge there is virtue in these oils, and gum especially, which I would add to all pastes I make, as also a little flax to keep the paste, that it wash not off the hook.

CHAP. VI.

TO KEEP YOUR BAITs.

1. PASTE will keep very long, if you put virgin wax and clarified honey into it, and stick well on the hook, if you beat cotton wool, or flax into it, when you make your paste.

2. Put your worms into very good long moss, whether white, red, or green, matters not; wash it well, and cleanse it from all earth and filth, wring it very dry, then put your worms into an earthen pot, cover it close that they crawl not out; set it in a cool place in Summer, and in Winter in a warm place, that the

frost kill them not; every third day in Summer change your moss, and once in the week in Winter; the longer you keep them before you use them the better: clean scouring your worms makes them clear, red, tough, and to live long on the hook, and to keep colour, and therefore more desireable to the fish: a little Bol Amoniac put to them, will much further your desire, and scour them in a short time: or your may put them all night in water, and they will scour themselves, which will weaken them; but a few hours in good moss will recover them. Lest your worms die, you may feed them with crumbs of bread and milk, or fine flour and milk, or the yolk of an egg, and sweet cream coagulated over the fire, given to them a little and often; sometimes also put to them earth cast out of a grave, the newer the grave the better; I mean the shorter time the party hath been buried, you will find the fish will exceedingly covet them after this earth, and here you may gather what gum that is, which J. D. in his *Secrets of Angling*, calls 'Gum of Life.'

3. You must keep all sorts of worms with the leaves of those trees and herbs on which they are bred, renewing the leaves often in a day, and put in fresh for the old ones: the boxes you keep them in must have a few small holes to let in air.

4. Keep gentles or maggots with dead flesh, beast's livers, or suet; cleanse or scour them in meal, or bran, which is better; you may breed them by pricking a beast's liver full of holes, hang it in the sun in Summer time; set an old course barrel, or small firkin, with clay and bran in it, into which they will drop, and cleanse themselves in it.

5. Cad-bait cannot endure the wind and cold, therefore keep them in a thick woollen bag, with some gravel amongst them: wet them once a day, at least, if in the house, but often in the hot weather: when you carry them forth, fill the bag full of water, then hold the mouth close, that they drop not out, and so let the water run from them; I have thus kept them three weeks, or you may put them into an earthen pot full of water, with some gravel at the bottom, and take them forth into your bag to use them.

6. The spawn of some fish is a good bait, to be used at such time as that fish is spawning: some days before they spawn they will bite eagerly; if you take one that is full-bellied, take out the spawn, boil it so hard as to stick on your hook, and so use it; or not boil it at all, the spawn of SALMON is the best of all sorts of spawn.

7. I have observed, that CHEVIN, ROACH, and [DACE] bite much better at the oak-worm, or any worm bred on herbs and trees, especially if you angle with the same, when they shew themselves at the top of the water, as with the natural fly, than if you use it under: for I have observed, that when a gale of wind shakes the trees, the worms fall into the water, and presently rise and float on the top, where I have seen the fish rise at them, as at flies, which taught me this experience; and indeed they sink not, till tost and beaten by the stream, and so die and lose their colour; the fish then, as you may see by your own on your hook, do not much esteem them.

8. There are two, some say three, sorts of cad-bait; the one bred under stones, that lie holow in shallow rivers, or small brooks, in a very fine gravelly case or husk, these are yellow when ripe: the other in old pits, ponds, or slow running rivers, or ditches, in cases or husks of straw, sticks, or rushes, these are green when ripe: both are excellent for TROUT, used as before directed, and for most sorts of small fish. The green sort, which is bred in pits, ponds, or ditches, may be found in March, before the other yellow ones comes in; the other yellow ones come in season with May, or the end of April, and go out in July: a second sort, but smaller, come in again in August.

9. Yellow bobs are also of two sorts; the one bred in mellow light soils, and gathered after the plough, when the land is first broken up from grazing, and are in season in the Winter till March; the other sort is bred under cow-dung, hath a red head; and these are in season in the Summer only: scour them in bran,

or dry moss, or meal.

10. Bark-worms are found under the bark of an oak, ash, alder, and birch, especially if they lie a year or more after they have fallen, you may find a great white worm, with a brown head, something resembling a dore bee, or humble-bee, this is in season all the year, especially from September until June, or mid-May; the Umber covets this bait above any, save fly, and cad-bait; you may also find this worm in the body of a rotten alder, if you break it with an axe or beetle; but be careful only to shake the tree in pieces with beating, and crush not the worm: you may also find him under the bark of the stump of a tree, if decayed.

11. Dry your wasps, dores, or bees, upon a tile-stone, or in an oven cooled after baking, lest they burn; and to avoid that, you must lay them on a thin board or chip, and cover them with another so supported, as not to crush them, or else clap two cakes together; this way they will keep long, and stick on your hook well. If you boil them hard, they grow black in a few days.

12. Dry your sheep's blood in the air, upon a dry board, till it become a pretty hard lump; then cut it into small pieces for your use.

13. When you use grain, boil it soft, and get off the outward rind, which is the bran; and then if you will, you may fry the same in honey and milk, or some strong scented oils, as polypody, spike, ivy, turpentine; for Nature, which maketh nothing in vain, hath given the fish nostrils, and that they can smell, is undeniable; and I am persuaded, more guided by the sense of smelling, than sight, for sometimes they will come to the float, if any wax be upon it, smell at it and go away. We see also that strong scents draw them together; as, put grains, worms, or snails, in a bottle of hay tied up pretty close, and you will, if you pluck it out suddenly, sometimes draw up EELS in it. But I never yet made trial of any of these oils; for when I had the oils, I wanted time to try them; or when I had time, I wanted the oils: but I recommend them to others for trial, and do purpose, God willing, to prove the virtue myself, especially that ointment so highly commended by J. D. in his *Secrets of Angling*.*

*In the edition of 1613, duod. the receipt here referred to occurs at the end of the volume:

Would'st thou catch fish?
Then here's thy wish;
Take this receipt
To anoint thy bait.

Thou that desirest to fish with line and hook,
Be it in pool, in river, or in brook,
To blisse thy bait, and make the fish to bite,
Loe here's a means if thou canst hit it right;
Take gum of life, fine beat and laid to soak
In oyle, well drawn from that which kills the oak;
Fish where thou wilt, thou shalt have sport thy fill,
When twenty fail, thou shalt be sure to kill.

Probatum.

It's perfect and good
If well understood
Else not to be told
For silver or gold.

Lauson, who 'augmented it with many approved experiments,' the second edition of the *Secrets of Angling*, 1652, duod. observes, 'This excellent receipt divers Anglers can tell you where you may buy them.' On the subject of 'gum of life,' he continues, 'I have heard much of an oyntment that will presently cause any fish to bite; but I could never attain the knowledge thereof, the nearest in mine opinion, except this Probatum, is the oyle of an ospray, which is called Aquila Marina, the Sea-Eagle. She is of body neare the bignesse of a goose; one of her feete is web'd to swim withall, the other hath talons to catch fish. It seems the fish come up to her, for she cannot dive. Some likelihood there is also in a paste made of Coculus Indie, Assa-Foetida, Honey and Wheat-flour, but I never tried them, therefore I cannot prescribe.'

'That which kills the oak,' is expressly said to signify 'the Ivy,' edit. 1652.

In a third, and hitherto unrecorded edition of the *Secrets of Angling*, it is said, 'This excellent receipt you may buy ready and truely made, at the signe of the Flying Horse, an Apothecaries in Carter-Lane.'

EDITOR.

14. When you see ant-flies in greatest plenty, go to the ant-hills where they breed, take a great handful of the earth, with as much of the roots of the grass growing on those hill; put all into a large glass bottle, then gather a pottle full of the blackest, ant-flies unbruised, put them into the bottle, or into a firkin, if you would keep them long, first washed with honey, or water and honey; ROACH and DACE will bite at these flies under water near the ground.

15. When you gather bobs after the plough, put them into a firkin, with sufficient of the soil they were bred in, to preserve them; stop the vessel quite close, or all will spoil; set it where neither wind nor frost may offend them, and they will keep all Winter for your use.

16. At the latter end of September, take some dead carrion that hath some maggots bred in it, which are beginning to creep; bury all deep in the ground, that the frost kill them not, and they will serve in March or April following, to use.

17. To find the flag-worm, do thus: go to an old pond, or pit, where there are store of flags, or, as some call them, sedges, pull some up by the roots, then shake those roots in the water, till all the mud and dirt be washed away from them, then amongst the small strings of fibres that grow to the roots, you will find some little husks or cases of a reddish, or yellowish, and some of other colours; open these carefully with a pin, and you will find in them a little small worm, white as a gentle, but longer and thinner; this is an excellent bait for the Tench, the Bream, and especially the Carp: if you pull the flags asunder, and cut open the round stalk, you will also find a worm like the former in the husks; but tougher, and in that respect better.

CHAP. VII.

OF SEVERAL HAUNTS OR RESORTS OF FISH, AND IN WHAT RIVERS OR PLACES OF THEM THEY ARE MOST USUALLY FOUND.

THIS part of our discourse being a discovery of the several places or rivers each kind of fish do most haunt or covet, and in which they are ordinarily found.

The several sorts of rivers, streams, soils, and waters they most frequent, is a matter, in this undervalued art, of no small importance; for if you come with baits for the Trout, or Umber, and angle for them in slow muddy rivers or places, you will have little, if any sport at all: and to seek for Carp or Tench in stony swift rivers, is equally preposterous; and though I know that sometimes you may meet with fish in such rivers and places, as they do not usually frequent, for no general rule but admits of particular exceptions, yet the exact knowledge of what rivers or soils, or what part of the river, for some rivers have swift gravelly streams, and also slow, deep, muddy places; such or such sorts of fish do most frequent, will exceedingly adapt you, to know what rivers, or what part of them are most fit for your baits, or what baits suit best with each river, and the fish in the same.

1. The Salmon loves large swift rivers, where there is considerable ebbing and flowing, and there that fish is found in the greatest numbers; nevertheless, I have known them to be found in lesser rivers, high up in the country, yet chiefly in the latter end of the year, when they come thither to spawn, he chooses the most swift and violent streams, or rather cataracts, and in England the clearest gravelly rivers usually with rocks or weeds; but in Ireland, I do not know any river, I mean high in the country, that hath such plenty of them as the black water, by Charlemont, and the broad water, by Shane's Castle, both of which have their heads in great bogs, and are of a dark muddy colour, and very few comparatively in the upper ban, though clearer and swifter than they.

2. The Trout is found in small purling brooks, or rivers that are very swift, and run upon stones or gravel; he feeds whilst strong in the swiftest streams, behind a stone, a log, or some small bank, which, shooting into the river, the streams beareth upon; and there he lieth watching for what comes down the stream, and suddenly catches it up. His hold is usually in the deep, under a hollow place of a bank, or a stone which lying hollow, he loves exceedingly and sometimes, but not so usually, he is found amongst weeds.

3. The Pearch prefers a gentle stream, of a reasonable depth, seldom shallow, close by a hollow bank; and though these three sorts of fish covet clear and swift rivers, green weeds, and stony gravel; yet they are sometimes found, but not in such plenty and goodness, in slow muddy rivers.

4. Carp, Tench, and Eel, seek mud and a still water; Eels under roots or stones, a Carp chooseth the deepest and most still place of a pond or river, so does the Tench, and also green weeds, which he likes exceedingly; the greatest Eels love as before; but the smaller ones are found in all sorts of rivers and soils.

5. Pike, Bream, and Chub, choose sand or clay: the Bream, a gentle stream, and the broadest part of the river, the Pike, still pools full of fry, and shelters himself, the better to surprise his prey unawares, amongst bull-rushes, water-docks, or under-bushes; the Chub loves the same ground, but is more rarely found without some tree to shade and cover him, in large rivers and streams.

6. Barbel, Roach, Dace, and Ruff, seek gravel and sand more than the Bream, and the deepest parts of the river, where shady trees are more grateful to them, than to the Chub or Chevin.

7. The Umber seeks marl, clay, clear waters, swift streams, far from the Sea, for I never saw any taken near it; and the greatest plenty of them that I know of, are found in the mountainous parts of Derbyshire, Stafforshire, as Dovetrant, Derwent, &c.

8. Gudgeon desires sandy, gravely, gentle strams, and smaller rivers; but I have known them taken in great abundance in Trent, in Derbyshire, where it is very large; but conceive them to be in greater plenty nearer the head of that river, about or above Heywood: I can say the same of other rivers, and therefore conceive they love smaller rivers rather than the large, or the small brooks, for I never found them in so great plenty in brooks, as small rivers; he bites best in the Spring, till he spawns, and little after till wasp time.

9. Shad, Thwait, Peel, Mullett, Suant, and Flounder, love chiefly to be in or near the saltish water, which ebb and flow; I have known the Flounder taken in good plenty, in fresh rivers; they covet sand and gravel, deep gentle streams near the bank, or at the end of a stream in a deep still place: though these rules may, and do hold good in the general, yet I have found them admit of particular exceptions, but every man's habitation engaged him to one, or usually at most, to two rivers, his own experience will quickly inform him of the nature of the same, and the fish in them. I would persuade all that love angling, and desire to be complete Anglers, to spend some time in all sorts of waters, ponds, rivers, swift and slow, stony, gravely, muddy and slimy; and to observe all the differences in the nature of the fish, the waters and baits, and by this means he will be able to take fish where ever he angles; otherwise, through want of experience, he will be like the man that could read in no book but his own: besides, a man, his occasions or desires drawing him from home, must only stand as an idle spectator, whilst others kill fish, but he none; and so lose the repute of a complete Angler, how excellent soever he be at his own known river.

Furthermore, you must understand, that as some fish covet one soil more than another, so they differ in their choice of places, in every season; some keep all Summer long near the top, some never leave the bottom; for the former sort you may angle with a quill or small float near the top, with a fly, or any sort of worm bred on herbs or trees, or with a fly at the top: the latter sort you will, all Summer long, find at the tails of wiers, mills, flood-gates, arches of bridges, or the more shallow parts of the river, in a strong, swift or gentle stream, except Carp, and Tench, and Eel; in Winter all retreat into deep, still places; where it ebbs and flows, they will sometimes bite best, but in the ebb most usually; sometimes when it flows, but rarely at full water, near the arches of Bridges, wiers, or flood-gates.

CHAP. VIII.

WHAT TIMES ARE UNSEASONABLE TO ANGLE IN.

THERE being a time for all things, in which with ease and facility the same may be accomplished, and most difficult, if not impossible, at another: the skill and knowledge how to choose the best season to angle, and how to avoid the contrary, come next to be handled; which I shall do first negatively, viz. what times are unfit to angle; and then affirmatively, which are the best seasons.

1. When the earth is parched with a great drought, so that the rivers run with a much less current than is usual, it is to no purpose to angle; and indeed the heat of the day in Summer, except cooled by winds, and shallowed with clouds, though there be no drought, you will find very little sport, especially in muddy, or very shallow and clear rivers.

2. In cold, frosty, snowy weather, I know the fish must eat in all seasons, and that a man may kill fish when he must first break the ice; yet I conceive the sport is not then worth pursuing, the extreme cold taking away the delight, besides the endangering health, if not life, by those colds, which at least cause rhumes and coughs: wherefore I leave Winter and night angling, to such strong healthful bodies, whose extraordinary delight in angling, or those whose necessity enforceth them to seek profit by their recreation, in such unseasonable times.

3. When there happens any small frost, all that day after the fish will not rise freely and kindly, except in the evening, and that the same prove very pleasant.

4. If the wind be very high, so that you cannot guide your tools to advantage.

5. When shepherds or countrymen wash their sheep, though while they are washing, I mean the first time only, the fish will bite exceedingly well; I suppose the filth that falls from the sheep draws them, as like baiting a place together, and then they so glut themselves, that till the whole washing time be over, and they have digested their fulness; they will not take any artificial baits.

6. Sharp, bitter, nipping winds, which most usually blow out of the North or East especially, blast your recreation; but this is rather the season than the wind, though I also judge those winds to have a secret malign quality to hinder the recreation.

7. After any sort of fish have spawned, they will not bite any thing to purpose, until they have recovered their strength and former appetite.

8. When any clouds arise, that will certainly bring a shower or storm, though in the midst of Summer, they will not bite: I have observed, that though the fish bite most eagerly, and to your heart's content, yet upon the first appearing of any clouds, that will certainly bring rain, though my own judgment could not then apprehend, or in the least conjecture, that a storm was arising, they have immediately left off biting; and that has been all given me to understand that a shower was coming, and that it was prudent to seek shelter against the same.

CHAP. IX.

THE BEST TIMES AND SEASONS TO ANGLE.

WE now come to the affirmative part, which is the best season to angle, that as before, we discovered when it would be lost labour to seek recreation; so now you may learn to improve opportunity, when it offers itself to best advantage.

1. Calm, clear, or which is better, cool cloudy weather in Summer, the wind blowing gently, so as you may guide your tools with ease; in the hottest months, the cooler the better.

2. When the floods have carried away all the filth that the rain had washed from the higher grounds into the river, and that the river keeps his usual bounds, and appears of a whey color.

3. When a sudden violent shower hath a little mudded and raised the river, then if you go forth in, or

immediately after such a shower, and angle in the stream at the ground, with a red worm chiefly; if there be store of fish in the river, you will have sport to your own desire.

4. A little before any fish spawn, your own observation will inform you of the time, by the fulness of their bellies, they come into the gravelly, sandy fords, to rub and loosen their bellies, and then they bite very freely.

5. When rivers after rain do rise, yet so as that they can keep within their banks, in swift rivers the violence of the stream forces the fish to seek shelter and quiet ease; in the little and milder currents of small brooks, where they fall into larger rivers, and behind the ends of bridges that are longer than the breadth of the river, making a low vacancy, where the bridge defends a small spot of ground from the violence of the stream, or in any low placenear the river's side, where the fish may lie at rest, and secure from the disturbance of the rapid stream; in such a place, not being very deep, and at such a time, you will find sport: as regards myself, I have ever found it equal to the best season.

6. For Carp and Tench early in the morning, from sun rising, until eight of the clock, and from four after noon, till night; and from sun set, till far in the night in the hot months.

7. In March, in the beginning of April, and at the latter end of September, and all Winter, fish bite best in the warmth of the day, when no winds are stirring, and the air quite clear. In Summer months, morning and evening are best, or cool cloudy weather: if you can find shelter, no matter how high the wind be.

8. Fish rise best at the fly, after a shower that has not muddied the water, yet has beaten the gnats and flies into the rivers; you may in such a shower observe them rise much, if you will endure the rain; also the best months for the fly, are March, April, May, and part of June; in the cooler months, in the warmest time of the day; or in warm weather, about nine in the morning, three in the afternoon, if any gentle gale blow; sometimes in a warm evening, when the gnats play much.

9. Also after the river is cleared from a flood, they rise exceeding well; I conceive that being glutted with ground-baits, they now covet the fly, having wanted it a time.

10. A Trout bites best in a muddy rising water, in dark, cloudy, windy weather, early in the morning, from half an hour after eight, till ten; and in the afternoon, from three, till after four, and sometimes in the evening, but about nine in the morning, and about three in the afternoon, are his chief and most constant hours of biting at ground or fly, as the water suits either; March, April, May, and part of June, are his chief months, though he bites well in July, August and September. After a shower in the evening, he rises well at gnats.

11. Salmon, at three in the afternoon, chiefly in May, June, July, and August, with a clear water and some wind. He bites best when the wind is blowing against the stream, and near the sea.

12. Carp and Tench, morning and evening, very early and late, June, July and August, or indeed in the night.

13. A Chevin, from sun rising or earlier, at snails especially; for in the heat of the day he cares not for them, in June and July till about eight, again at three in the afternoon at ground, or fly; and his chief fly which he most delights in, is a great moth, with a very great head, not unlike to an owl, with whitish wings, and yellowish body, you may find them flying abroad in Summer evenings in gardens, when some wind is stirring, in large rivers chiefly, streams or shade. He will take a small lamprey, or seven-eyes, an eel-brood, either of them about a straw's bigness.

14. Pike bites best at three in the afternoon, in a clear water, accompanied by a gentle gale, in July, August, September, and October.

15. Bream, from about sun rising, till eight, in a muddy water, a good gale of wind; and in ponds, the

higher the better, and where the waves are highest, and nearer the middle of the pond, the better; from the end of May, June, July, especially, and August.

16. Roach and Dace all day long; best at the top, at fly, or oak-worm principally, and at all other worms bred on herbs or trees, palmers, caterpillars, &c. in plain rivers or ponds, under water-dock leaves, or under shady trees.

17. Gudgeon from April, and till he have spawned in May, and a little after that, till wasp time, and then to the end of the year, all day long.

18. Flounder all day in April, May, June, and July.

CHAP. X.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. LET the Angler's apparel be sad dark colours, as sad grey's, tawny, purple, hair, or musk colour.

2. Use shoemaker's wax to your silk or thread, with which you make or mend either rod or fly; it holds firmer, and sticks better than any other.

3. Into such places as you use to angle at, once a week at least, cast in all sorts of corn boiled soft, grains washed in blood, blood dried and cut into pieces, snails, worms chopped small, pieces of fowl, or beast's guts, beast's livers; for Carp and Tench you cannot feed too often, or too much; this course draweth the fish to the place you desire. And to keep them together, cast about twenty grains of ground malt at a time, now and then as you angle; and indeed all sorts of baits are good to cast in, especially whilst you are angling with that bait, principally cad-bait, gentles, and wasps, and you will find they will snap up yours more eagerly, and with less suspicion; but by no means, when you angle in a stream cast them in at your hook, but something above where you angle, lest the stream carry them beyond your hook, and so instead of drawing them to you, you draw them from you.

4. Destroy all beasts or birds that devour the fish or their spawn,* as the [OTTER.]

*THE OTTER'S ORATION.

Why stand we beasts abasht, or spare to speake?
Why make wee not a vertue of our need?
We know by prooffe, in wit wee are to weake,
And weaker much, because all Adams seed,
(Which beare away the waight of wit indeed)
Do dayly seeke our names for to distaine,
With slanderous blotte, for which we Beasts be slaine.
First of my selfe, before the rest to treat,
Most men cry out, that fishe I do deuoure,

Yea some will say, that Lambes (with mee) be meate:
I graunt to both, and he that hath the powre,
To feede on fish that sweeter were than sowre,
And hath yong flesh to banquet at his fill,
Were fonde to fraunche on garbage, graynes or swill.

But master Man, which findeth all this fault,
And streynes devise for many a daynty dishe,
Which suffreth not that hunger him assault,
But feedes his fill on euey flesh and fishe,
Which must haue all, as much as witte can wish,
Us seely Beasts, deuouring Beasts do call,
And he himselve, most bloody beaste of all.

Well yet me thinks, I heare him preach this Text,
How all that is, was made for vse of man:
So was it sure, but therewith followes next,
This heauy place, expound it who so can:
The very scourge and plague of God his ban,
Will light on such as queyntly can devise,
To eat more meate, then may thir mouthes suffise.

Now master Man stand forth and here declare,
Who euer yet could see an Otter eate,
More meate at once, then serued for his share?
Who sees vs beasts sit bybbing in our seate
With sundry wines, and sundry kindes of meate?
Which breede disease, yfostred in such feastes,
If men do so, be they not worse than beasts?

The beastly man, must sitte all day and quaffe,
The Beaste indeede, doth drincke but twice a day,
The beastly man, must stuffe his monstrous masse
With secrete cause of surfeiting alway;
Where beasts be glad to feede when they get prey,
And neuer eate more than may do them good,
Where men be sicke, and surfet thorough foode.

Who sees a Beast, for sauery Sawces long?
Who sees a beast, or chicke or Capon cramme?
Who sees a beast, once luld on sleepe with song?
Who sees a beast make venson of a Ramme?
Who sees a Beast destroy both whelpe and damme?
Who sees a Beast vse beastly Gluttonie?
Which man doth vse, for great Ciuilytie.

I know not I, if dyuing be my fault,
Me thinks most men, can diue as well as I:
Some men can diue in Seller and in vault,
In Parlor, Hall, Kitchen and in Buttery

To smell the Rost, wherof the fume doth flee:
And as for games, men diue in every streame,
All frawdres be fishe, their stomacks neuer squeame.

So to conclude, when men their faults can mend,
And shunne the shame, where with they beasts do blot,
When men their time and treasure not mispend,
But follow grace, which is with paines ygot,
When men can vice rebuke, and vse it not:
Then shall they shine, like men of worthy fame,
And else, they be but *Beasts* well worthy blame.

Noble Art of Venerie, 1611. 4to. pp. 201-203

&c. and endeavour, whether in authority or not, to see all statutes put into execution, against such as use lawful nets, or means to take fish; especially bar-netting and night-hooking.

5. Get your rods and tops without knots, they are dangerous for breaking.

6. Keep your rod dry, lest it rot, and not near the fire, lest it grow brittle.

7. In drought, wet your rod a little before you begin to angle.

8. Lob-worms, dew-worms, and great garden worms, all one.

9. When you angle at ground, or with the natural fly, your line must not exceed the length of your rod. For the Trout at ground, it must be shorter, and in some cases, not half the length as in small brooks or woody rivers, either at ground, or with the natural fly.

10. When you have hooked a good fish, have an especial care to keep your rod bent, lest he run to the line, and break your hook, or his hold.

11. Such tops or stocks as you get, must not be used till fully seasoned, which will not be in one year and a quarter, but I like them better if kept till they be two years old.

12. The first fish you take, cut up his belly, and you may then see his stomach; it is known by its largeness and place, lying from the gills to the small guts; take it out very tenderly, if you bruise it, your labour and design are lost; and with a sharp knife cut it open without bruising, and then you may find his food in it, and thereby discover what bait the fish at that instant takes best, either flies or ground-baits, and so suit them accordingly.

13. Fish are frightened with any the least sight or motion, therefore by all means keep out of sight, either by sheltering yourself behind some bush or tree, or by standing so far off the river's side, that you can see nothing but your fly or float; to effect this, a long rod at ground, and a long line with the artificial fly, may be of use to you. And here I meet with two different opinions and practices, some will always cast their fly and bait up the water, and so they say nothing occurs to the fish's sight but the line; others fish down the river, and so suppose, the rod and line being long, the quantity of water takes away, or at least lessens the fish's sight; but others affirm, that rod and line, and perhaps yourself, are seen also. In this difference of opinions I shall only say, in small brooks you may angle upwards, or else in great rivers you must wade, as I have known some, who thereby got the sciatica, and I would not wish you to purchase pleasure at so dear a rate; besides, casting up the river you cannot keep your line out of the

water, which has been noted for a fault before; and they that use this way confess, that if in casting your fly, the line fall into the water before it, the fly were better uncast, because it frightens the fish; then certainly it must do it this way, whether the fly fall first or not, the line must come to the fish, or fall on him, which undoubtedly will frighten him: my opinion is, therefore, that you angle down the river, for the other way you traverse twice so much, and beat not so much ground as downwards.

14. Keep the sun, and moon, if night, before you, if your eyes will endure, which I much question, at least be sure to have those planets on your side, for if they be on your back, your rod will with its shadow offend much, and the fish see further and clearer, when they look towards those lights, than the contrary; as you may experiment thus in a dark night, if a man come betwixt you and any light, you see him clearly, but not at all if the light come betwixt you and him.

15. When you angle for the Trout, you need not make above three or four trials in one place, either with fly or ground-bait, for he will then either take it, or make an offer, or not stir at all, and so you lose time to stay there any longer.

PEARCH bites exceedingly well at all sorts of earth-worms, especially lob-worms, brandlings, bobs, oak-worms, gentles, cad-bait, wasps, dores, minnows, colwort-worm, and often at almost any bait, save the fly.

He bites well all day long in seasonable weather, but chiefly from eight in the morning till after ten, and from a little before three in the afternoon till almost five.

16. A CHEVIN loves to have several flies, and of divers sorts, on the hook at once, and several baits also at once on the hook, as a wasp and colwort-worm, or an old wasp, and young dore, or humble, when his wings and legs are grown forth, or a fly and cad-worm, or oak-worm.

17. Take for a Trout, two lob-worms well scoured, cut them into two equal halves, put them on your hook; this is an excellent bait.

In a muddy water, a Trout will not take a cad-bait, you must therefore only use it in clear water.

If you desire to angle in a very swift stream, and have your bait rest in one place, and yet not overburthen your line with lead; take a small pistol bullet, make a hole through it, wider at each side than the middle, yet so open in every place, as that the line may easily pass through it without any stop; place a very small piece of lead on your line, that may keep this bullet from falling nearer the hook than that piece of lead, and if your float be made large enough to bear above water, against the force of the stream, the fish will, when they bite, run away with the bait as securely, as if there were no more weight upon your line, than the little piece of lead, because the hole in the bullet gives passage to the line, as if it were not there.

18. When cattle in Summer come into the fords, their dung draws the fish to the lower end of the ford; at such time angle for a Chevin, with baits fit for him, and you will have sport.

19. Before you set your hook to your line, arm the line by turning the silk five or six times about the link, and so with the same silk set on your hook; this preserves your lines, that your hook cut it not asunder, and also that it will not, when using the cast fly, snap off so easily, which it is very subject to do.

20. In very wet seasons Trout leave the rivers and very small brooks, and retreat into such little brooks as scarce run at all in dry Summers.

21. To all sorts of pastes, add flax, cotton, or wool, to keep the paste from falling off your hook.

22. Deny not part of what your endeavours shall purchase unto any sick or indigent persons, but willingly distribute a part of your purchase to those who may desire a share.

23. Make not a profession of any recreation, lest your immoderate love towards it should bring a cross

wish on the same.

[*F I N I S.*]

J. Johnson, Printer, Brook Street, Holborn, London.

